

UCSE Reasonable Adjustments Policy

26/27

SLT Responsibility – Adam Fahey

Policy Author – Ciaran Whatley



Significant Changes Following Review

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
All	New policy – reflecting changes in sector and aligning with validating partner policy	Ciaran Whatley

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	18/08/2026
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Ciaran Whatley
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	HE Disability Officer
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change?	HE staff and students
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.?	New policy is designed to reflect changes in the sector and align with our validating partners.

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate?	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage?	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit?	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy

Who can access the policy?	Who cannot, or now cannot.
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Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	2	Neutral – Applies to all ages. No specific barriers identified.	Ensure inclusive language and access for mature students.	Ongoing – HE Disability Officer
Disability	5	Positive – Policy supports disabled students. Barriers: student engagement and awareness of new process and requirement to attend discussion of needs to access specific adjustments (i.e. assessment adjustments)	Ensure clarity that discussion around adjustments is not formal, and they are not being assessed on their need. Ensure clear communication at the start of the year and targeted advertisement to those that have received adjustments previously.	Ongoing – HE Disability Officer & HE Disability Support Practitioner
Gender (Sex)	1	Neutral – No direct impact. No barriers identified.	Ensure inclusive language and avoid gendered assumptions.	Ongoing -
Gender Reassignment	2	Neutral to positive – Inclusive tone. Barrier: potential lack of staff awareness.	Staff training on inclusive practices and language.	Annual – HE Support
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	Neutral – No direct impact or barriers identified.	No action required.	N/A
Pregnancy / Maternity	3	Positive – Adjustments may support pregnancy-related needs. Barrier: timing conflicts with leave.	Flexible deadlines and assessment modes; clear guideline. Signpost towards extenuating circumstances process where appropriate.	Ongoing – HE Disability Officer, Programme Leads & HE Support
Race	2	Neutral to Positive – Inclusive access. Barrier: cultural or language barriers.	Ensure materials are culturally sensitive; offer translation support.	Ongoing – HE Support
Religion or Religious Belief	2	Neutral – potential conflict with religious observance.	Flexible scheduling; raise staff awareness.	Ongoing – HE Examinations team
Sexual Orientation	1	Neutral – No direct impact or barriers identified.	Maintain inclusive language and environment	Ongoing – HE Support

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	Neutral	None Identified	N/A

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University Centre South Essex (UCSE) Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. South Essex Colleges Group (“we”, “us”, or “our”) is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for its students. We understand the importance of student health and wellbeing in relation to their learning, academic achievement and wider student experience and seek to develop a positive and safe environment that enables them to engage with their studies and achieve to the best of their ability.
- 1.2. This policy outlines the University Centre’s approach to making reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and additional learning needs, ensuring they have equal access to education, University Centre services and the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through assessments in a manner which allows adaptations for particular needs.
- 1.3. The reasonable adjustments duty under the Equality Act 2010 is to take such steps as is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, to avoid a disadvantage which a disabled student experiences because of their disability. This can include adapting a student’s learning environment, adapting teaching methods and adapting assessments. Criteria for judging what is ‘reasonable’ include; whether the adjustments compromise academic standards, learning outcomes of an assessment, health and safety, or the relevant interests of other students. Specifically, the University Centre is not required to make a reasonable adjustment to the application of a competence standard in an Assessment. The College will make reasonable adjustments where it is practical and within available resources and is also entitled to assess their practicality and likely effectiveness in deciding whether to implement these.
- 1.4. The policy applies to any form of disability which could impact on the student’s studies or their ability to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and competency during assessment. Alongside physical disabilities and long-term illnesses, this includes but is not limited to cognitive, social and learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, ASD, ADD / ADHD etc.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. The terms ‘disabled’ and ‘disability’ throughout this policy are as defined under the Equality Act (2010) in that you are disabled if you have a ‘physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on [your] ability to do normal daily activities’.
- 2.2. The term ‘reasonable adjustment’ throughout this policy describes provision deemed reasonable under the Equality Act 2010 to meet the needs of disabled students. This

is in relation to the legal requirement, under the Equality Act 2010, that an employer, education provider, service provider or public body make changes to provision or offering to remove or reduce the disadvantage experienced by a disabled person compared with a non-disabled person.

- For further clarity on what is considered reasonable see 6.7

2.3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education (2012) defines a 'competence standard' as an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.

