



ICHAS

Section 7– Policies and Procedures on Teaching, Learning & Assessment

Subject:	Policy on Reasonable Accommodation		
Applicable Standard	QQI	Core	Teaching and Learning Supports for Learners
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			July 2019
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024

CONTEXT

An important finding from a study undertaken by Schwartz (2016) was that there was significant disparity between the perceptions of students requiring reasonable accommodation and University faculty regarding the adequacy of provision, with more than half the students reporting that they were not receiving reasonable accommodations while the majority of university personnel thought they did provide reasonable accommodation.

While it is a statutory requirement to provide reasonable accommodation, the policy is determined by the fact that many students are significantly disadvantaged in accessing educational opportunities. The provision of reasonable accommodations at ICHAS is therefore designed to address many of the barriers to education caused by the impact of an individual's disability or specific additional needs while not affording such students an advantage over other students.

The policy applies to learners with a disability or specific learning need who require reasonable accommodations to enable them to demonstrate their ability to attain the learning outcomes being assessed. In order to establish particular needs, the College is reliant on external expertise and students seeking reasonable accommodation are required to provide the relevant assessments (normally medical or psychological) to support their application. The College considers it inappropriate to offer reasonable accommodation in circumstances where it is not requested - therefore it is the student's responsibility to apply for reasonable accommodation.

It is also important to distinguish between a Policy for Reasonable Accommodation and accommodating circumstances of temporary illness or personal circumstances. Where temporary illness or personal circumstances occur, which impede a learner's ability to participate in Assessment tasks they should refer to the Policy and Procedures relating to Personal Extenuating and/or Mitigating Circumstances. Where accommodations are deemed reasonable, they will be provided by the College and at no additional cost to the

learner.

With respect to assessment, procedural responses to reasonable accommodation adhering to the principle of adaptation rather than dilution of assessment criteria; ensuring that those who do not receive reasonable accommodation are not disadvantaged. Reasonable Accommodation is guided by QQI (2013) policy outlined as follows:

“Some learners with disabilities may be unable to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes through conventional assessment tasks. Reasonable accommodations will therefore need to be made to deal with issues that would otherwise prevent such learners from demonstrating their achievement.

Reasonable accommodations are concerned with adapting the assessment approach, not with diluting the standard of learning to be attained, interfering with it or amending the intended learning outcomes. Assessments which involve reasonable accommodations should be consistent with those which do not. Reasonable accommodations may apply to any assessment.

Reasonable accommodations are normally identified well in advance of the assessment event by a need’s assessment process. The findings of this process should be communicated in writing to the appropriate academic and administrative units (e.g. the unit conducting the assessment or the examinations office or equivalent), which will in turn distribute the information as required to teachers, assessors and the board of examiners, and to the learner concerned.” (QQI, 2013)

POLICY STATEMENT

The College is firmly committed to supporting students with disabilities or specific learning needs as far as is reasonably practicable as outlined in the AHEAD Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning. It is the responsibility of the student to draw such matters to the attention of the College through any means they are most comfortable with. This policy applies to learners with a disability or specific learning need who require reasonable accommodations to enable them to demonstrate their competence and to complete assessment tasks associated with programme and/learning outcomes on an equitable basis.

Therefore, the College will actively seek to develop and implement policies and procedures which promote both equality and equity. Students and potential students with recognised disadvantages or disabilities may be given special consideration during course delivery and assessment. A substantial disadvantage is one that entails time, inconvenience, effort or discomfort compared to other students which is more than minor or trivial.

SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			✓	
Responsible for Implementation	Registrar			

Responsible for Monitoring & Review	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer
		✓		

DEFINITIONS

Schwartz (2016:9) defined an accommodation as “something that would modify the environment so an individual’s disability would not hinder or prevent the person’s ability to complete a task at the same level as an individual without a disability”

Reasonable accommodation is defined by the Equal Status Act (2000-2015) as follows:

“A reasonable accommodation is any means of providing special treatment or facilities if, without such accommodations, it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service provided by the educational establishment.”

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019) provide the following definition: “...practical changes which service providers have to make so that people with disabilities can get and use all kinds of services on an equal basis with others. This includes services which are free of cost (for example, a public playground, or social welfare services), as well as services which you pay for.”

In essence Reasonable Accommodation refers to modifications to academic requirements made to ensure that requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, or certificated additional learning needs against a qualified applicant or student with a disability or certificated additional learning needs.

RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- Equal Status Act (2000), Section 2.1. Available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/html> [Accessed 28/01/2019].
- QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards, Revised
- AHEAD (2008) Good Practice Guidelines for the Providers of Supports and Services for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education
- AHEAD and Higher Education Authority, ‘Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning’ (2013).
- IHREC (2019) What is Reasonable Accommodation? Available at <https://www.ihrec.ie/your-rights/i-have-an-issue-with-a-service/discrimination-in-relation-to-services/what-is-disability-in-relation-to-services/what-is-reasonable-accommodation/> Downloaded May 25th 2019.
- DARE: Disability Access Route to Education Handbook (2018)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI for use by all Providers

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) et al (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI For Independent/Private Providers Coming To QQI On A Voluntary Basis
- Government of Ireland (2012) Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Policies & Criteria for the Validation of programmes of Education.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2015) QQI Policy Restatement Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training.
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2005) – re-published by QQI, (2015) Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training June 2005
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2018) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes
- Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2013) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (revised 2018) Quality Assuring Assessment: Guidelines for Providers

Linked Policies and Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Access Policy on Transfer and Progression Policy on Assessment of Learners
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with Reasonable Accommodation Procedures associated with Access Procedures associated with Assessment of Learners