



QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 81 – DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

1. Policy Statement

Throughout this document the word disability will be used to describe students with a disability under the Equality Act (2010) this includes:

- Students with long term physical and mental health conditions
- Students with Sensory and or physical impairments
- Students with neurodiversities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASC, ADHD

Providing access to education and learning to a wide and diverse body of students is an integral principle of Arden University's operating ethos. Its modes of delivering higher education are designed with the diverse needs of students in mind and to provide students with flexibility and choice to help overcome some of the barriers they may face to learning. The University also recognises that individual students may have specific disabilities that may require additional support and reasonable adjustments to be made. This policy sets out the principles by which reasonable adjustments will be made in dialogue and consultation with the student.

Arden University is committed to dealing in a fair and considerate manner with disabled students and where possible make reasonable adjustments to its operating procedures, whilst maintaining the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the qualifications it offers.

Students are expected to make a disability known either to their Admissions Advisor at point of application, during the registration task, to the Student Support or Inclusion team as soon as the disability becomes known to them. Arden University staff will endeavour to assess the student's needs and the implications for their study. Where appropriate, evidence may be required to support a request for reasonable adjustments and/or applications for hardship funding in support of contributions towards DSA equipment.

1. Reasonable adjustments to Assessment

Students with disabilities may request support for scheduled assessments. Students should complete the Assessment Support Arrangements Student Request Form (available on the A-Z in iLearn) and submit this to the Inclusion Team.

Reasonable adjustments for assessments will be made on an individual basis, based on precedent, and may include, but are not limited to:

- Extra time in examinations/TCA's (e.g. for students with a disability)
- An alternative assessment method



- Exam access arrangements such as large or alternative formats

The Student Affairs Committee will consider and approve such requests on behalf of the Academic Board. The Inclusion Team will consider all applications in advance of the review meeting and make detailed recommendations to the Student Affairs Committee.

Unprecedented requests may be escalated to the Registrar and the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) if they require a policy decision to be made.

Students with declared disabilities who are awaiting DSA assessment and approval, may request, without evidence, a 7-day extension for coursework assessments. An extension cannot be requested for an exam or TCA. To request an extension, a student needs to complete the Short-Term Extension form, available on the A-Z in iLearn.

2. **QA 41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment**

Students with reasonable adjustments in assessments may need to follow the QA41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment procedure should circumstances arise that have had a serious adverse effect on the student's performance. These circumstances must have been unanticipated and beyond the student's control such as worsening of conditions which means that assessment arrangements were not sufficient. Medical evidence will not be required when a student submits a claim for mitigating circumstances if they experience an acute episode or worsening of an existing declared condition which means that the reasonable adjustments in place are no longer sufficient.

Mitigation forms are available within iLearn or from the Student Support and Inclusion teams. Students are strongly recommended to ensure that claims for mitigation are submitted to a member of the Student Support or Inclusion teams for an initial check prior to formal consideration. All claims for mitigation are considered by the Student Affairs Committee in confidence.

3. **QA76 Leave of Absence Policy**

Should more longer-term medical conditions or bouts of issues from an existing disability occur, students can temporarily suspend their studies for a specified period of up to a maximum of 12 months through the QA76 Leave of Absence Policy. Leave of absences cannot be backdated so students are advised to contact their Student Support Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.

A leave of absence form should be submitted to the Student Support Co-ordinator in the first instance, evidence is not required. Leave of absence requests are considered by the relevant Programme Team Leader with the outcome communicated by the Student Support team.

A leave of absence may have implications for progression, study intensity, student finance and other issues which are outside of Arden University's control.

4. **QA72 Cause for Concern Procedure**



In some instances, where there are particular concerns with and not limited to the health and wellbeing of a student, Arden University may be required to instigate the QA72 Cause for Concern procedure. Upon review, a referral to proceed to the Fitness to Study Policy, Student Disciplinary Procedure or decide that no further action is required.

5. **QA73 Fitness to Study Policy**

Arden University seeks to maintain a safe learning environment that is conducive to the well-being, academic and personal development of all. The Fitness to Study policy aims to address concerns when a student's health may be jeopardising their studies or the studies of others.

There are three stages within the policy involving a discussion and meetings with the student. Outcomes from each stage including the setting of an action plan, enforced Leave of Absence, change of study mode/intensity or withdrawal.

6. **Inclusion Support for Students applying to the Arden Financial Support Bursary**

The Arden financial support bursary is designed to provide financial support to students who may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) but who are unable to meet the associated costs of

1. the initial diagnostic assessment of an SpLD
2. contribution towards the cost of DSA equipment

The above costs can provide barriers to students who are eligible, or likely to be eligible for DSA support but are unable to meet initial or associated costs of that support.

Limits:

1. £1,000 maximum payment per student over the lifetime of study with Arden.
2. No limit to the number of students that will be supported, but the scheme will be reviewed after 6 months to assess continuing viability on this basis.

Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply for Inclusion support through the Arden financial support bursary, students must meet the eligibility criteria for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) as set out below (extracted from Student Finance website).

Students with disabilities can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs), for example of disabilities include:

- Long-term health condition
- Mental health condition
- Sensory or Physical impairment
- Specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or dyspraxia

In order to be eligible students must also:



- Be an undergraduate including foundation year or postgraduate student
- Have a condition that affects your ability to study
- Qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- Be studying on a course that lasts at least a year
- Be studying on a course that has at least a 25% course intensity.
- For an SpLD assessment students must have gone through a screening assessment with an Arden Inclusion Adviser

EU or international students are not eligible for DSA from Student Finance England.

Requests for support to access an SpLD assessment or for help towards the DSA contribution should be made through Blackbullion by clicking on the Inclusion support tile.

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Responsible Department:	Student Experience
Policy Contact:	Caroline Pike, Inclusion Services Manager (cpike@arden.ac.uk)
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