Competence standards may be learning outcomes provided they genuinely reflect the level of competence required of the course. Competence standards cannot be changed by reasonable adjustments

3. SCOPE

3.1. This policy and associated procedure apply to all disabled full-time and part-time students enrolled on a Higher Education programme of Level 4 and above at South Essex Colleges Group who have, or may acquire, a condition covered by the Equality Act (2010) during their studies. This refers to students who have long-term and life-long disabilities. The policy does not apply to students who have a short term condition (e.g. short-term illness, short-term physical damage etc.).

3.2. Students experiencing a short-term condition which impacts upon their ability to demonstrate their learning through assessment should use the Extenuating Circumstances policy of their programme's validating partner. For further guidance, students should contact HESupport@southessex.ac.uk.

3.3. This policy outlines how we meet our responsibilities to students under the Equality Act (2010), specifically the approach to supporting disabled students through the provision of reasonable adjustments.

3.4. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of our staff and students in the provision of reasonable adjustments to disabled students in Higher Education.

4. POLICY AIMS

4.1. The purpose of this policy and associated procedure is to support the student to achieve a positive outcome from their programme of study and to put reasonable adjustments in place where required to ensure that all students can participate fully and fairly in their education and any other facilities and services provided by us in the course of their study.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1. The College will:

- Promote an inclusive learning environment.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to support students with disabilities.
- Take steps to anticipate possible adjustments before such time as a disclosure of disability is made.
- Encourage students to disclose their disabilities to access appropriate support.
- Provide training and guidance to all staff, both support and academic, on implementing reasonable adjustments across all relevant provision.
- Raise awareness of the support and provision offered to disabled students through HE Support and its legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010).
- Ensure the design and delivery of programmes and modules are as inclusive as possible and that this is tested through approval and review processes.
- Mandatory monitoring and review of the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments for individual students.
- Encourage an understanding of all-forms of reasonable adjustments (whether for assessments, in-class, accessibility requirements, or exam arrangements) as a core part of a disabled student's study.
- Take steps to reduce the need for disabled students to provide additional evidence beyond that provided during an initial disclosure.

5.2. Although the University Centre aims to identify the most common barriers experienced by disabled students and, wherever possible, to identify appropriate anticipatory adjustments to overcome these barriers, this may not be possible in all cases, so where needed, individual reasonable adjustments will be agreed and implemented.

5.3. The University Centre can make reasonable adjustments (individual and anticipatory) to academic provision or practices but not to competence standards (2.3).

5.4. There is no requirement to amend the academic standards of a programme for a disabled student, but it may be necessary to change the method of assessment and the examination venue where in person exams must be attended to meet the requirements of professional and vocational bodies. This includes assessment methods for a competency standard. The key questions for deciding if part of an assessment is a competence standard are:

- a. What skill, competence, level of knowledge or ability is being measured?
- b. What standards are being applied to decide whether a student has met the required level of that competence or ability?

- c. What parts of the assessment are the method by which the student's ability to meet the standards at (b) is tested?

5.5. The HE Disability Officer can also offer advice and guidance to colleagues on reasonable adjustments which may be needed where disabled students are involved in activities or University Centre processes outside teaching and learning settings.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1. To receive specific reasonable adjustments, beyond those offered as standard by the University Centre, a student must complete an initial declaration of disability and discuss their needs with the UCSE Disability Support team. These discussions are informal and NOT an assessment of need; for information regarding booking refer to the "Reasonable Adjustment Guide for Students and Staff" or contact the HE Disability Officer.

6.2. Where possible, recommendations for adjustments should be in place within 20 working days following discussion with the UCSE Disability Support team. Where urgent, and this distinction is made clear to relevant staff, this should be within 3 working days where possible. Where recommendations contain a significant degree of complexity or require exceptional input on the part of the University Centre, this timeline may be extended, and this will be communicated to the student concerned as appropriate.

6.3. The awarding of reasonable adjustments does not itself require the provision of specific evidence from the student. Further evidence to any already on file may be requested, at the discretion of the HE Disability Officer or relevant academic professionals, to support a request for adjustments particularly those related to assessments or examinations.

6.4. Where additional evidence is requested, the following is a guide for what would be recognised as supporting evidence but is not an exhaustive list:

- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) Needs Assessment report
- GP/Consultant letters or reports from relevant qualified professionals
- Special Educational Needs reports from previous education institution
- Form 8 (Exam Access Arrangements from UK School/College)
- Letters from services where the student has received support in the past (e.g. therapist)
- EHCP (Issued post-16 and relevant to further education at UK School/College)

Other evidence may be recognised, students should contact HESupport@southessex.ac.uk for further guidance.

