



Students with Disabilities and Impairments Policy

Responsibility for policy: Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: July 2023

Next review: July 2028

Application

1. This policy applies to all students and staff of the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and practices intended to enable full and equal access and inclusion for disabled and impaired students at the University of Waikato.

Related documents

3. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [Code of Student Conduct](#)
 - [Human Rights Act 1993](#)
 - [Kia Ōrite: New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments](#)
 - [New Zealand Disability Strategy](#)
 - [Personal Information and Privacy Policy](#)
 - [Safety and Wellness Policy](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Student Complaints Procedures](#)
 - [Student Discipline Regulations](#)
 - [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
 - [University of Waikato Privacy Statement](#)

Definitions

4. In this policy
disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society that limit their movements, senses or activities. It includes those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
impairment means a temporary or long-term condition, medical condition, illness or injury that affects a student's learning, communication, concentration, memory, hearing, mobility, movement, speech and/or vision. An impairment can be physical, psychiatric or a combination of both and includes both "seen" and "unseen" forms of impairment that has been or can be recognised, verified or diagnosed by an appropriate person qualified to make such a determination. It does not include states brought on by polysubstance use or stress without such a determination

reasonable accommodations means appropriate adjustments made to a student's learning environment to lessen the impact of an impairment when it is necessary, possible and reasonable to do so. Reasonable accommodations must not compromise academic standards, the essential nature of the paper or programme or what are deemed to be essential skills or knowledge in relation to the paper or programme as shared through teaching and demonstrated through assessment. Adaptations or accommodations are based on the premise that students with impairments should be neither disadvantaged nor advantaged relative to other students. This may include different treatment for the purposes of achieving equity in learning and teaching outcomes. It is recognised that what may be reasonable as an accommodation is on a spectrum and can be circumstantial. Examples of some, but not all, available accommodations are set out in the [Appendix](#) to this policy. The health and safety of all members of the University community is a paramount principle in assessing the necessity and practicality of reasonable accommodations.

Principles

5. The University of Waikato is committed to the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and impairments intended to enhance the opportunities for them to achieve success in their academic pursuits and to participate in student life.

Accessibility Services

6. Students seeking information about or support for a disability or impairment are encouraged to contact and/or register with [Accessibility Services](#).
7. Specific services are available to assist students with access to learning and student life where the students have provided [Accessibility Services](#) with a referral or other communication from a medical practitioner or registered health professional; access to specific services is determined at the discretion of [Accessibility Services](#).

Determination of reasonable accommodations

8. Where a student, [Accessibility Services](#), the [Student Health Service](#) or another University staff member with direct contact with a student suspects or has identified that reasonable accommodations will be required to effectively support the student, discussion will be held with the student (and/or their designated support person or agency) and relevant staff, including the relevant paper and/or programme convenor, to determine any accommodations that may be offered. Examples of some, but not all, available accommodations are set out in the Appendix to this policy.
9. Where a student, [Accessibility Services](#), the [Student Health Service](#) or another University staff member identifies that the current support or accommodations offered by [Accessibility Services](#) may not be sufficient to enable the student to meet paper or programme requirements as a direct impact, consequence or effect of the disability or impairment of the student, discussion with the student, relevant paper or programme convenor/supervisor or equivalent, [Accessibility Services](#) will be held where necessary to improve the aims of the support towards academic achievement and participation in student life.

10. Where any concern regarding support or accommodations offered by [Accessibility Services](#) or the [Student Health Service](#) is unable to be resolved by mutual agreement between the parties, the matter may be escalated to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success.
11. Students who have been granted reasonable accommodations for a disability or impairment are responsible for communicating with [Accessibility Services](#) and/or the [Student Health Service](#) in regards to any change to their support needs or conditions, or any issue or query related to the support or accommodations provided on an ongoing basis; any such changes will be promptly discussed with University staff relevant to the accommodations provided.

Responsibilities

12. Students are responsible for
 - a. ensuring they communicate their request for support with [Accessibility Services](#) and/or the [Student Health Service](#) as soon as practicable so that support is able to be provided in a timely manner
 - b. providing the required medical information set out in clause 7 of this policy and engaging in an appropriate assessment process with [Accessibility Services](#) or the [Student Health Service](#)
 - c. meeting any obligations associated with reasonable accommodations provided as agreed between the student, [Accessibility Services](#) and any other University service or staff directly involved, and
 - d. engaging with [Accessibility Services](#) or the [Student Health Service](#) on an ongoing basis to ensure that support and provided by [Accessibility Services](#) and/or the [Student Health Service](#) remains appropriate to their needs.
13. Paper and/or programme convenors and staff delivering paper content are responsible for:
 - a. the consideration of appropriate accommodations for the delivery of teaching and assessment in consultation with [Accessibility Services](#) and/or the [Student Health Service](#) and the student (and/or their designated support person or agency) who has requested such accommodations in accordance with clause 8 of this policy
 - b. the allowance and/or delivery of reasonable accommodations agreed in partnership with the student (and/or their designated support person or agency) and [Accessibility Services](#) or the [Student Health Service](#).
14. The [Accessibility Services Manager](#) is responsible for:
 - a. the appropriate assessment of students with disabilities and impairments
 - b. arrangements for the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and impairments, and
 - c. monitoring the impact of accommodations on students with disabilities and impairments and others to ensure they continue to be allocated fairly and appropriately, do not unfairly impact other students and do not impair the delivery of course content in discussion with paper and/or programme convenors and other staff.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

15. The Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
16. A breach of this policy by a staff member may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).
17. A breach of this policy by a student may result in disciplinary action under the [Student Discipline Regulations](#).

Appendix: Examples of impairments and accommodations

Note: What may be reasonable as an accommodation depends on particular circumstances that exist on a spectrum. The following examples are not comprehensive and available accommodations can change from time to time. For more information, contact [Accessibility Services](#).

Type of impairment	Accommodation available
Specific learning, e.g. Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, etc	Test/Exam support – Reader/Writer, additional time Notetaker Text-Speech and Speech-Text software support
Vision/Sight	Test/Exam support – Reader/Writer, additional time, 1-1 support Text-Speech and Speech-Text software support – Including OCR conversion for written text Large font print for written material
Auditory/Hearing	Sign language interpreting Test/Exam support – additional time Hearing devices including lapel microphones for lecturers/speakers or personal amplifier devices, priority seating
Mental Health/Psychological	Timetable management Support with requesting extensions Use of sensory tools in classroom environments Test/exam support – additional time, own room, gender specific supervisors
Neurodivergent/Sensory	Sensory tools in triggering environments such as earmuffs, hearing support, tactile tools 1-1 support Communication and advocacy support, in particular with other University staff and peers
Physical, including temporary injuries and mobility	Special Consideration support Test/Exam support – additional time, writer, extra time Preferential parking permits for equity of campus access Coordinating returns to study as part of recovery plan