



Additional Learning Support (ALS) requirements in assessments policy and procedures

Purpose: This document set out the policy and procedures for learners requiring additional learning support due to a declared disability. It also addresses arrangements for learners seeking temporary support because of accident or injury, and for learners in pregnancy. The document also sets out the relationship between approved ALS arrangements (whether permanent or temporary) and applications for exceptional personal circumstances to be taken into consideration.

Changes to policy included in this version:

- This policy makes provision for learners to arrange ALS up to six weeks before any assessment period in the academic calendar, replacing a single cut-off point in the year.

Policy Statement

1. AECC University College is committed to providing additional support for learners who have been assessed as needing extra support or resources in order to help them achieve their learning aims, including where this necessitates additional support or adjustments for assessments. We are always mindful of our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
2. We will also use our best endeavors to provide additional support in instances where a learner requires temporary adjustments to assessment arrangements as a result of temporary injury, to enable learners who are able to do so to take an assessment at the scheduled time.
3. In determining reasonable adjustments we will take account of what constitutes a Competence Standard (Ref: Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)), as reasonable adjustments cannot be applied to such standards (only to the assessment of them). For further information please refer to Appendix 1.
4. If you require this document in a different format, please contact Registry.
5. All information collected under the requirements of this policy/procedure will be processed in accordance with the Student Privacy Notice. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will share this information with others within the University College only for the purposes of arranging assessment(s) with agreed adjustments in place.

Additional Learning Support

6. Learners declaring a disability or specific learning difficulty (including dyslexia) will need to provide relevant evidence or arrange an initial screening via Student Services. A written report will be produced and, where a disability or specific learning difficulty is confirmed as a result of this process, this will document the disability and suggested adjustments for each learner.
7. ALS requirements necessitating adjustments to examinations (additional time, readers, scribes, etc) must be defined and agreed **at least 6 weeks ahead of any formal assessment period** so that the necessary support can be put in place. Where ALS reports are received after this deadline every effort will be made to accommodate the required adjustments. but this may not always be possible. If learners come forward after this deadline, and where adjustments cannot be accommodated, this should be taken forward as Exceptional Personal Circumstances for consideration at the Exceptional Personal Circumstance Boards.
8. Registry is responsible for making the arrangements for additional requirements, in consultation with Course Leaders and Student Services. Student Services can offer advice as to how adjustments might be facilitated, however learners should note that some adjustments may be

considered unreasonable and the final decision of what is reasonable or not will be based on academic judgement, in liaison with colleagues in Registry and Student Services.

9. Where assessment takes place by means of in-class tests outside the main exam periods learners with ALS requirements will need to be accommodated as required and the Unit Leader should liaise with Registry to ensure the necessary arrangements are in place.

Link with exceptional personal circumstances

10. Learners with declared disabilities for whom additional learning support arrangements have been put into place may not submit applications for exceptional personal circumstances in relation to assessment in respect of the disability for which the adjustments have been made unless the learner has evidence that:
 - (i) any circumstances affected them over and above the special arrangements already made during assessments
 - (ii) the arrangements put in place did not fully compensate for their condition, *or*
 - (iii) there was a sudden or unexpected deterioration of the known condition for which the adjustments already in place were not sufficient to compensate
 - (iv) there has been a late diagnosis of a disability or other requirement for additional learning support.

Temporary adjustments

11. If, as a result of unforeseen circumstances, learners have a temporary injury necessitating an examination adjustment they should notify Registry as soon as possible, and normally at least three working days before the first affected examination, using the [Temporary Assessment ALS Request form](#). All requests must be accompanied by appropriate medical evidence, submitted in English (officially translated, where applicable – please see the definition included on the Temporary Assessment ALS Request Form).
12. Staff shall do their best to accommodate requests made at short notice but it is not possible to guarantee that they will be met, and if a temporary injury is very last minute it may be more appropriate for the situation to be addressed by means of an examination postponement or through an application for Exceptional Personal Circumstances, as applicable.
13. For support in examinations Registry will discuss the learner's needs with Student Services and the relevant Course Leader, to identify whether appropriate adjustments can be accommodated.
14. For written coursework, temporary injuries will usually be addressed by means of an extension to coursework deadlines as covered by the Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy.

Link with exceptional personal circumstances

15. Learners for whom temporary examination adjustments have been put into place may not submit applications for exceptional personal circumstances in relation to the same temporary injury for which the adjustments have been made unless the learner has evidence that:
 - (i) any circumstances affected them over and above the special arrangements already made during Assessments
 - (ii) the arrangements put in place did not fully compensate for their injury, *or*
 - (iii) there was a sudden or unexpected deterioration of the injury, for which the adjustments already put into place were not sufficient to compensate.

Pregnancy

16. Learners who are pregnant and who wish to request examination adjustments should contact Registry and provide relevant evidence.

