

UCL Academic Manual 2018-19

Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes

Section 5: Reasonable Adjustments 2018-19

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The Reasonable Adjustments regulations define how UCL supports students with a disability or long-term medical or mental health condition throughout their learning, teaching and assessment experience. They cover students at all levels of study, including taught and research students.

5.1 Overarching Principles

- Principle 21: UCL *must* make reasonable adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment to support students with a disability or other ongoing medical or mental health condition.
- Principle 22: Students *should* notify UCL of any such condition at the time of enrolment or as soon as possible thereafter so that UCL can put in place the support that the student needs.

5.2 Student Guide to Applying for Reasonable Adjustments

Declare a disability at application stage or during pre-enrolment and receive an invitation to complete an Applicant Support Questionnaire providing more information to the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team in Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) about your condition and support needs.

Or

Contact the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team directly at any stage during your studies to request a confidential 1:1 appointment.



Continue to liaise with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team via email or phone, or attend an appointment. A member of the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team will discuss your support needs in more detail and agree appropriate follow-on actions, which may include:

- Production of a Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA)
- Email liaison with your academic Department, Information Services (ISD) and/ or Library
- Completion of an application for Special Examination Arrangements
- Onward referral for non-medical help (e.g. specialist tuition, mental health mentoring, note-taking support)



Remain in contact with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team throughout your studies and request a review of support as and when you feel it is necessary.

5.3 Scope & Definitions

1. The Reasonable Adjustments regulations apply to all UCL Undergraduate, Graduate and Postgraduate Taught and Research students.
2. Under the Equality Act 2010, UCL is required to make Reasonable Adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that disabled students are not put at a substantial disadvantage. UCL can also provide Reasonable Adjustments for students who might not consider themselves to have a 'disability' but who nevertheless would benefit from additional support with their studies due to an ongoing medical or mental health condition.
3. Under the Act, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed. 'Long-term' generally means the condition has lasted, or is likely to last, 12 months or more, although UCL also provides support for students with shorter-term conditions.

4. A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
 - b) Mental health difficulties (e.g. depression, anxiety, schizophrenia)
 - c) Mobility difficulties (e.g. wheelchair users, back pain, hypermobility)
 - d) Blindness or visual impairment
 - e) Deafness or hearing impairment
 - f) Autistic spectrum conditions (e.g. Asperger syndrome)
 - g) Long-term health issues (e.g. diabetes, arthritis, cancer, HIV, autoimmune conditions)
 - h) Progressive conditions (e.g. motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, forms of dementia)
 - i) Fluctuating or recurring conditions (e.g. bipolar disorder, epilepsy, rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS))

5.4 Academic & Competency Standards

1. The aim of Reasonable Adjustments is to ensure that all students are able to demonstrate the full extent of their academic abilities, irrespective of a disability or long-term condition. All UCL programmes require students to reach specific academic standards in order to be awarded a UCL qualification and some also have particular Competency Standards associated with professional accreditation. UCL will not reduce or change those standards, but it is committed to ensuring that the methods of assessing those standards do not put disabled students at a disadvantage.

5.5 Support Available to Students

1. Reasonable Adjustments can take a wide range of forms and [the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) will work with the student to agree the best support for them. [The Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) website provides detailed information about the types of support available for different conditions such as:
 - a) Additional tuition and library access for students with specific learning difficulties
 - b) Support mechanisms and workload planning for students with mental health difficulties
 - c) Ensuring there is physical access for students with mobility difficulties
 - d) Providing materials in an alternative format for students who are blind or have a visual impairment
 - e) Providing materials in an alternative format for students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment
 - f) Support mechanisms and workload planning for students with autistic spectrum conditions
 - g) Support mechanisms and workload planning for students with long-term health issues, progressive conditions, fluctuating conditions or recurring conditions
2. There are a number of other ways in which UCL can support students in addition to Reasonable Adjustments, including:

Special Examination Arrangements

3. Students may also apply for Special Examination Arrangements (SEAs). SEAs are adjustments to central or departmental written examinations which can be made as a form of Reasonable Adjustment for students with a disability or long-term condition **or** as a form of mitigation for students with shorter-term Extenuating Circumstances - see [Section 4.3: Special Examination Arrangements](#).

