STUDENTS WITH A DECLARED DISABILITY

1. The University is committed to ensuring that disabled students are fully supported in their learning and assessment, in line with current legislation. A student is considered as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has ‘a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Teaching and assessment activities at the University fall within this definition. Impairments that may meet this definition include:

- Specific learning difference such as dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- Autistic spectrum disorders including autism and Asperger’s syndrome;
- Sensory impairments, especially those impacting hearing or vision;
- Mobility difficulties and chronic pain impacting on mobility;
- Long term health conditions, including cancer, HIV, diabetes and immune system disorders;
- Chronic mental health difficulties including depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis and eating disorders.

2. The University will seek to provide reasonable adjustments (RAs) to learning and assessment for students whose disability meets the definition in the Equality Act 2010 if it is likely to impact on their learning and assessment. The purpose of a RA is to remove or minimise the barriers that a disabled student may face in order to provide them with a fair and equal opportunity to succeed. Examples of RAs for examinations include the provision of an examination paper in an alternative form, such as an enlarged typeface, provision of a small group or individual room, additional examination time (to be used for writing or resting subject to a maximum duration of 4 hours including the additional time) and the use of assistive software on a computer.

3. The University will take an anticipatory approach to the provision of RAs when individual students disclose an impairment, and also takes a broader anticipatory approach by designing its teaching and assessment in such a way that it is accessible to all our students. However, where an assessment mode is used to measure a 'competence standard', the ability and legal duty to provide some types of RA to assessment may be limited. Schools of Study will identify such modes of assessments in their course and module handbooks. The Equality Act 2019, Section 98 4(3) provides the following definition: ‘A competence standard is 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.’

Role of the Student Support Unit (SSU)

4. The Student Support Unit (SSU) provides advice and support for disabled students and can also provide help for students who have a short term condition, such as a limb fracture, that may impact on learning and assessment. Students with an existing disability should let the University know about their disability as early as possible after their place at the University is confirmed, and by week 3 of Semester 1 where possible, or before the start of the first module on an online distance learning course. This is to allow time for RAs to be considered and implemented for the whole of the academic year. In order to be considered for RAs to assessment a student will need to provide recent evidence to SSU from an appropriate specialist (e.g. a medical practitioner or HCPC-registered psychologist) to demonstrate that their disability meets the definition in the Equality Act. SSU and the student will jointly review the likely impact of the student’s disability on their learning and/or ability to engage with particular modes of assessment. The SSU, in collaboration with the student, may then prepare an application for RAs to assessment by setting out the nature of the student’s disability and the issues that they are likely to encounter in engaging with the generic categories of assessment used in their course. The SSU may suggest RAs that should remove or minimise any disadvantage that they might otherwise experience. The generic categories of assessment and modes of assessment are available at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment
Reasonable Adjustment application

5. SSU will submit an application, based on medical/professional evidence, for reasonable adjustments (RAs) to be considered to support a student in an anticipatory manner with their learning and assessment. The procedure for considering an application is set out below.

6. The University will record the RAs that have been agreed to support the student in learning and assessment. Normally RAs will be agreed for the duration of a student’s course of study but in some cases SSU will suggest that the RAs should be for a fixed period of time, or that the RAs should be reviewed after a stated period of time. RAs to assessment that involve a change in assessment mode, rather than an adjustment to the mode itself and those that involve a variation to the examination rubric, will need to be confirmed on a module by module basis. The agreed RAs will be made available to the student and to members of University staff, as necessary. The student is responsible for raising concerns if the agreed RAs to learning and assessment are not being delivered.

7. The University will carry out an annual review of all students who receive RAs to assessment, seeking to identify situations in which these may not have been effective for individual students.

Consideration of an application for Reasonable Adjustments to assessment

8. The process for considering and approving an application from SSU for RAs to assessment is set out below. Further information is provided by the web link below and the flowchart at Appendix 1. [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/ra](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/ra)

9. The University will use academic judgement to decide whether some types of RA to learning and assessment are appropriate or possible, whilst also maintaining academic standards in delivery and assessment of module learning outcomes. An agreed RA to assessment should result in a fair and equal opportunity for a disabled student to succeed without conferring an advantage over other students, in order to comply with the principles of assessment.