- 6.5. Any supporting evidence provided is used solely as a guide. The process with which adjustments are identified is based on the student's individual needs; identified through a combination of supporting evidence provided and discussion with the UCSE Disability Support team.
- 6.6. Students without formal evidence of a disability will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments in assessments. Where students apply with minimal or no supporting evidence, their case will be considered by a panel consisting of the HE Disability Officer; Wider Participation Manager; Programme Partnership Managers; and other Academic Staff or the Executive Director – HE where appropriate.
- 6.7. When considering the reasonableness of an adjustment decisions will involve the disabled student, UCSE Disability Support team and other academic professionals as needed. For any decisions the following factors will be considered:
- The views of the student
 - The effect of the disability on the student
 - The relevant interests of other people, including students
 - The practicability of the adjustment
 - The extent to which any adjustment could effectively overcome the substantial disadvantage facing the student
 - The extent to which an alternative adjustment might more effectively overcome the disadvantage facing the student
 - The total resources of SECG
 - The financial cost to SECG
 - Availability of financial or other assistance to the student
 - Health and safety requirements and regulations
- 6.8. There is no need to prove that any adjustment is practicable and effective in advance, just that it might be. An adjustment would not be considered unreasonable if it does not fully remove the disadvantage; an adjustment which partially removes or reduces substantial disadvantage is also likely to be reasonable.
- 6.9. When considering the specific detail of the Reasonable Adjustment(s), the academic integrity of the assessment and validity of the assessment outcomes should be taken into consideration.
- 6.10. In some cases, it may be more suitable to offer a different format of assessment entirely, as an alternative assessment (6.11), to provide a means by which competence standards can be fairly demonstrated by a disabled student while preserving assessment integrity and validity.

7. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS IN ASSESSMENTS

- The following are examples of adjustments that can be made for assessments. This is not an exhaustive list and not all adjustments will be appropriate for the particular student or the particular assessment requiring adjustment:
 - Relaxed Word Count: The word count minimum/maximum are relaxed up to 20% of the original word count.
 - Additional academic support: Extra 1:1 sessions with teaching staff to discuss academic work. This may be to discuss academic content, break down tasks or discuss deadlines and priorities. This must not include any element of draft reviews or proof reading.
 - Group work/presentation adaptations: For example changing how presentations are completed. These would be considered on a case by case basis dependent on the competencies required for the specific module. This may require additional concession requests dependent on validating partner policy.
 - Change of mode: Changing the mode or type of assessment from one format to another. For example, changing a written essay into a presentation of equivalent weighting. This may require additional concession requests dependent on validating partner policy.
 - Sympathetic Marking: Special considerations to be made in the marking, grading and feedback of assessments. For example, lessening weighting of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Markers concentrate on the quality of content, critical thinking, and argument structure rather than errors in writing, such as spelling and grammar, unless these are part of the learning outcomes. Written and verbal feedback should be constructive and supportive, highlighting positive aspects and providing clear guidance on improvements without using ambiguous or overly negative language
 - Extended deadlines: A specified and agreed change of deadline in relation to a particular task. These would be considered on a case by case basis dependent on individual student need and the particular module. These would be up to a maximum of 14 days at the discretion of the relevant module teacher, with further extensions considered on a case-by-case basis via the relevant Extenuating Circumstances process. Extending a deadline is not available for Reassessment and may not be available in some other circumstances, e.g. because of the timing of exam boards or holidays. In this situation you can discuss alternative adjustments with your tutor and the Disability Officer. Please note: Particular care must be taken when considering extended deadlines as this could cause conflict with other deadlines or programme requirements which in some cases may cause an unintended disadvantage.

8. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS IN EXAMS

- The following are examples of adjustments that can be made for exams. This is not an exhaustive list and not all adjustments will be appropriate for the particular student or the particular exam requiring adjustment:
 - Access to additional support in Examinations: Provision for the student to be supported during an assessment by a person undertaking a specific role. This can include roles such as:
 - A scribe: A Learning Support Assistant who writes down exactly what a learner dictates during an assessment, including punctuation, spelling, and layout, without altering content. This support is used when a learner is unable to write due to a disability or difficulty. This role could also be replaced by provision of assistive technology (e.g. word processor) where appropriate
 - A reader: A Learning Support Assistant who reads the assessment questions (and, if permitted, relevant text) aloud to the learner. They do not explain or interpret the material, only read it verbatim. This support is used when a learner has difficulty reading. This role could also be performed using assistive technology (e.g. reader pen) where appropriate.
 - A prompt: A Learning Support Assistant who gives gentle verbal or non-verbal cues to keep a learner focused and on task during an assessment. They must not guide the content of answers or indicate correctness, and their role is purely to manage attention and concentration.
 - Extra Time in Examinations: In the context of a time-limited assessment such as a formal examination, being provided with additional time to complete the assessment. This typically agreed in a percentage format, for example: 25% extra time.
 - Rest Breaks in Examinations: In the context of time-limited assessment such as a formal examination, being able to take supervised stop-the-clock breaks during exams for fatigue, pain, or attention needs.
 - Separate Room in Examinations: In the context of time-limited assessment such as a formal examination, providing the student with a separate or private assessment area in order to reduce anxiety or sensory overload; often used in conjunction with other adjustments.
 - Adjustment to Resources: Materials, resources and assessment instruments adapted to Braille, enlarged print or screen-reader compatible materials for students with visual impairments. This would also include the provision for captioned videos and/or a BSL interpreter for students with hearing impairments during an assessment.

9. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS ON PLACEMENT

- Students undertaking work placement hours as part of their qualification are advised to consult with the Practice Learning Coordinator prior to the start of their placement.
- In order to ensure a high-quality and supportive learning experience, the Practice Learning Coordinator may need to share relevant information about a student's disability with the placement provider. This will only occur with the student's knowledge and consent.
- It is considered best practice to:
 - Discuss and agree with the student what specific information will be shared.
 - Develop a placement support plan tailored to the student's needs.
 - Ensure that placement providers engage with the student in advance to discuss practical arrangements.
 - Identify any potential barriers and implement reasonable adjustments to support the student effectively during their placement.

10. OTHER REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- Reasonable adjustments are also available in-class and around campus. These are provided on an as-needed basis based on readiness of availability or need for further consideration.
- Further adjustments for UCSE activities are also available as needed, and can be discussed with the UCSE Disability Support Team.
- The following are examples of other adjustments that can be made. This is not an exhaustive list and not all adjustments will be appropriate for the particular student requiring adjustment:
 - Priority Lift Access: SECG operates a priority lift access scheme at all appropriate campuses. UCSE student access to this scheme requires discussion with a student's programme/course team and completion of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).
 - Online Resources: Many UCSE resources are readily available on the relevant web-based learning management system (e.g. Moodle or Canvas). For additional resources, such as course materials, this can be discussed as an additional reasonable adjustment.
 - Additional Person Support: Typically students at UCSE will not receive a dedicated support person in-class or around campus unless provided via DSA or a student's existing social care plan (These staff are also not directly employed by UCSE). In certain exceptional circumstances, such as where medical concerns would deem it necessary (as determined by a panel consisting of the HE Disability Officer and other relevant staff) UCSE may make provision of a dedicated support person for a specific need. Please note: this provision would not be made for academic support purposes.

- Delivery Adjustments: These are adjustments to delivery mode or style made by the course or programme team as appropriate. These could include repetition, a supporting slide deck, active learning etc.

11. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1. HE SUPPORT

- HE Disability Officer
 - They are responsible for the collection and administration of student disability information at UCSE from the point of initial declaration.
 - They are responsible for assessing disability related barriers to learning for individual students drawing on information and evidence provided by students; and then recommending reasonable adjustments to support their study.
 - They are responsible for the creation of any support plans or adjustment summaries containing recommendations to be used by academic staff and students when considering specific adjustments.
 - They are not responsible for the consideration of academic standards when students wish to make use of recommended adjustments.
 - They are available for consultation by students and other relevant staff when considering specific adjustments following initial recommendations.
 - They are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of adjustments and update recommendations as needed.
 - They are responsible for supporting HE Management's adjudication of reasonable adjustments recommendations and implementation where the decision contains a significant degree of complexity or requires exceptional input on the part of the University Centre.
- HE Disability Support Practitioner
 - They will support the Reasonable Adjustment process and can make recommendations in the absence of the HE Disability Officer.
 - They can support students who need advice regarding Reasonable Adjustments following SpLD Screening/Assessment via UCSE.
- HE Student Wellbeing and Engagement Facilitator
 - They are responsible for referring students into the UCSE Disability Support team / Reasonable Adjustments process where appropriate.
 - They may be responsible for the application of reasonable adjustments in activities or events organised by the HE Support Team in the absence of the HE Disability Officer or HE Disability Support Practitioner.
 - They can support the HE Disability Officer in determining reasonable adjustment recommendations for students with mental health or wellbeing concerns where formal evidence is not available and there is a history of support.
- Wider HE Support team

- They may be responsible for the application of reasonable adjustments in activities or events organised by the HE Support Team in the absence of the HE Disability Officer or HE Disability Support Practitioner.
- They are responsible for referring students into the UCSE Disability Support team / Reasonable Adjustments process where appropriate.

