

Reasonable Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities

Date approved:	21/11/2025	Date policy will take effect:	21/11/2025	Date of Next Review:	21/11/2028
Approving Authority:	Academic Council				
Responsibility:	Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Registrar, Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager, Disability Officer				
Consultation undertaken:	DkIT Institute Management Planning Committee (IMPC) Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) guidelines.				
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	DkIT Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Learners with Disability Policy. Procedure for the Administration of In-Class Examinations for Students with Reasonable Accommodations. DKIT Policy for Audio Recording of Lectures as a Reasonable Accommodation for Students registered with the Disability Service				
Reference(s)	Equal Status Act 2000 – 2018 as amended Disability Act 2005 AHEAD 2008, Good Practice Guidelines				
Audience:	Public – accessible to anyone				
Category:	Student Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment, Learning Resources and Student Support.				

1 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment(s)
1	21/11/2025	Academic Council (AC:DOC:202:06:02)	• Policy approved for the first time.

Contents

1	Version Control and Change History	2
2	Purpose of Policy.....	4
3	Application and Scope.....	4
4	Policy Principles.....	4
4.1	Disclosure of Disability/Assessment of Need.....	5
4.2	Learning Agreements	5
4.3	Reasonable Accommodations	6
4.4	Data Protection and Consent to Share Information	6
5	Roles and Responsibilities.....	7
6	References	8
	Appendix 1: Definition of Disability and Reasonable Accommodations	9
	Appendix 2: Example of Documentation Required for Verifying a Disability	10
	Appendix 3: Reasonable Accommodations.....	12

2 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) commits to disability equality and inclusion so that all disabled students are included and feel valued and that barriers are understood and overcome.

The policy provides a framework for the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities who are studying at DkIT.

DkIT is committed to inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and to respect the diversity of the student body and ensure that all students can learn and flourish. DkIT will implement reasonable accommodations to help alleviate any disadvantages that may be experienced by students with a disability.

This policy reinforces DkIT's strategic commitment to foster an inclusive and fair culture that promotes success for all students and our obligations under the Disability Act 2005 [Disability Act 2005](#) and the Equal Status Act 2000-2018 (as amended) [Equal Status Acts - IHREC](#). This policy is also underpinned by the Institutes Strategic Plan 2024-2028 [DkIT Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#) as well as other DkIT policies with complementary aims and objectives, which include the DkIT Equity of Access and Participation Policy, the EDI Policy and the DkIT Admissions Policy. This policy supports DkIT in implementing the actions and goals outlined in the ALTITUDE Charter (Banks et al., 2024) that aims to embed universal design across tertiary education'.

A definition of Disability and Reasonable Accommodations can be found in **Appendix 1**.

3 Application and Scope

The policy applies to all DkIT Registered undergraduate, postgraduate and apprentice students who are registered for support with the Disability Service.

4 Policy Principles

DkIT positively welcomes applications from disabled students and is committed to ensuring every effort is made to allow all students to fully experience life at the Institute.

DkIT is committed to ensuring, as far as possible and within the framework of current legislative policy and requirements, that students have equity of access to and participation in all teaching, assessment, examination, and work placement activities.

DkIT will strive to ensure that its courses, services, programmes and facilities are inclusive and accessible and that students with disabilities can participate as independently as possible.

DkIT endorses the principles of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment and encourages academic departments to strive towards the principals of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Including UDL principles in programme design can cater to diverse learners' needs and preferences and remove barriers to learning.

DkIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations as determined by an individual needs assessment, to ensure that those students with disabilities can reach their potential.

DkIT will strive to create an environment where students are comfortable to disclose their disability and will facilitate students to do so throughout their time at DkIT.