The Student Systems and Records Office

10. The Student Systems and Records Office (SSRO) can apply the following RAs to assessment:

- 25%, 50% or 100% additional time for exams (an academic consultation must be undertaken by the Reasonable Adjustment Panel in cases where an individual exam duration exceeds 4 hours following the application of additional time)
- scheduling of examinations separately to the main cohort in a small group room or an individual room
- the use of a support worker for example a scribe or reader
- an extended deadline of an additional 4 or 8 hours for a Take Away Paper (SSU to propose extended deadline based on the student’s circumstances – not necessarily 4 hours for a 24hr TAP and 8 hours for a 48hr TAP).

At the beginning of each academic year SSRO will review assessments to ensure that these RAs are applied where they have been approved.

School Director of Student Experience

11. All students with a disability known to the SSU may submit within the late submission period, which is normally 7 days, without the usual penalties. This is referred to as a ‘penalty waiver’. No approval is required to submit during the ‘penalty waiver’.

12. In addition to use of the ‘penalty waiver’, the SSU may make an application to the DoSE to consider extended deadlines to ensure that submissions are appropriately staggered, for
example, in the assessment periods. This may result in the cohort deadline standing for some assessments, with use of the ‘penalty waiver’. Where a deadline is extended the student may also submit without penalty during the late submission period (‘penalty waiver’) after their individual extended deadline. This may result in a submission up to 14 days after the cohort deadline. The DoSE will ensure that the security of the assessment is maintained where an extended deadline is approved, given that late submission may also be permitted, so that a student cannot benefit from feedback already given to the cohort. An extended deadline may not be approved on a group submission for an individual student. Extended deadlines must not be agreed where this could result in a submission deadline on a weekend or bank holiday (excludes e-submissions).

13. The standard regulations apply in relation to re-submission of an assessment after the cohort deadline or after the individual extended deadline. This means it is not possible to re-submit during the late period (‘penalty waiver’) once a submission has already been made. This applies both to late submission after an individual extended deadline and to late submission after the cohort deadline.

14. The School Director of Student Experience (DoSE) can also approve applications for a variation to the arrangements for a presentation or a group assessment for an individual student, provided this enables the module learning outcomes to be achieved and the mode of assessment is not changed. For example, a presentation may be given on a one-to-one basis to the same Marker, rather than to a student group and Marker. However, it is not acceptable for a presentation to be made to a different tutor not involved in the marking for the cohort. For a group assessment, the DoSE may approve a variation to the assessment task, for example, that a student undertakes a researching role rather than a presenting role on a group presentation, or that a student writes up a section of a group assessment on their own rather than collaboratively.

15. The DoSE will review submission deadlines, presentation arrangements and group assessments at the start of each year or semester in accordance with the approved RAs to assessment.

University Reasonable Adjustment Panel

16. All other applications for RAs are exceptional and will be considered by the University Reasonable Adjustment Panel. This includes applications for a variation to the examination rubric where the provision of additional time would otherwise result in the overall duration of the examination exceeding 4 hours, or where a variation to an examination paper is required due to the student’s circumstances. It is University policy that no examination should exceed 4 hours, as a result of additional time, unless a Professional and/or Statutory Body prohibits any adjustment to the examination rubric. The External Examiner should normally sign off a variation to the examination rubric and review the exam answer paper as part of the sample for external moderation.

17. An application for an alternative mode will exceptionally be considered, provided that the mode approved for the cohort is not required to test competence standards, and where it can be demonstrated that possible arrangements to support the approved mode of assessment are not appropriate due to the nature of the disability. In some modules it may not be possible to provide an alternative mode due to the specific module learning outcomes to be tested, or to Professional and/or Statutory Body accreditation requirements. The Panel will receive relevant clinical information together with the application from SSU in order to make its decision. When an application for alternative modes is considered by the Panel, it will be subject to academic consultation within the School in relation to each module to ensure that academic standards and accreditation requirements can be met. The assessment tasks and submitted work for all written alternative modes should normally be sent to the External Examiner in advance of the
examination board to ensure that the academic standards of the award have not been compromised.