Interruption of Study

4. Where a student is affected by adverse circumstances for an extended period of time they may decide to apply for an Interruption of Study - see [Chapter 3, Section 5: Interruption of Study](#).

Support to Study Policy and Fitness to Study Procedure

5. Where a student's physical or mental health gives rise to concerns about their fitness to study, their capacity to engage with their studies and/ or their behaviour in relation to the UCL community as a whole, the Support to Study Policy and Fitness to Study Procedure may apply - see [Chapter 6, Section 2: Support to Study](#) and [Chapter 6, Section 3: Fitness to Study Procedure](#).

Pregnancy and Maternity

6. Pregnancy, maternity and being a carer are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. In accordance with this, account will be taken of any constraints for the assessment of students owing to pregnancy or maternity. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible.
7. Students should contact [UCL Examinations](#) or [Student Support & Wellbeing](#) to find out what options are available (support is not provided by [the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) or via a SORA).

Religious Observance and Cultural Traditions

8. In accordance with UCL's policy for cultural and religious inclusiveness, account will be taken of any constraints for the assessment of students owing to cultural or religious observance. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible.
9. Students should contact [UCL Examinations](#) or [Student Support & Wellbeing](#) to find out what options are available (support is not provided by [the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) or via a SORA).

Extenuating Circumstances

10. Students with Reasonable Adjustments may also need to use the Extenuating Circumstances (EC) regulations if they experience something sudden, unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond their control and which affects their performance at assessment, such as a serious illness or the death of a close relative. [Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances](#) includes further details.

5.6 Longer-term Conditions

1. Ongoing medical or mental health conditions are not usually considered to fall within the definition of ECs because UCL supports the student through Reasonable Adjustments. However there may be times when a student with a disability or ongoing medical or mental health condition needs to use the Extenuating Circumstances procedures if they feel they need a one-off coursework extension, a Deferral of assessment or some other form of shorter-term help. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a) An acute episode or crisis
 - b) A serious worsening of their condition
 - c) A mental health problem which may fluctuate unpredictably
 - d) An acute flare-up of a mental health or medical condition due to increased exam stress
 - e) A new condition
 - f) Circumstances where there may be insufficient time to put Reasonable Adjustments in place
 - g) A severe long-term illness which can only be addressed by an extension, Deferral or other form of one-off mitigation.
2. Longer-term medical or mental health conditions can fall between the definition of a 'disability' and an 'Extenuating Circumstance'. In such cases it may be appropriate to support the student through a combination of **both** Reasonable Adjustments and Extenuating Circumstances. The options in [Section 5.5](#) - such as Interruption of Study, Special Examination Arrangements and Fitness to Study - should also be considered. The principal aim should be to draw up a support package which provides the best level of care for the student concerned but which also ensures that arrangements uphold the academic standards of UCL and do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any student over another.

3. If a student has questions about a longer-term condition or is unsure of which procedure to use, they should contact their Personal Tutor, Programme Leader, departmental administrator, the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team or Student Psychological and Counselling Services who can help the student to assess the options open to them and provide assistance in completing the relevant forms.

5.7 Postgraduate Research Students

1. These Reasonable Adjustments regulations also apply to UCL Postgraduate Research students, including MPhil/ PhD, Professional Doctorate and MRes students. A student may need Reasonable Adjustments for some or all of the following:
 - a) Supervision meetings, seminars, tutorials and symposia
 - b) Field trips and study leave
 - c) The upgrade meeting
 - d) Completion of the thesis and any other documentation or artefacts
 - e) The assessment of any taught components on the degree
 - f) The oral/viva examination
2. Where a student requires support they should follow the procedures outlined in this chapter, noting in particular the need to declare their condition (see Section 5.8) and to work with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team, their Supervisor and their Department to draw up a Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA) (see Section 5.10).
3. At the point of upgrade and final examination in particular, Supervisors and Examiners must ensure that the candidate's needs are taken into consideration. If staff or students have any questions about putting Reasonable Adjustments in place they should contact the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team for advice.