17. In examinations, pregnant learners may require rest breaks and may need to visit the toilet more frequently than those who are not pregnant. They may also require a more comfortable and supportive chair. In such cases, learners may need to sit the examination in a location separate from other learners. In some cases, and where this can be done without compromising academic standards and the demonstration of competences, alternative methods of assessment may be appropriate and should be explored in discussion with Registry.
18. Normally learners are expected to take their pregnancy into account when preparing coursework or preparing for exams so an application for exceptional personal circumstances would not normally be appropriate. However, if there are complications with the pregnancy or the learner's health deteriorates such that their academic performance is affected then an application may be considered, in line with the Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy. Similarly, if a learner is unable to undertake an alternative method of assessment, or if they experience significant pregnancy-related problems in the course of an examination this should be considered under the Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy.
19. For coursework assessments it will normally be appropriate to address issues by means of an extension to coursework deadlines.

ALS Marking guidelines

20. Learners entitled to ALS marking must indicate this on their Turnitin submission at the top of the page. Similarly, for written exams, Registry will indicate on the front page of the exam paper and within relevant unit mark spreadsheets. Markers should ensure that the ALS Marking Guidelines are applied only in these cases.
21. AECC University College ALS Marking guidelines are available from the Staff Information Portal (SIP).

Related documents

- Exceptional Personal Circumstances policy
- Student Privacy Notice
- Assessment Regulations for all Higher Education Courses.

Version:	2.1
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Deputy Academic Registrar
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference/ source	Internal. Equivalent policies at other HEIs
Date approved	29 August 2023
Effective from	1 September 2023
Review date	Spring 2025
Target	All students and apprentices, all academic staff, Registry staff
Policy location	SIP/WEB
Equality analysis	The policy is specifically intended to formalise arrangements for students requiring additional learning support/reasonable adjustments due to a declared disability, as such it has a direct positive impact.

Appendix 1: Extract from the Equality and Human Rights Commission: **GUIDANCE**

Equality Act 2010

Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education

This Technical Guidance applies to the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 that were commenced on 1 October 2010.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Competence standards

What is a competence standard?

7.33 The Act defines a 'competence standard' as 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. [Sch13, para 4\(3\)](#)

7.34 Education providers are likely to impose various requirements and conditions in respect of courses. However, any such requirement or condition only amounts to a competence standard if its purpose is to demonstrate a particular level of a relevant competence or ability such as a requirement that a person has a particular level of relevant knowledge of a subject.

Example: The admissions criteria for a course in choreography include a requirement to demonstrate 'a high level of physical fitness'. The course itself, however, is predominately theory-based and does not involve any strenuous physical activity. This is unlikely to be a competence standard

Example: The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of law in order to obtain the degree is a competence standard

7.35 On the other hand, a condition that a person can, for example, do something within a certain period of time will not be a competence standard if it does not determine a particular level of competence or ability.

Example: A requirement that a person completes a test in a certain time period is not a competence standard unless the competence being tested is the ability to do something within a limited time period.

Competence standards and assessment process

- 7.36 Sometimes the process of assessing whether a competence standard has been achieved is inextricably linked to the standard itself. The passing of an assessment may be conditional upon having a practical skill or ability which must be demonstrated by completing a practical test. Therefore, in relatively rare circumstances, the ability to take the test may itself amount to a competence standard.

Example: An assessment for a practical course in car maintenance cannot be done solely as a written test, because the purpose of the test is to ascertain whether someone can complete car repairs.

What is the significance of this distinction?

- 7.37 A provision, criterion or practice does not include the application of a competence standard. Therefore the duty to make reasonable adjustments does not include a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the application of a competence standard.

- 7.38 Although there is no duty to make reasonable adjustments to the application of a competence standard, such a duty does apply to the process by which competence is assessed. So although an education provider has no duty to alter a competence standard, it needs to consider whether or not a reasonable adjustment could be made to some aspect of the process by which it assesses a competence standard.

Example: When assessing the competence standard of a person's ability to read French it would be a reasonable adjustment to provide a visually impaired student with text in large font (if that was the adjustment the student required).

Example: A law student has severe arthritis in her hands. When assessing her level of knowledge, it might be a reasonable adjustment to provide an oral exam or viva instead of a timed handwritten exam. However, there may be an overlap between a competence standard and any process by which an individual is assessed against that standard

Example: A woman taking a written test for a qualification in office administration asks the education provider for extra time for the test because she has dyslexia. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment for the education provider to make. She also asks if she can leave out the questions asking her to write a business letter and to précis a document, because she feels that these questions would substantially disadvantage her because of her dyslexia. The education provider would not have to make this adjustment because these questions are there to determine her competence at writing and précising, so are part of the competence standard being tested