

# **Assessments: Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedures**

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# Assessments: Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Procedures

## 1. Definitions

- 1.1 For the purposes of this Policy, the Equality Act 2010 definition of 'disability' or a 'disabled person' is used. It states that, '*a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*'.
- 1.2 'Impairment' holds its usual meaning as '*the state of being diminished, weakened, or damaged especially mentally or physically*'.
- 1.3 An impairment is defined as long term if it has lasted for longer than 12 months, is likely to last longer than 12 months or is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.
- 1.4 Trinity Laban defines a 'long term or chronic condition' as that which is expected to last beyond the end of the current academic year on the basis of the available documentary evidence.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 Trinity Laban recognises the importance and value to the learning experience and environment of having a diverse body of staff and students.
- 2.2 Trinity Laban believes in principles of social justice, acknowledges that discrimination affects people adversely, and is committed to challenging all forms of inequality. To meet this objective, Trinity Laban has a comprehensive Equality and Diversity Policy which all students and staff are recommended to read.
- 2.3 This policy aims to support and enhance the Equality and Diversity Policy by:
  - a) complementing existing structures which identify and support disabled students;
  - b) ensuring that all students have equal opportunity to demonstrate their educational achievements in formal assessments; and
  - c) maintaining the quality and integrity of assessment criteria for all students.

## 3. Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 Trinity Laban recognises that some students, by virtue of a disability, may encounter extra challenges in assessments that a person without that disability would not. In order to ensure equal opportunity and access to assessments, where:
  - a) a provision, criteria or practice;
  - b) physical feature; or
  - c) the lack of auxiliary aids,causes a disabled student to experience substantial disadvantage in comparison with a non-disabled student, Trinity Laban will take such steps as are reasonable to avoid that disadvantage. These steps are known as 'Reasonable Adjustments'.
- 3.2 Trinity Laban advocates the inclusive design of assessment and encourages the anticipation of the needs of the range of individuals within the student body when setting assessment tasks.

This Policy sets out the procedures under which students may apply for Individual Reasonable Adjustments and how information derived from those applications and related decisions is fed-back into the design stage to ensure assessment practice within Trinity Laban improves yearly.

- 3.3 Reasonable adjustments for individual students with disabilities, impairments, long term or chronic conditions are made under this Policy when the normal assessment arrangements as designed would disadvantage an individual because of their specific needs.

## 4. Quality Code

- 4.1 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education sets out the following Expectation which higher education providers are required to meet:

**Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.**

- 4.2 The Quality Code sets out a number of guiding principles for assessment. In relation to this Policy, it sets out the principle that, 'Assessment is inclusive and equitable' and goes on to state that, 'Assessment procedures and methods are flexible enough to allow adjustments to overcome any substantial disadvantage that individual students could experience.'
- 4.3 In formalising this policy, Trinity Laban aligns itself further with the Quality Code.

## 5. Applying for a Reasonable Adjustment

### General Statement on Disclosing Disabilities

- 5.1 Trinity Laban has arrangements in place to identify students with disabilities during the application process with appropriate support put in place following registration.
- 5.2 Trinity Laban encourages students to disclose disabilities in confidence as soon as they are diagnosed in order that support can be made available at the earliest opportunity following disclosure.

### Trinity Laban Application

- 5.3 As part of the general care and support provided to students with disabilities, the Disability Co-ordinator may identify of his/her own initiative that a student requires an individual Reasonable Adjustment for a specific assessment/s. In which case, it will be the responsibility of the Disability Co-ordinator to complete the application form on behalf of the student.
- 5.4 The Disability Co-ordinator will only be empowered to take such a step when he/she already holds sufficient independent documentary evidence on the student file.

### Student Applications

- 5.5 If a student believes that due to a disability, they require a reasonable adjustment, they should initially approach the Disability Co-ordinator to discuss the matter. Where warranted, the Disability Co-ordinator will then propose a reasonable adjustment and ensure that this information is disseminated to the appropriate persons with responsibility for the specific assessment/s.
- 5.6 If following the above, no reasonable adjustment has been proposed, a student or their representative may make an application for a reasonable adjustment to an assessment under this Policy by using the Application for Reasonable Adjustment Form which is available from the Registry and on Moodle.
- 5.7 The completed form must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence sufficient to support the applicant's statement. Trinity Laban will consider any application which does not have

sufficient documentary evidence as being incomplete until such a time as sufficient evidence is received.

- 5.8 The exception to the above rule is where Trinity Laban already has sufficient independent documentary evidence on the individual student file. This may be the case in circumstances where the disability has been previously disclosed to, or diagnosed by, Trinity Laban.
- 5.9 Examples of acceptable documentary evidence are listed below:
- Signed Optometrist Declaration
  - Signed Medical Practitioner Report
  - Learning Statement from a Chartered Educational Psychologist or individual with a Special Needs teacher Qualification
- 5.10 A complete form must be received by the Disability Co-ordinator at least ten working days before the assessment/s to which the application relates. Trinity Laban will not consider any application which is not complete or received within the specified time frame.
- 5.11 If for any reason, whether related to a disability or otherwise, any student or their representative is unable to make an application in this form, they should contact the Disability Co-ordinator or the Registry to receive assistance in making the application
- 5.12 It is the student or their representative who is responsible for ensuring that a completed application is received by the Disability Co-ordinator in accordance with this Policy.