5.8 Declaring a Condition

1. Students are responsible for declaring a disability or other long-term medical or mental health condition so that UCL can support them throughout their studies:
 - a) Students are strongly encouraged to declare their condition at the application stage or during pre-enrolment.
 - b) Students may also contact the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team directly at any stage during their studies to request a confidential one-to-one appointment.

Confidentiality

2. Any information relating to a student's disability or Reasonable Adjustments is treated confidentially. Where information needs to be shared with members of the UCL community in order to facilitate support for the student, this will be done only with the student's consent and on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Full and Partial Declaration

3. Students are encouraged to fully declare their condition so that UCL can ensure that learning, teaching and assessment processes are adjusted to their needs. A full declaration means that all UCL staff directly involved in the student's education have access to information about the adjustments which need to be made.
4. Students do have the option of only partially declaring their condition. This means that the student chooses which members of staff have access to information about their adjustments or chooses what details are disclosed. However, if a student only partially declares a condition UCL may not be able to offer the student all the support that they need.

Non-disclosure

5. Where a student does not declare a condition, UCL will not be able to offer any support.

5.9 Accessing Support

1. Where a student declares a condition at application or pre-enrolment, they will be invited to complete an Applicant Support Questionnaire giving UCL more information about their condition and support needs. Alternatively, any student may request a confidential one-to-one appointment with a member of the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team at any time during their studies to discuss their needs.

Medical Evidence

2. Students may be asked for medical evidence so that UCL can assess their needs and arrange Reasonable Adjustments. Student Support and Wellbeing's Medical Evidence Guidance provides further information and advice.

Follow-on Actions

3. On receipt of the Applicant Support Questionnaire, or following initial contact from the student, the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team will liaise with the student, via email, phone or one-to-one appointments, to discuss their support needs in more detail and agree appropriate follow-on actions, such as:
 - a) Production of a Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA) (Section 5.10)
 - b) Email liaison with the student's Department, Information Services (ISD) or Library
 - c) Completion of an application for Special Examination Arrangements (Section 4.3)
 - d) Onward referral for non-medical help (e.g. specialist tuition, mental health mentoring, note-taking support).

5.10 Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA)

1. All students with a disability or long-term condition should work with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team and their Departmental Disability Officer to draw up a Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA). There are a number of different SORA templates for different purposes; the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team will decide which template is most appropriate.
2. The SORA should take into account both the student's needs and the curriculum on their specific programme of study, helping to ensure that adjustments are appropriate to the activities which a student will be undertaking, such as lab work, field trips, coursework, examinations etc.
3. The student may decide:
 - a) Whether or not to involve the Departmental Disability Officer in this process.
 - b) Whether or not to involve their tutor, module organiser, supervisor, programme leader or other academic or professional staff in this process.
 - c) How much information they want to disclose about their condition or adjustments.
4. Students must note that, if they choose not to disclose information, UCL may not be able to offer the student all the support that they need.
5. Once the SORA has been agreed with the student, it will be shared with the appropriate Department(s) or service(s), taking account of the student's preferences for the disclosure of information.
6. If a Department or service has any queries about the recommendations they should contact the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team for advice.

Assessments Taking Place before the SORA is Agreed

7. The start of the academic year is always a busy time for the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team and it may not be possible to give students an appointment as quickly as we would like. Where a student provides evidence that they have made an appointment with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team but is yet to be seen, the Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel may use its discretion to allow students with a disability or other long-term condition additional time or other Reasonable Adjustments - see Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances for details of how to apply.

