QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 81 – DISABILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY

Policy Statement

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

- Students with long term physical and mental health conditions
- Students with sensory and or physical impairments
- Students who are neurodivergent, including those with dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism and 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.

Statement of intent 2026/27

Arden University is committed to supporting disabled students in a fair and considerate manner. Where possible, we make reasonable adjustments to our operating procedures, whilst maintaining the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the qualifications offered.

During the 2026/27 academic year, Arden University will be undertaking a comprehensive review of its approach to reasonable adjustments and accessibility support for students. This work will focus on enhancing the effectiveness, consistency and transparency of the reasonable adjustments process, ensuring that students can access timely, appropriate and individualised support throughout their learning journey.

As part of this review, the University will develop enhanced guidance and supporting resources for both students and staff. This will include greater clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, processes for requesting and implementing reasonable adjustments, and the support available to enable inclusive participation in learning, teaching and assessment.

The University is committed to adopting a collaborative and evidence-informed approach to this work. Throughout 2026/27, feedback will be sought from students, academic staff, professional services colleagues, student representatives and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that future arrangements reflect the needs and experiences of the University community.

This interim policy will remain in force while the review is undertaken. The findings and recommendations arising from the review will inform the development of a revised Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, which the University intends to publish in 2027, subject to the appropriate governance and approval processes.

1. Student Reasonable Adjustments Process

Arden University encourages students to disclose disabilities, long-term health conditions, mental health conditions, neurodiversity, specific learning differences or any other support requirements to the university as early as possible in their learning journey. This may be shared during the application process, enrolment, registration, or at any point during a student's learning journey.

Students may request reasonable adjustments by contacting the Disability and Accessibility Team within Wellbeing Services, Student Support, or through referral from academic or professional services staff.

1.1. Current process for accessing reasonable adjustments

Disclosure and Initial Contact
Students disclose a disability, health condition, wellbeing concern, neurodiversity or accessibility need to Arden University's Wellbeing Services team. Referrals may be made by wider university staff (e.g. teaching staff) where support needs are identified.

Assessment of Need
A Disability and Accessibility Adviser will meet with the student to discuss:

- The impact of their condition on study and participation.
- Existing support arrangements.
- Potential barriers to learning, assessment, attendance, or engagement.

In certain cases, i.e. for exam arrangements or complex support, students may be asked to provide supporting evidence, e.g. a medical note from an appropriately qualified professional. However, we will work to ensure that no student, even undiagnosed, is ever left without reasonable adjustments or support.

Consideration of Reasonable Adjustments
Requests will be considered individually, considering:

- The student's needs and circumstances
- Available evidence or working diagnosis
- Professional recommendations (e.g. needs assessment reports)
- Programme requirements and competence standards
- The University's duties under the Equality Act 2010

Student Support Plan
Where adjustments are approved, a tailored Student Support Plan will be developed collaboratively between the student and a Disability and Accessibility Adviser. The Support Plan will record all agreed reasonable adjustments and recommended support measures.

The support plan can be updated if a student's circumstances change, additional adjustments are suggested by a member of staff, or a standard review takes place. Students will receive an email copy of their support plan and if a student would like to share their disability and potential learning barriers with their academic team, the Wellbeing Team will ensure that staff can access these via SITS.

Types of reasonable adjustment may include, but are not limited to:

- Adjustments to teaching and learning activities, alternative formats or learning materials

- Adjustments made for specific classroom situations (i.e. a seat near the front of the class)
- Extra time in Time Constrained Assessments (TCAs) and Multiple-Choice Questionnaires (MCQs)
- Exam arrangements
- Alternative assessments
- Pre-approved extensions beyond the standard 7 working days
- Short-term attendance support
- Assistive technology
- Mental Health and wellbeing support where it impacts participation in learning

See **supporting guidance for students** for more detail.

Implementation
Approved adjustments will be recorded on the appropriate University systems.
Relevant staff will be informed on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection requirements.
Adjustments will normally be implemented as soon as reasonably practicable.

Review and Monitoring
Students are encouraged to engage with agreed support arrangements and notify the Wellbeing Services Team of any changes in their circumstances.

Support Plans will be reviewed periodically to ensure adjustments remain appropriate, effective and proportionate. Temporary and short-term adjustments may be reviewed more frequently.

Where Adjustments Cannot Be Approved
Where a requested adjustment is deemed not reasonable because it would:
- Compromise academic or professional competence standards;
- Alter the fundamental nature of a programme;
- Create an unacceptable health and safety risk; or
- Cause a disproportionate burden on the University,

the rationale will be clearly explained to the student and alternative support options will be explored.

1.2 Staff Responsibilities and Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments
Creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment is a shared responsibility across the University. While Disability and Accessibility Advisers within Wellbeing Services coordinate reasonable adjustments, all student-facing staff have a responsibility to support their effective implementation.