## **Consequences of Late Application**

- 5.13 Where an application for reasonable adjustments is received after the cut-off point, the student will have to continue with the assessment without an adjustment being considered. The Disability Co-ordinator may accept a late application where there are exceptional circumstances and the student was unable to meet the deadline.

## **6. Decision Making**

### **Responsibilities**

- 6.1 The Disability Co-ordinator or her/his nominee is responsible for the following actions:
- a) assessing applications for a reasonable adjustment;
  - b) informing students and/or their representatives of individual outcomes in a timely manner;
  - c) informing the relevant person/department with responsibility for the assessment of the need for a Reasonable Adjustment; and
  - d) maintaining a Register of Reasonable Adjustments which include outcomes and a list of normally approved examples of reasonable adjustments.
- 6.2 The Disability Co-ordinator or her/his nominee will consult with the designated member of the faculty to which the student belongs in making any decision to grant a reasonable adjustment under this policy. In the Faculty of Dance this will be the Dean of Dance and in the Faculty of Music this will be the Assistant Director of Music and Head of Programmes or their respective nominees.

### **Examples**

- 6.3 The following are examples of reasonable adjustments which have been normally approved by Trinity Laban. Please note that inclusion on this list is not indicative of the outcome on any specific case. Each Reasonable Adjustment is considered independently on a case by case basis:

- 25% Extra-time for written examinations for student with Specific Learning Difficulties.
- Rest breaks in examinations for those with Fatigue or Mental Health Issues.
- Use of a laptop in examinations for those with dyspraxia/dysgraphia
- Scribe in examinations for student who have difficulties typing.
- Fractionally extra-time for sight-reading for musicians with Specific Learning Difficulties.
- Scales in warm up room for musicians with memory difficulties.

## Applicable Test

- 6.4 Each application will be assessed on an individual basis taking into account the student's specific circumstances, condition and the formal assessment to which the application relates. For a reasonable adjustment to be granted, the answer to the following questions must be positive:
- Is the student, by way of his or her disability, disadvantaged by the method of assessment when compared to a non-disabled student?
  - Will the proposed Reasonable Adjustment help overcome the disadvantage?
  - Is the proposed adjustment reasonable in the circumstances?
- 6.5 The measure of what is reasonable will depend on the:
- Human, financial, physical or other resources available to Trinity Laban;
  - Cost of the adjustment;
  - Practicality of the changes; and
  - Potential benefit to other staff, students and visitors
- 6.6 In addition to the above, the proposed Reasonable Adjustment will only be granted where it does not:
- Provide the student with an unfair advantage over other students who are taking the same assessment;
  - Affect the integrity of the assessment and/or qualification; or
  - Influence the final outcome of the assessment decision.
- 6.7 It is Trinity Laban's policy not to automatically allow extensions to coursework deadlines for students with specific learning disabilities, however it is acknowledged that there may be times (for example early in an academic year) where an extension may be necessary in order to allow students sufficient time to access learning support.
- 6.8 The Register of Reasonable Adjustments will include information on all applications, whether the adjustment was proposed by the student or staff; the outcome of any decision and a list of approved adjustments as amended over time. The Register will be used to further best practice in this area and to inform the design stage of assessments, ensuring that the need for individual reasonable adjustments is reduced over time.

## Review of Outcome

- 6.9 In the event that a student or their representative is dissatisfied with the decision of the Disability Co-ordinator or her/his nominee, they have the right to request that the application be considered by the Head of Learning Enhancement. Any such request must be made in writing (or other form necessitated for reasons of disability) within five days of the date the original decision was communicated to the student and/or their representative.

- 6.10 The Head of Learning Enhancement will conduct a fresh review of the application and reach a decision based upon the criteria set out in this Policy.

## 7. Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1 As stated earlier in this policy, it is the responsibility of the Disability Co-ordinator to ensure that the relevant person/department with responsibility for the specific assessment is informed that a Reasonable Adjustment has been granted. In the Faculty of Dance, this will be the relevant Programme Leader and in the Faculty of Music this will be both the relevant Head of Department and the Programme Leader. Once it has been confirmed that they have been informed, responsibility for implementing the Reasonable Adjustment passes to that person/department.

## 8. Communication of Policy

- 8.1 This Policy will be signposted in staff and student handbooks and published on Moodle. The Disability Co-ordinator will endeavour to provide documents in different formats if requested by disabled applicants.
- 8.2 Other mechanisms for communication of the policy will include the Trinity Laban's committee structure, targeted training and awareness-raising sessions and induction.

## 9. Training

- 9.1 Appropriate training on this Policy and attendant Procedures will be provided to:
- Programme Leaders;
  - Module Leaders/Component Leaders;
  - Staff members with defined responsibilities; and
  - Other relevant persons.

## 10. Review & Evaluation

- 10.1 This Policy will be periodically reviewed alongside the Academic Quality Handbook.

## 11. Related Documents

- 11.1 Documents relating to this Policy
- Application for Reasonable Adjustments Form
  - Register of Reasonable Adjustments

## 12. Appendix A: Application Process