**Notification of approved RAs to assessment**

18. The University will inform students and SSU of the outcome of applications for RAs to assessment. Extended deadlines and alternative modes will be shown on Sussex Direct but details of other RAs to assessment will not be shown on Sussex Direct, but will be confirmed to the student by email. This email will also contain details of the steps that a student should take if they wish to discuss their agreed RAs to assessment.

**University Reasonable Adjustment Panel terms of reference and composition**

19. **Terms of reference:**

(i) To consider all applications for Reasonable Adjustments (RAs) to support students in assessment proposed by the Student Support Unit (SSU) that cannot be applied by the Student Systems and Records Office (SSRO) or the School Director of Student Experience in line with University policy.

(ii) To use academic judgment to (a) ensure that academic standards are maintained in line with the University principles of assessment and (b) to consider equity for all students across the University in making decisions on individual cases.

(iii) To ensure that all decisions made allow the University to meet any legal obligations and requirements.

(iv) The Panel will meet once per term, or as required.

(v) The Panel reports to the University Education Committee.

(vi) The minimum level of quoracy will be two academic members of staff.

(vii) To authorise the Chair to make decisions by chair’s action on individual cases between meetings, where appropriate.

**Composition:**
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) (or nominee) (Chair), Director of Teaching and Learning from each cluster; Director for the Student Experience (or nominee); Student Support Unit nominee/s, SRO Examinations Services Manager (or nominee), USSU Education Officers (UG and PG), USSU Welfare Officer and ADQE Manager (Academic Standards) (Secretary).

**Changes in Circumstances and Exceptional Circumstances Claims**

20. Reasonable Adjustments can be revised as appropriate should circumstances change (for example, a significant change in a student’s condition or a change in teaching or assessment).

21. When there is a sudden and unforeseen exacerbation of the known condition, or where the condition is first diagnosed or declared shortly before a particular assessment it may not be possible to provide RAs to assessment that would otherwise be appropriate. An Exceptional Circumstances claim may be submitted for all such cases.

22. A student may also claim for exceptional circumstances that are unrelated to their long term condition via the on-line claims process.
23. The evidence must relate to the original cohort deadline or the extended deadline, not to any late submission deadline. The Frequently Asked Questions (provided via the web link below) provide further guidance to disabled students who are considering making an exceptional circumstances claim. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment/ec

24. The Chair of the University Reasonable Adjustment Panel may be asked by the Chair of the University Education Committee to exceptionally hold a review meeting with a student, if it appears that the Exceptional Circumstances Claims process is being used in a situation where RAs to assessment would be more appropriate, or where a revision of the agreed RAs to assessment may be appropriate. However, a RA to assessment will only be considered for a student whose disability meets the definition in the Equality Act 2010. The School Director of Student Experience would normally be included in any such meeting.

25. Although transfer from full-time to part-time study is not a RA, a student may apply to extend the period of study of a single stage over two academic sessions, where this is supported by the SSU, providing the curriculum structure permits this and the DoSE believes that the student is likely to achieve a successful degree outcome. All extensions to a period of study must be approved by the Director for the Student Experience to ensure that the degree can be achieved within the maximum period of registration permitted by the University Regulations for taught courses.

International Summer School (ISS)

26. The Director of the International Summer School (ISS) will consider applications from International Summer School students, provided the student has made themselves known to the University and an application is submitted for consideration 3 weeks before the start of the Summer School. (The agreed RAs to assessment will stand for a student already registered on a course at the University, where they decide to take an ISS module.) The Director of ISS can consider applications for presentation and group work arrangements and extended deadlines. In relation to presentation and group work arrangements and extended deadlines, the Director of ISS will ensure that the principles set out in the procedures above are adhered to in approving an application. Therefore, a presentation may be made to the same Marker or an extended deadline may be agreed provided it does not enable a student to benefit from feedback given to the cohort. The Director of ISS will refer any applications for an alternative mode or a variation to an exam paper, for example, where an exam duration would otherwise exceeds 4 hours, to the Chair of the University Reasonable Adjustment Panel.