Wellbeing Services (Disability and Accessibility Team)
The Disability and Accessibility Team is responsible for:
- Assessing requests for reasonable adjustments.
- Reviewing supporting evidence and determining appropriate support.
- Developing Student Support Plans.
- Advising students on reasonable adjustments, accessibility support, assistive technologies and Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA).
- Providing guidance to academic and professional services staff.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of implemented adjustments.
- Maintaining accurate records of approved adjustments.

Academic Staff
Academic staff are responsible for implementing approved adjustments and promoting inclusive practice.
Academic staff must:

- Review and engage with Student Support Plans (where students have given consent to share them.)
- Implement approved teaching, learning and assessment adjustments consistently.
- Ensure learning materials are accessible wherever reasonably possible.
- Consider accessibility and inclusive practice when designing and delivering teaching and assessment activities.
- Record any additional classroom-based adjustments provided during teaching sessions.
- Refer students to Wellbeing Services where unmet support needs are identified.
- Raise concerns where competence standards, professional body requirements or health and safety obligations may be affected.
- Complete all mandatory training relating to disability, accessibility and reasonable adjustments.

Personal Academic Coaches
Personal Academic Coaches will:

- Review and engage with Student Support Plans (where students have given consent to share them.)
- Ensure relevant staff (i.e. teaching staff) are aware of changes to support plans
- Act as a key point of contact for students.
- Signpost or refer students to specialist support services.
- Support student engagement with agreed adjustments.
- Liaise with relevant services where concerns regarding implementation arise.

Academic Skills Tutors and Student Success Teams
These teams will:

- Support students in accessing academic and personal development support.
- Reinforce strategies identified within Student Support Plans.
- Signpost students to relevant wellbeing, disability and accessibility services where appropriate.

Heads of School and Heads of Department
Heads of School and Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with this policy within their areas.
- Monitoring implementation of approved adjustments.
- Promoting inclusive practice and accessibility.
- Ensuring staff complete mandatory training.
- Escalating concerns regarding implementation or effectiveness of support.
- Reviewing data relating to student outcomes and experiences.

1.3 Recording and Escalation of Adjustments

All reasonable adjustments will be recorded on the University's approved systems, whether:

- Approved through a Student Support Plan;
- Implemented within a teaching session;
- Agreed as a temporary adjustment;
- Recommended through wellbeing or disability support;

Staff identifying a need for an adjustment that is not currently recorded within a Student Support Plan will refer the student to the Disability and Accessibility Team for review.

2. Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment

If a disabled student's circumstances change unexpectedly and have a significant negative impact on their academic performance, and this is beyond their control, they may need to apply for extenuating circumstances. For example, this could include a deterioration in a medical condition where the reasonable adjustments already in place are no longer sufficient to support them in an assessment.

In these situations, students should follow the **QA41 Extenuating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment** procedure. Where appropriate, the Wellbeing Team can provide supporting information from medical evidence already held on file. Students will not normally be asked to provide additional medical evidence for long-term or fluctuating conditions where evidence has previously been submitted.

Extenuating Circumstances forms are available in the **A-Z section of iLearn** or from the Student Support Team or Wellbeing Team.

Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with a member of the Student Support Team, a Learning Adviser, or the Wellbeing Team before submitting it. This can help ensure that the application is complete and contains the necessary information for consideration.

3. Break in Learning Policy

If a student experiences a significant worsening of a long-term health condition or disability, or other ongoing circumstances that affect their ability to engage with their studies and cannot be effectively managed through reasonable adjustments, they may request a temporary break in learning. Under the **QA75 Break in Learning Policy**, students can suspend their studies for a specified period of up to 12 months.

Breaks in learning cannot be backdated. Students are therefore encouraged to contact their Student Support Co-ordinator as soon as possible if they believe they may need to take a break from their studies.

A Break in Learning Form should be submitted to the Student Support Co-ordinator in the first instance. Supporting evidence is not normally required. Requests are considered by the relevant Programme Team Leader, and the outcome will be communicated to the student by the Student Support Team.
Students should be aware that taking a break in learning may affect progression, study intensity, student finance arrangements, visa requirements (where applicable), and other matters that are outside the University's control.

4. Additional support for Disabled Students

4.1 Suspected Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

Students who believe they may have a specific learning difficulty, ADHD or autism but do not have formal evidence should contact Wellbeing@arden.ac.uk to discuss available screening and assessment options.

5.2 Support with DSA Equipment Costs
Students who are eligible for DSAs but are unable to meet the £200 contribution towards recommended equipment may be able to apply for financial assistance through the **Arden Blackbullion Hardship Fund**.

5.3 Non-Medical Helper (NMH) Support
Students who require Non-Medical Helper support but are unable to access this through DSAs may be eligible for university-funded support. Students should contact Wellbeing@arden.ac.uk, where a Wellbeing adviser will assess their needs and make recommendations for appropriate support.

Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply for disability related support, 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
- 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

International and EU Students

EU and international students are not eligible to apply for DSAs through Student Finance England. However, they may be eligible for equivalent university-funded support. Students who require disability-related support should contact Wellbeing@arden.ac.uk for advice on the options available to them.

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