5.11 Changes in a Student's Condition

1. Where a student's condition is relatively stable, adjustments can be agreed for the whole of their time with UCL. However, a student's condition can fluctuate or worsen over time and they might need different levels of support at different times. The Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team will try to take these fluctuations into account in the SORA, but there may be a need to review the student's adjustments at regular points during their programme.
2. Students are responsible for considering their needs regularly and must contact the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team if they think that any changes need to be made to their SORA.

5.12 Extensions as a Form of Reasonable Adjustment

1. Reasonable Adjustments include a wide range of options to support students which can be much more effective than regular extensions. Extensions can mean that a student falls behind fellow students and they often clash with other deadlines and teaching activities. However there may be times when the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team recommends that a student needs regular extensions to support their condition. If this is considered to be an appropriate adjustment for the student, this should be explicitly stated in the SORA.
2. Such students do not need to complete a separate EC Form. Departments and Module Organisers should assume that the student is using the extended deadline on all eligible assessments unless the student informs them otherwise.
3. If a Department or Module Organiser has concerns about granting an extension – for example if it is likely to impact on the student's ability to attend teaching activities or complete other assessments – the Department should liaise with the student and with the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team to agree the deadline for submission.
4. If extensions are not explicitly included in a student's SORA then the same regulations around extensions apply to that student as to all other students i.e. they must submit an EC Form under the regulations in Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances.

5.13 Attendance Requirements

1. UCL's minimum attendance requirement is 70% (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1: Attendance Requirements). UCL expects students to aim for 100% attendance, and includes Reasonable Adjustments in the minimum requirement of 70%. As a result, UCL will not normally consider lowering the minimum attendance requirement as a form of Reasonable Adjustment. Any student on a Tier 4 visa who is absent from UCL must obtain authorisation under the procedures set out in Chapter 3, Section 3.2: Authorised Absence for Students on a Tier 4 Visa.

5.14 Study Abroad

1. The Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team can provide advice on Reasonable Adjustments for students on a Study Abroad Year, and will work with the receiving institution, subject to the student's consent, to ensure that details of support requirements are communicated.

5.15 Placements & Occupational Health

1. Where a programme includes a professional placement, such as teacher training or a health care placement, students are required to declare any condition which might impact on their ability to undertake the placement at the application stage or during pre-enrolment.
2. If any health-related issues arise during a student's programme, the student can contact Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHW) directly for a confidential one-to-one appointment

at any time. The student's tutor or Programme Leader may also refer the student to OHW using the Student Referral Form.

3. Where a student declares a condition, OHW will invite the student to an appointment to discuss their support needs. OHW will draw up a report giving suggestions on the support and adjustments that the placement provider may wish to consider. The placement provider, tutor and/ or programme leader are responsible for determining whether the adjustments are justified, reasonable and feasible in that environment.
4. Faculties or Departments *may* publish local Fitness to Practice policies covering students on professional placements on their programmes. Policies *should* be published on the Faculty/ Departmental website and communicated to students.

5.16 Accommodation & other Non-academic Services

1. These Reasonable Adjustments regulations cover UCL's provisions for learning, teaching and assessment. However students with a disability or long-term condition may also need Reasonable Adjustments to access accommodation or other UCL services. Students can discuss their needs with [the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) or [Student Support & Wellbeing](#) as part of their application for academic Reasonable Adjustments, or they can contact [the Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#) or SSW directly for a confidential one-to-one appointment at any time during their studies.

5.17 Further Guidance

- [UCL Declare](#)
- [The Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing team](#)
- [Student Psychological and Counselling Services](#)
- [Student Support & Wellbeing](#)
- [Occupational Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Section 4.3: Special Examination Arrangements](#)
- [Section 6: Extenuating Circumstances](#)
- [Chapter 6, Section 2: Support to Study](#)
- [Chapter 6, Section 3: Fitness to Study Procedure](#)