Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Reasonable Adjustments Policy
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1. Policy Statement and Purpose

1.1 MLA College is committed to providing an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all students. The College recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring that disabled students and students with long term health conditions are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with their peers.

1.2 This policy sets out the principles, scope, and responsibilities relating to the provision of reasonable adjustments for students, in order to support equitable access to learning, teaching, and assessment while maintaining academic standards and competence requirements.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

2.1 This policy is informed by, and operates in accordance with, the following:

a. Legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 Regulatory Expectations
- Office for Students requirements relating to equality of opportunity, student outcomes, and student support

b. Sector Guidance

- Relevant guidance relating to accessibility, inclusive learning, and assessment practices within UK Higher Education

3. Scope and Applicability

3.1 This policy applies to:

- students enrolled on BSc, MSc, and MBA programmes;
- all taught modules delivered through the College's digital learning environment.

3.2 This policy applies to students who:

- have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010; or
- have a long term physical or mental health condition with a substantial and long term impact on their studies.
- Temporary illness, injury, pregnancy, and short term personal circumstances are normally supported through other College processes, including the Extenuating Circumstances Policy. This does not remove the College's wider statutory duties under equality legislation.

This policy does not apply to staff. Reasonable adjustments for staff are managed under separate organisational policies and procedures.

4. Definitions

4.1 **Disability -** A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

4.2 **Reasonable Adjustment -** A modification or support measure intended to remove or reduce a substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled student, without changing the academic competence standards required for a programme or award.

4.3 **Competence Standards** - The academic, professional, or assessment standards that must be met for successful completion of a programme or award. Reasonable adjustments may affect how competence is demonstrated, but not what is being assessed.

5. Policy Principles

5.1 The College's approach to reasonable adjustments is guided by the following principles:

- Individual consideration: adjustments are assessed on a case by case basis.
- Equity and inclusion: adjustments are intended to remove barriers, not confer unfair advantage.
- Academic integrity: competence standards and learning outcomes are maintained.
- Transparency: processes are clear and consistently applied.
- Confidentiality: personal information is handled sensitively and lawfully.

6. Disclosure of Disability or Long-Term Health Condition

6.1 Students are encouraged to disclose a disability or long term health condition as early as possible to enable appropriate support to be considered and implemented.

6.2 Disclosure may take place:

- at application or enrolment;
- during the course of study;
- in advance of assessment or progression points.

6.3 Reasonable adjustments are normally implemented from the point of disclosure and approval.

6.4 Retrospective application of adjustments will be considered only where legally required or where exceptional circumstances apply.

7. Evidence and Supporting Information

7.1 The College normally requires appropriate medical or diagnostic evidence to support a request for reasonable adjustments.

7.2 Accepted evidence may include:

- documentation from a registered medical practitioner;
- specialist diagnostic reports;
- equivalent evidence for international students, accompanied by certified translations where required.
- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) Needs Assessment Reports;

7.3 Receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), or eligibility for DSA, does not replace or limit the College's duty to consider and implement reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments may be considered and approved regardless of a student's eligibility for external funding or support schemes, including for international students who are not entitled to DSA.

7.4 Where evidence is unavailable, unclear, or delayed, the College may consider interim or temporary adjustments at its discretion, pending receipt of appropriate documentation.

7.5 **Timescales for Consideration -** The College will aim to consider requests for reasonable adjustments within 10 working days of receipt of sufficient supporting evidence. Where additional information, academic consultation, or external advice is required, students will be kept informed of progress, and consideration may take longer.

7.6 Indicative timescales are provided for guidance only and do not create an entitlement to support within a specific timeframe.

8. Types of Reasonable Adjustments

8.1 Reasonable adjustments are determined individually and may include, but are not limited to:

- additional time in timed assessments or presentations;
- scheduled rest breaks during timed assessments;
- adjustments to the scheduling or organisation of assessments where appropriate;
- agreed support measures to enable participation in mandatory live academic activities;
- provision of adjustment summaries to relevant academic staff.

8.2 The College seeks to embed accessibility within learning materials wherever practicable, including captioned recordings and accessible digital formats.

8.3 Deadline extensions are managed through the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and are not normally granted as reasonable adjustments under this policy.

8.4 Alternative assessment formats may be considered where they are consistent with programme competence standards and any validating partner requirements.

9. Decision-Making Criteria

9.1 Requests for reasonable adjustments are considered on an individual, case by case basis. In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable and appropriate, the College will normally take into account:

- the nature and impact of the student's disability or long term health condition;
- the student's individual circumstances and the barriers they experience in accessing learning, teaching, or assessment;
- the likely effectiveness of the proposed adjustment in removing or reducing any substantial disadvantage;
- the practicability of implementing the adjustment, including resource, operational, and timetabling considerations;
- the need to maintain academic integrity, competence standards, and learning outcomes; and
- any relevant health and safety considerations.

9.2 No single factor will be determinative, and decisions will be made in line with the College's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

10. Academic Standards and Competence

10.1 Reasonable adjustments will not:

- compromise academic integrity;
- remove mandatory learning outcomes;
- alter competence standards required for an award;
- eliminate required participation elements integral to the programme.

10.2 Adjustments may change the method by which competence is demonstrated, but not the competence itself.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

11.1 **Students -** Students are responsible for:

- disclosing relevant disabilities or long term health conditions;
- providing appropriate supporting evidence where required;
- engaging with agreed adjustments;
- informing the College of any changes in circumstances.

