



**UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE
BIRMINGHAM**

**Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments
for Students in Examinations**

Approved by the Academic Regulations Committee
7 December 2022

This Code of Practice applies to formal written examinations for all types of programme and should be read in conjunction with:

- 1 The Code of Practice on the Conduct of Formal Written Examinations,
- 2 The Conduct and Invigilation of Examinations
- 3 Student Code of Conduct for Examinations

1. Responsibilities and Definitions

In accepting disabled candidates, the University acknowledges its obligation to ensure that assessment arrangements are designed so that all candidates are assessed on equal terms. Across the university there will be a number of students who qualify for specific access arrangements for examinations. This may be due to disability, a medical condition or specific learning differences.

Some, such as physical or sensory disabilities, may be obvious, whilst others may not be apparent unless disclosed by the candidate, for example, diabetes, epilepsy and dyslexia. Additionally, incapacity may be temporary; usually this will be of a physical nature, for example, broken arm, hand, etc. The needs of individual candidates with apparently similar disabilities will also vary.

Short term conditions. In the unfortunate event that you suffer unexpected medical problems immediately before or during your examinations please alert the Examinations Unit. If you are still able to attend your examination we will try to arrange specific access so that your needs can be accommodated.

Advanced Planning It is essential that candidates are encouraged to declare any additional needs in regards to barriers to accessing the main examination venue at the earliest possible opportunity to their Year Manager, the Academic Skills Centre or the relevant Examination Officer so that reasonable adjustments can be made.

2. Academic Skills Centre (ASC)

The Academic Skills Centre (ASC) provides academic support for learners who require it. The Academic Skills Centre will assess and determine the needs of a given learner in respect to examination access arrangements if the current evidence is ambiguous.

3. Procedure for Examination Access Arrangements

Students must come to the Examinations Unit to discuss their specific needs regarding access arrangements for formal written examinations. Information on the specific provision required is recorded on a database maintained by the Examination Unit. Access arrangements are based on the evidence provided.

Students must provide evidence of reasons for alternative access arrangements. Although arrangements can be negotiable in certain circumstances, clear evidence of a condition influencing the sitting of examinations is essential e.g. An Educational Psychologists' report stating that a learner has a specific learning difficulty may indicate extra time.

Medical evidence can vary, but it should provide an outline of the circumstances, with a clear statement that a condition exists, and be signed by a medical practitioner.

If evidence does not exist, the student is referred to CASE. The CASE staff will provide guidance on what a learner needs to do if evidence does not exist, but they feel that a condition does. If medical evidence is required, the University Nurse can be called in to provide advice. In very personal situations, the University Counsellor can assist in providing advice and recommendations.

If a student feels that they no longer require the specified adjustments, they should inform the Examinations Office directly. Where a student feels that the access arrangements listed on the evidence is no longer relevant then any requests for changes should be discussed with the Examinations Unit and CASE.

Data Protection (GDPR)

Information may need to be shared with other University staff members and offices in order to make access arrangements for you. We may also need to seek independent medical advice, or advice from an Examination Centre or from the Board of Examiners for your programme of study about the support that they may be able to provide. Where your doctor or educational psychologist has supplied medical evidence about you, we may need to contact them to ask for further information. However, we will ask for your consent before we contact them.

We may share information about the nature of your disability or specific access situation where:

- There is a serious and imminent risk to your own or to others' safety.
- There is a legal requirement to disclose the information (for example, for the prevention or detection of crime).

We will retain information about your access requirements for as long as it may be relevant. This will usually be for the length of your registration on the programme of study plus a further period of time.

Regular liaison between the Examinations Unit and CASE takes place. If unusual needs are identified, discussion is initiated. Collaboration between the two parties will attempt at all times to achieve the evidence required to ensure that access arrangements can be arranged. Although advice and support is offered, it is in the end, the responsibility of learners themselves to ensure that appropriate evidence is found.

Prior to each examination period the Examinations Unit contact individual students to advise that the appropriate access arrangements are in place.

The Examinations Unit makes all the arrangements including rooms for small groups using computers or requiring additional time, separate rooms for students requiring readers, scribes and unlimited time and any other access arrangements that are required.

The extra examination time allowance that can be granted shall be standardised at fifteen minutes per hour. No time allowance additional to this will be granted except by prior arrangement.

The arrangements for students with additional support requirements beyond the time allowance will be dealt with on an individual basis.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

Wherever possible, a candidate's additional needs should be identified at the admission stage. The Examinations Unit, in consultation with CASE will then provide the necessary access arrangements for students with additional needs on the student's assessment. Further information on the assessment process is available from CASE. The access arrangements recommended to the Examinations Unit by CASE will depend on the assessment.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include;

- accessible venue
- additional time
- reader/scribe/prompt
- use of assistive technology
- use of a small room
- supervised breaks - use of this is likely to include a recommendation for a separate room
- examination paperwork in preferred format

5. Alternative forms of assessment

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to consider an alternative form of assessment to examinations for some students with additional needs. Alternatives to examinations should be considered where all possible accommodations have been explored but where the student is still unable to undertake examinations due to a disability. Curriculum teams should recommend an alternate method of assessment to the Examinations Unit at the earliest opportunity. Before implementing any alternative form of assessment, advice should be sought from CASE and the Examinations Unit.