Students registered with the University of Brighton

27. The University of Brighton regulations and procedures apply to students registered on a course owned by BSMS. However, the University of Sussex regulations apply where a module owned by the University of Sussex is taken, in accordance with the course structure. Where this occurs, the University of Brighton will advise the Student Support Unit (SSU) of the RAs to teaching and assessment that have been agreed. The SSU will process the application in accordance with the procedure above, without the need to review the evidence provided. Exceptionally, the evidence will be requested and reviewed, should the RAs to assessment require Panel approval.

Appeals

28. Students have the right of appeal against Reasonable Adjustment Panel decisions, where the criteria are met. Please refer to the appeals criteria available at: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/complaintsappeals/academic
Appendix 1: Procedures to follow for students with a disability without an Exceptional Circumstances Claim

For students with a declared disability, the Student Support Unit (SSU) will provide support based on an ‘anticipatory approach’ which commences with a review of the evidence in order for Reasonable Adjustment (RA) to learning and assessments to be considered. RA applications should be made at the earliest opportunity at the start of the course and usually by week 3 of the first semester, where possible. Some RAs to assessment will need to be approved by the University Reasonable Adjustment Panel. RAs to assessment may also be made in cases of pregnancy or related maternity needs, and in cases of ‘temporary disability’.

Student Support Unit (SSU) considers support required for teaching, learning and assessment upon registration. Are Reasonable Adjustments (RA) to assessment required?

Is the support required for an unseen exam (or similar)?

The SSRO office can apply the following Reasonable Adjustments to assessment in line with University policy. Will these enable the student to take the assessment e.g. an exam?

University Reasonable Adjustments Panel

All other RAs must be approved by the University RA Panel. The Table at Annex A sets out the approval/application process. Annex B sets out questions that the Panel will consider.

Submission deadlines

‘Penalty waiver’: All students with a disability known to SSU may submit within the published permissible lateness period without penalty.

‘Extended individual deadline’: The DoSE may approve an application from SSU to extend deadlines beyond the cohort deadline, for example, to ensure that deadlines in an assessment period are staggered. The ‘penalty waiver’ will also apply on assessments with a late submission period.

Group submissions do not have a late submission period and an extended deadline cannot be approved.

Presentations

The DoSE may approve an application from SSU regarding arrangements for an individual or group presentation, provided the mode does not change and the module learning.

No further action required unless a student requests a review due to a change in circumstances.

Presentation deadlines

‘Penalty waiver’: All students with a disability known to SSU may submit within the published permissible lateness period without penalty.

‘Extended individual deadline’: The DoSE may approve an application from SSU to extend deadlines beyond the cohort deadline, for example, to ensure that deadlines in an assessment period are staggered. The ‘penalty waiver’ will also apply on assessments with a late submission period.

Group submissions do not have a late submission period and an extended deadline cannot be approved.

Yes

Is support in place/recommended for teaching and learning?

Yes

Is support required for an unseen exam (or similar)?

Yes

Additional time in examinations

25%, 50% or 100% additional time for writing/resting. Individual cases will be referred to the Panel where additional time results in the exam duration exceeding 4 hours. The exam is held separately to the main cohort.

Exam support worker

Reader, Scribe or other support work to provide support during exam.

Exam script

To support the student the exam question paper may be presented as follows: large print, use of coloured paper, language modified (e.g. by qualified teacher of

Individual/small group room with/without technical support

The assessment is held separately to the main cohort in an individual room or a small group room.

No

No
Annex A: University policy regarding approval/application of reasonable adjustments to assessment for disabled students whose disabilities meet the definition in the Equality Act 2010 and who are known to the University.

