

Procedure for Individual Exam Arrangements for Disabled Students

Introduction

The University of Bolton is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment to equality and diversity means that this procedure has been screened in relation to the use of plain English, the promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, gender and disability and avoidance of discrimination to other equality groups related to age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or gender assignment.

Applicants to the university are given the opportunity to declare a specific learning difficulty (SpLd) or disability on their application form. Declaration of a SpLd or disability will not prejudice an application to the university. Once an applicant has declared a SpLd or disability, this information is passed to the Disability Service. In some circumstances the Disability Service will contact the applicant to discuss support requirements immediately.

The Disability Service will send potential students a disability pack which contains information about disability-related support and forms to complete. Once these are returned to the Disability Service they are retained until the applicant is a confirmed student. Students will then be invited to meet with a disability adviser to discuss support requirements. In **all** cases, documentary evidence of a SpLd or disability will be required before support can be put in place. Examples of such documentary evidence include a specialist teacher's report, an Educational Psychologist's report, a GP's letter or a consultant's letter. There are two levels of support for disabled students – University level support and Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Students who can provide documentary evidence of a SpLd or disability may apply to their Local Authority (LA) for Disabled Students' Allowance. If the LA confirms eligibility, a student has an Assessment of Need to determine the appropriate support. An Assessment of Need can be organised through the Disability Service at the University upon receipt of an eligibility confirmation letter from a student's LA. An assessment can be organised through the Disability Service if a student thinks he/she may have a SpLd, for example dyslexia.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure for individual exam arrangements only. **For more detailed information about support for disabled students and applying for the DSA, please contact the Disability Service. You are also advised to read the Disability Service Confidentiality Policy.**

Examinations

It is acknowledged that disabled students or those with SpLD's may have individual examination requirements. Documentary evidence of a SpLD or disability **must** be submitted to the Disability Service before individual exam arrangements will be considered.

Individual exam arrangements are not automatically '*put in place*': they must be discussed and assessed with a Disability Adviser in advance. There is a deadline by which students must have applied for individual exam arrangements.

Individual Exam Arrangement Form

Students must fill in and submit the examination form to the Disability Service by the cut off dates. These cut off dates are to allow the Faculty time to organise and put arrangements in place for exams taking place. These Deadlines will be advertised prior to the examination period.

Please note that individual exam arrangements must be discussed with the Disability Adviser before, or at the time of filling in the exam form. In some circumstances, the Disability Adviser may judge that the arrangements requested by the student or contained in the Assessment of Needs fall outside what is considered a reasonable adjustment. In this case the arrangements will not be put in place.

Process

Once an exam application form has been submitted and reasonable adjustments have been approved by the Disability Service, the arrangements will be saved on a spreadsheet that will be sent to the student's Faculty of study. This spreadsheet will be sent to the Faculty within a week of the exam application deadline.

Student responsibility

All students, who have applied and been approved for individual exam arrangements, are advised to check in a timely manner that their arrangements have been processed. Students can check with their own individual Faculty. The Faculty will respond to you in a timely manner. The emails for each of the Faculties are:

Games, Computing and Creative Technology - gcct-enquiries@bolton.ac.uk

Arts, Media and Education - ame-enquiries@bolton.ac.uk

Bolton Business School - bus1@bolton.ac.uk

School of the Built Environment and Engineering. - bee-enquiries@bolton.ac.uk

Wellbeing and Social Sciences – hss@bolton.ac.uk

Late application for individual exam arrangements

Late applications for individual exam arrangements will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. The Disability Service in consultation with the Faculty will determine whether late applications can be processed. Late applications will usually only be accepted if a student acquires a condition or disability which they could not have previously known about and therefore miss the application for individual exam arrangements. An example of acceptable late applications would be in the case of a broken limb.

Mitigating circumstances

In some circumstances it may not be possible to put exam arrangements in place in time for exams. An example is when a student is assessed late for a SpLD,

such as dyslexia. In such circumstances, students will be advised to submit an application form for mitigating circumstances. The Disability Adviser can write a letter of support for mitigating circumstances for students in this position. The student must still attend the examination even if it has not been possible to put arrangements in place. Students can then fill in mitigating circumstances after the examination. The probable outcome is the student will be permitted to be reassessed, as if for the first time, without penalty.

Allocation of scribes

Students who may need to use a scribe (amanuensis) must discuss this provision with the Disability Service. The University has procedures governing the use of scribes that can be obtained from the Disability Service, Student Services, Eagle Mall.

Students are also strongly advised to read the document '*Students using Scribes*' available from the Disability Service, Student Services, Eagle Mall.

Responsibilities of Faculty

The Disability Service will send the Faculty a list of individual exam arrangements for students within their Faculty the day after the student exam application deadline.

The Faculty will make arrangements such as separate rooms, informing invigilators of extra time, rest breaks, organising scribes etc. This is a time-consuming and in some instances (allocation of scribes) costly job. Students must take responsibility as outlined above in checking arrangements are in place well in advance of their exams.

As the Faculty are responsible for organising the practicalities of individual exam arrangements it will be necessary for the Disability Service to pass on the students' names and some information on a strictly need to know basis. Often this will just be the individual exam arrangements, however in some circumstances, it may be necessary to pass on information about the nature of disability or SpLD. This will always be discussed with the student first and in accordance with the Disability Confidentiality Policy.

What if the student does not agree with the decision of the Disability Service about individual exam arrangements?

The University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled students or those with a SpLD. This duty includes making reasonable adjustments to examination conditions or arrangements to ensure that disabled students or those with a SpLD or disabilities are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to students who do not have a disability or SpLD. However, the University must also ensure that adjustments do not advantage one student over another. It is the role of the Disability Advisers to determine what is considered a reasonable adjustment and the final decision regarding adjustments for exams lies with the Disability Service.

If a student disagrees with the decision, they should in the first instance discuss their concerns with the Disability Adviser. If a student remains dissatisfied with the

conclusion of this discussion, he/she may refer their case to the Head of Student Services. The student must do this in writing explaining the reasons they feel individual exam arrangements should be made and enclose documentary evidence to support their appeal. This must be done in a timely manner to allow the Head of Student Services to review the case and discuss with the Senior Disability Adviser **before** exams commence. No individual examination appeals will be accepted after the deadline for the submission of the Individual Exam Arrangement form has passed.

If the student remains dissatisfied with the way their appeal has been handled they should now follow the University's Student Complaints Procedure

Re-sits

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their individual exam arrangements carry forward to the resit period where necessary. To do this, they must contact the relevant Faculty on their generic email, who will confirm arrangements with them.

Liaison with external organisations

There are some occasions when the Disability Service may need to liaise with specialist, external, disability organisations to determine what constitutes a reasonable adjustment for exam arrangements. This is only ever done anonymously, i.e. student's name is never disclosed.