11.2 **Student Experience Team** - The Student Experience Team is responsible for:

- receiving and managing disclosures;
- reviewing supporting evidence;
- consulting Academic Programme Managers where academic judgement is required;
- approving and coordinating reasonable adjustments;
- providing guidance on DSA applications where applicable;
- maintaining confidential records.

11.3 **Academic Programme Managers -** Academic Programme Managers are responsible for:

- advising on the academic appropriateness of proposed adjustments;
- ensuring competence standards and learning outcomes are maintained.

11.4 **Academic Supervisors and Tutors -** Academic supervisors and tutors are responsible for implementing agreed adjustments as outlined in adjustment summaries provided by the Student Experience Team.

11.5 **Head of Student and Programme Services -** The Head of Student and Programme Services has overall responsibility for:

- oversight of reasonable adjustment decision making;
- accessibility reviews;
- consideration of appeals under this policy.

12. Confidentiality and Data Protection

12.1 Information relating to a student's disability or health condition is treated as sensitive personal data and is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

12.2 Access to such information is restricted to staff with a legitimate need to know, including:

- the Student Experience Team;

- the Head of Student and Programme Services;
- relevant academic staff, where required for implementation.

12.3 Academic staff receive adjustment requirements only and do not receive medical or diagnostic evidence.

13. Implementation of Adjustments

13.1 Approved adjustments are normally applied on a module by module basis and are communicated to relevant staff in advance of assessment activity wherever practicable.

13.2 Responsibility for implementation rests jointly with the Student Experience Team and relevant academic areas.

14. Review of Adjustments

14.1 Reasonable adjustments are reviewed:

- at each module;
- where a student's circumstances change;
- where concerns about effectiveness are identified.

14.2 Students may request a review of adjustments at any time.

15. Appeals and Complaints

15.1 Where a student is dissatisfied with a decision or the implementation of reasonable adjustments, they may request a review through:

- an accessibility review conducted by the Head of Student and Programme Services; and
- the College Complaints Procedure, where resolution has not been achieved.

16. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

16.1 This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements and continued alignment with sector good practice.

Appendix A – Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

The examples set out below are provided for illustrative purposes only. They are not exhaustive and do not guarantee approval. All reasonable adjustments are considered on an individual, case by case basis, having regard to the requirements of the programme, applicable competence standards, and the College's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Learning and Teaching

Examples of reasonable adjustments to support access to learning and teaching may include:

- provision of learning materials in alternative or accessible formats;
- captioned or transcribed lecture recordings where available;
- flexibility in methods of participation in live or synchronous academic activities, where appropriate;
- agreed use of assistive technologies to support learning.

Assessment

Examples of reasonable adjustments to support assessment may include:

- additional time in timed assessments or presentations;
- scheduled rest breaks during timed assessments;
- adjustments to the organisation or scheduling of assessments where appropriate;
- alternative assessment formats, where these are consistent with programme competence standards and validating partner or professional requirements.

Engagement and Attendance

Examples of reasonable adjustments to support engagement and attendance may include:

- agreed adjustments to participation requirements for mandatory live academic activities;
- flexibility in engagement methods, where this does not compromise learning outcomes or competence standards.

Appendix B – Evidence Guidance

The College normally requires supporting evidence to inform consideration of reasonable adjustment requests. Evidence is used to understand the impact of a disability or long term health condition on a student's studies and does not replace the need for individual consideration.

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- documentation from a registered medical practitioner;
- specialist diagnostic reports;
- Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) Needs Assessment Reports;
- equivalent evidence for international students, accompanied by certified translations where required.

The College recognises that evidence may not always be immediately available. Where evidence is delayed, unclear, or unavailable, the College may consider interim or temporary adjustments at its discretion, pending receipt of appropriate documentation.

Appendix C – Decision Making Criteria for Reasonable Adjustments

In determining whether a requested adjustment is reasonable and appropriate, the College will normally have regard to a range of factors, including but not limited to:

- the nature and impact of the student's disability or long term health condition;
- the student's individual circumstances and the barriers they experience in accessing learning, teaching, or assessment;
- the likely effectiveness of the proposed adjustment in removing or reducing any substantial disadvantage;
- the practicability of implementing the adjustment, including resource, operational, and timetabling considerations;
- the need to maintain academic integrity, competence standards, and intended learning outcomes; and
- any relevant health and safety considerations.

No single factor will be determinative. Decisions are made in line with the College's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and are informed by appropriate academic and professional judgement.

Appendix D – Overview of the Reasonable Adjustments Process

The process for considering and implementing reasonable adjustments normally involves the following stages:

1. Disclosure of a disability or long term health condition by the student.
2. Submission and review of supporting evidence, where required.
3. Consultation with Academic Programme Managers or other academic staff where academic judgement is required.
4. Decision making regarding the suitability and reasonableness of proposed adjustments.
5. Communication of approved adjustments to relevant academic staff through adjustment summaries.
6. Implementation of adjustments in learning, teaching, and assessment activities.
7. Review of adjustments at module points or where a student's circumstances change.

This overview is provided for guidance only and does not form part of the formal policy requirements.

Appendix E – Related Policies and Procedures

This policy operates alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, the following College policies and procedures, as applicable:

- Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Academic Regulations
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Admissions Policy