### Applications to be approved/applied by the School DoSE or SSRO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Reasonable Adjustment application</th>
<th>DoSE approval</th>
<th>SSRO to apply</th>
<th>Panel approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual extended deadline to an assessment (7 days beyond the cohort deadline)¹</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Additional time for writing or resting: 25%, 50%, 100%, up to a maximum of 4 hours, which may be used for writing or resting at the desk in examinations. (An additional 15 minutes will be included per examination where 25% additional time has been given)²</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An additional 4 or 8 hours for a Take Away Paper to enable submission on the same day as the cohort. SSU to advise of extended deadline based on the student’s circumstances – not necessarily 4 hours for a 24hr TAP and 8 hours for a 48hr TAP.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Resting outside the exam room within the designated rest area.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presentations: 1-1³</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group assessments⁴</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Use of equipment: PC; use of own ergonomic keyboard; use of own mouse (e.g. roller ball); use of own back rest, foot rest; adjustable chair; adjustable desk</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Use of Support Worker: Scribe; Reader; Lip-speaker; BSL Interpreter; presence of carer</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Small group room; individual room; seating preference; permission within exam room to walk, stand, exercise; room requirements (warm or cool, lighting, windows, background noise).</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Exam Script: large print; use of coloured paper; language modified (e.g. by qualified teacher of the Deaf)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Examination start time scheduled up to one hour after cohort start time; chaperoning within the designated examination area on the day of the cohort exam to enable an earlier/later start time.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ All disabled students known to the University may submit in line with the published late submission period without penalty ('penalty waiver'). Applications from SSU for individual extended deadlines beyond the cohort deadline may be approved by the DoSE, provided the security of the assessment is maintained. An extended deadline may not be agreed for a group written submission.

² Students may rest at their desk or use the additional time for writing, up to the maximum additional time. No further time is given for toilet visits which may be taken throughout, including during the first hour. The Panel must conduct an academic consultation for any exams where the duration exceeds 4 hours, following the application of additional time.

³ Individual or group presentations can be held in a separate room, other than to a group, provided they are made to the same Marker. A variation to the presentation arrangements may be approved by the DoSE for an individual student, provided the mode is not changed and the variation enables the module learning outcomes to be met.

⁴ A variation to the arrangements for a group written submission may be approved by the DoSE for an individual student, provided the mode is not changed and the variation enables the module learning outcomes to be met. An extended deadline may not be approved for a group written submission.
### Applications to be approved by the Panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Reasonable Adjustment application</th>
<th>DoSE approval</th>
<th>SSRO approval</th>
<th>Panel approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alternative mode of assessment⁵</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Variation to examination paper e.g. to answer fewer exam questions from the same exam paper within same time.⁶</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deferral of assessment into resit assessment period⁷</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bespoke exam paper to enable exam to be scheduled at a different time to the cohort e.g. morning, afternoon or every other day.⁸</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Any application can be referred to the University Reasonable Adjustment Panel by SSRO or the DoSE, even where they have authority to approve/apply.
- Any application not listed must be referred to the Panel.
- The University Reasonable Adjustment Panel will consider the questions in Annex B.

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⁵ The School will be asked to propose an appropriate alternative mode of assessment, following initial discussion of the application by the Panel. The School recommendation must ensure that the relevant module learning outcomes and accreditation requirements may be met.

⁶ The School will be asked to propose an appropriate adjustment to the exam paper in cases where additional time results in the exam duration exceeding 4 hours, following referral to the Panel by SSRO. The School recommendation must ensure that the relevant module learning outcomes and accreditation requirements may be met. Any adjustment must be in keeping with the exam rubric or guidance previously published or a mock past paper must be provided. This is to ensure that equivalent guidance is provided to support the adjustment to the assessment task.

⁷ The Panel may approve an application to defer an assessment to the resit assessment period of the current academic year.

⁸ The School will be asked to provide a bespoke exam paper, distinct to the cohort exam paper, in cases where chaperoning arrangements are not suitable, following referral to the Panel by SSU/SSRO. This will not normally be possible for resit/sit examinations in the resit assessment period.
Annex B

The University Reasonable Adjustment Panel will consider the following questions in considering an application for RAs to assessment:

1. Is the student disabled? (Note: SSU only register students with an impairment that meets the definition of a disability according to the Equality Act)
2. Is the student placed at a substantial disadvantage by the practice of setting formal, timed and unseen examinations for a reason related to their disability?
3. Did the candidate remain at a substantial disadvantage for reasons related to their disability despite the adjustments which had been made to the examination to date?
4. Is the requirement to sit a formal, timed, unseen examination a competence standard in itself, for the modules concerned?
5. If the examination format is not of itself a competence standard, is it possible to remove any substantial disadvantage which remained by making further adjustments such as replacing timed examinations with another mode of assessment?
6. Would it be reasonable to make those adjustments?