11.2. HE EXAMINATIONS

- The HE Examinations team are responsible for the implementation of reasonable adjustments within assessment and examination processes, where appropriate.
- They are responsible for supporting the logistics of formally administered assessments where reasonable adjustments have been recommended.
- They are responsible for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are implemented as recommended.
- They are not responsible for the determination of academic standards when students wish to make use of recommended adjustments.
- They are responsible for the maintaining of approved recommendations for audit compliance.
- They are not responsible for the holding of evidence or disability related information, this should remain in one central location within the UCSE Disability Support team's files.
- They are responsible for referring students into the UCSE Disability Support team / Reasonable Adjustments process where appropriate.
- They are responsible for the filing of and liaison regarding concession requests where appropriate.

11.3. HE PRACTICE LEARNING

- The HE Practice Learning Co-ordinator is responsible for the co-ordination and liaison of student reasonable adjustments and disability information, where appropriate, with placement and practice learning partners. This is done only with student knowledge and consent.
- The HE Practice Learning Co-ordinator is responsible for consultation with students needing reasonable adjustments about their placement prior to the placement beginning.
- They are not responsible for the provision of reasonable adjustments whilst students are on placement, this remains the responsibility of the placement or practice learning partner as part of their legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
- They may advise a student and placement provider on appropriate reasonable adjustments or address concerns or worries of a student related to their placement.

11.4. HE ACADEMIC

- They are responsible for considering a students' request for adjustments for a particular assessment based on recommendations made by the HE Disability Officer.
- They are responsible for the determination and consideration of academic standards for their particular module/unit.
- They are responsible for determining specific extended deadlines, where applicable, based on the particular assessment and the recommendations made.
- They are responsible for the application of reasonable adjustments in the classroom and can also determine additional adjustments, where appropriate, for in-class activities or lessons.
- They are responsible for referring students into the UCSE Disability Support team / Reasonable Adjustments process where appropriate.

11.5. HE MANAGEMENT

- They are responsible for the adjudication of reasonable adjustments recommendations and implementation where the decision contains a significant degree of complexity or requires exceptional input on the part of the University Centre.

12. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 12.1. Students at UCSE with disabilities, that may benefit from specific reasonable adjustments, are responsible for making contact with the UCSE Disability Support team as soon as possible to support the consideration and implementation of any specific reasonable adjustments.
- 12.2. Students, where requested, are responsible for the providing of relevant evidence or information to support the consideration and implementation of any specific reasonable adjustments.
- 12.3. Students are responsible for contacting the UCSE Disability Support team or their relevant Programme Partnership Manager to raise any concerns around the consideration and implementation of recommended reasonable adjustments.

13. COMPLIANCE & COMPLAINTS

- 13.1. Where reasonable adjustments have been recommended and there is no impact on academic standards, there is no perceived reason why a request for adjustments would be rejected by academic staff.
- 13.2. Where a request for adjustments, based on existing recommendations made by the UCSE Disability Support team, has been rejected by academic staff; students

are able to request adjudication via the UCSE Disability Support team or their Programme Partnership Manager.

13.3. Where a student or staff member is unsure of what specific arrangements to make or request, they should discuss this with the HE Disability Officer.

13.4. Where a student wishes to raise concerns regarding any aspect of this process or their provision (or lack thereof) of reasonable adjustments; in the first instance this should be raised with the student's course or programme team. Where a resolution is not possible at this stage, complaints should be made following UCSE's formal complaints procedure.

13.5. All data and information around a student's disability and their reasonable adjustments is subject to the SECG privacy notice and data protection policy.

14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

14.1. This policy was written drawing on information and advice from the previous UCSE Reasonable Adjustments and Adjusted Assessment policy, the UEA Partner Institution Reasonable Adjustment Guidance 25-26, The Equality Act 2010, and the EHRC Technical Guidance on further and higher Education.

Senior Leadership Responsibility	Adam Fahey
Policy Author	Ciaran Whatley
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	HE Disability Officer
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