

Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment – Students with Disabilities

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Description	This policy sets out the principles and processes that guide the University in making reasonable adjustments to assessment for student with disabilities while maintaining the academic integrity of its programs.

Related documents

[Students with Disabilities Policy](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Student Charter](#)

[Griffith University Disclosure Statement](#)

[Student Review and Appeals Policy](#)

[Student Review and Appeals Procedures](#)

[Student Complaints Policy](#)

[Student Complaints Procedures](#)

[Undergraduate Programs Admission Policy](#)

[Assessment Types in Use at Griffith University](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[Choosing your Path, Disclosure: It's a personal decision](#)

[\[Disability Discrimination Legislation and Reasonable Adjustment\]](#) [\[Definitions\]](#) [\[Making Reasonable Adjustments\]](#) [\[Disclosure and Supporting Documents\]](#) [\[Maintaining Academic Integrity and Reasonableness\]](#) [\[Review of Adjustments\]](#)

1. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

The [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) includes a requirement for academic environments to be free from discrimination on the grounds of disability. This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability. The Act is supported by the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) which clarify and elaborate the legal obligations in relation to education.

An essential consideration for the University is the principle of 'reasonable adjustment'. This principle is enshrined in the Act and it asserts that wherever possible, necessary and 'reasonable' to do so, the usual policy or practice will be varied to meet the needs of a person with a disability.

The principle of reasonable adjustment is therefore central to policy making and practices relating to alternative assessment.

2. DEFINITIONS

In the context of this policy and in line with the definition of disability defined in the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*:

A student with a disability refers to an enrolled student of the University with a **disability** that in relation to a person means:–

- total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a **disability** that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person;

resulting in a reduced ability to access educational services provided by the University including assessment tasks and a requirement for reasonable adjustments and/or support services to address these barriers. A student who is pregnant and does not meet the above criteria is not a student with a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action (or group of measures or actions) taken by the University that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability to

- apply for admission or enrol in a program;
- participate in the course or program; and
- use the facilities or services;

on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability¹.

An adjustment is **reasonable** in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. [See section 3](#) below for details.

Duty to disclose refers to a responsibility or agreement to disclose information that may be relevant in a decision-making process.

Griffith University Disclosure Statement All students are encouraged to disclose their disability for the purpose of enabling access to a safe environment with appropriate adjustments, minimising students’ exposure to risk and risk to others.

Assessment is the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore by inference a judgment about the learning itself.

Alternative assessment is the substitution of a different form of assessment to accommodate a student’s disability.

Academic Integrity requires in the making of reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, the University continues to ensure the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those upon whom it confers an award are able to present

¹ *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience and expertise implicit in the holding of that particular award.

3. MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The University shall provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities consistent with the *Disabilities Standards for Education 2005*.

Adjustments shall be made on an individual basis. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable all relevant circumstances will be taken into account, including the following:

- The student's disability
 - The nature of the course
 - The assessment type
 - The student's usual work methods
 - The views of the students or their associates
 - The effect of the adjustment on the student
 - The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected including the University, staff, other students and any other stakeholder
 - The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.
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4. DISCLOSURE AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The Student Charter states that the University expects students to disclose relevant information about circumstances that may impact on their capacity to undertake their studies for the purpose of making reasonable adjustments.

The purpose of disclosure is not to exclude students from opportunities but to enable access to a safe environment, with appropriate adjustments, minimising their exposure to risk and risk to others. Students need to be clear about the reason for making the disclosure and what they are required to disclose to receive the support they require. Students in exercising their duty of disclosure are to advise staff in a timely manner of their needs in relation to their disability, including assessment related adjustments.

If the University is not advised in a timely manner, then it may be unable to provide a student with reasonable adjustments. In such instances, it may be appropriate for a student to seek special consideration or defer their assessment as provided for in Section 9 of the [Assessment Policy](#). For example: it might not be possible to arrange a scribe for a student with a temporary injury to their dominant hand/arm.

To assist with the identification of appropriate reasonable adjustments, including adjustments for assessment, the University requires students with disabilities seeking adjustments to supply appropriate supporting documentation about the nature and impact of their impairment/medical condition in the learning environment. Such evidence must be an accurate reflection of the person's current impairment/medical condition and may include medical or other professional advice, reports from previous educational institutions or government and community agencies.

In some instances a detailed independent expert assessment may be required in order to determine the nature of adjustments that are appropriate for an individual student enrolled in specific programs/courses.²

² *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

5. MAINTAINING INTEGRITY AND REASONABLENESS

To protect the integrity of the University's qualifications the Course Convenor when determining whether an adjustment to assessment is reasonable needs to ensure the relationship between the assessment methods, the standard of achievement and the learning outcomes expected for the program and its courses are maintained. An adjustment to assessment should not undermine the following characteristics of effective assessment:

- Valid – the assessment measures the learning outcomes of the course.
- Reliable and consistent – levels of achievement are determined against specified criteria and are consistent when more than one assessor marks the work or when one assessor marks the work on different occasions.
- Transparent – a clear relationship exists between the assessment task and the learning outcome/s for which a level of achievement is to be measured.
- Fair – all students have the same opportunity to demonstrate successful achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Efficient and effective – a variety of assessment types are to be used to measure achievement of learning outcomes, appropriate scheduling of assessment tasks and technology are used to facilitate assessment processes.

Exemptions or exclusions from assessment tasks on the basis of disability is not a reasonable adjustment as the University is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

In providing for students with disabilities, the University ensures the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those on whom it confers an award can present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience and expertise implicit in the holding of that particular award.

6. REVIEW OF ADJUSTMENTS

As students' program and course enrolments change, the University shall ensure that there is an opportunity for a student to have their reasonable adjustments reviewed to take account of specific program and/or course requirements.

There may be instances when adjustments may not be required or where adjustments may change over time.

The University might assess that there are other reasonable adjustments that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for a student.