4.1 Disclosure of Disability/Assessment of Need

- Students with relevant supporting documentation (**see Appendix 2**) are eligible and encouraged to apply to the Disability Service for appropriate support and reasonable accommodations.
- All students with significant support requirements are advised to make contact with the Disability Service well in advance of the academic year so that supports may be agreed and arranged prior to the start of the programme.
- When a student accepts a place in DkIT, if they have indicated the presence of a disability on their CAO application form, they will be contacted by the Disability Service inviting them to a needs assessment meeting.
- During the needs assessment meeting, the nature of the disability will be discussed as well as discussions about previous supports availed of and current difficulties the student may have with course requirements. The Needs Assessment is strictly confidential. The outcome of which can be revised at any point throughout the programme of study.
- The needs assessment process will also determine whether or not the student is eligible for additional support through relevant disability funding such as the HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities.
- Students from Northern Ireland who wish to register with the Disability Service should contact the Northern Ireland Education Authority (EA). The EA provide financial assistance for those students who have a disability and who meet their criteria. A needs assessment will be completed by the EA and recommendations will be reviewed and actioned where appropriate by DkIT.
- International students who wish to register with the Disability Service must provide the relevant paperwork/evidence, which should be a certified English translation of the relevant documents. It is important to note that reasonable accommodations availed of at home institution may or may not be available in DkIT.

4.2 Learning Agreements

- Following the needs assessment process, the Disability Office will complete a learning agreement which sets out the support and accommodations that have been agreed to be put in place by the Institution.
- Learning Agreements will be individual to each student to reflect their learning difference, their programme of study and the agreed support and reasonable accommodations to be put in place.
- Students are responsible for informing the Disability Office if the support set out in the learning agreement is not appropriate nor sufficient for their needs and if there is a problem or issue with the delivery of the agreed support. Students should contact the Disability Officer as quickly as possible to ensure any adjustments are identified and solutions agreed in good time.
- Where Work Placement or Internship is an integral part of a programme, the student Learning Agreement will be shared with the Placement Coordinator, with student consent, so that arrangements can be made for a meeting with the student in advance of the placement.

4.3 Reasonable Accommodations

- Students with disabilities who are availing of reasonable accommodations in their examinations (e.g. extra time, large text scripts, etc.) will have this detailed in their needs assessment. If a student availed of reasonable accommodations for their Leaving Certificate exams, they should forward a copy of their RACE letter to the Disability Service.
- Deadlines are in place for reasonable accommodations in examinations to be implemented, these currently are 1st November for Semester 1 Examinations and 1st April for Semester 2 Examinations. Students who are met after these dates will have their supports in place for the **following** examination session.
- For full details on reasonable accommodations in examinations, please refer to the DkIT policy <https://www.dkit.ie/about/policies/granting-of-reasonable-accommodations-in-examinations-to-students-with-disabilities>
- A summary of the reasonable accommodations based on the specific disability/ specific learning difficulty/ongoing health condition of the student are listed in **Appendix 3**.

4.4 Data Protection and Consent to Share Information

- The Institute will manage the process of information sharing as set out in the needs assessment and will treat all personal data in accordance with the GDPR/DkIT Data Protection Policy and retained for the period for which it is required, in line with the DkIT Data Retention policy.
- The learning agreement, once agreed and signed by the student, will be shared internally. It will be shared only with the staff members necessary to ensure that agreed support and accommodations are provided. This will be discussed and agreed with the student during the needs assessment meeting.
- Information will not be shared without the student's permission, but where permission is not granted this may mean that the support and adjustments outlined in the learning agreement may not be fully met.
- Students are advised to disclose their disability even if they do not believe that additional support is required. This will enable a discussion about their disability and their studies to help ensure that any possible barriers to study are identified and solutions agreed in good time.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

Recognition of the roles and responsibilities of both staff and students is essential to the implementation of this policy.

Responsible Office/ Person	Role
Staff / External Service Providers	Staff have a moral and legal responsibility and a duty of care to respond when a student discloses personal information in relation to their disability. If a student discloses a disability to a member of staff, it is important that staff direct the student to the Disability Service, if they have not already made contact. Academic staff and work placement co-ordinators have a duty to facilitate the reasonable accommodations identified through the needs assessment.
Student	In order to avail of reasonable accommodations, it is the responsibility of the student to inform DkIT about any disability that may impact their studies. Students applying through the CAO, have the option to declare their disability/ health condition on the CAO form by ticking the 'disability box'. Students who have declared a disability may be entered into the supplementary Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). Students who accept a reduced points DARE place at the Institute must register with the Disability Service. They must provide verifiable evidence and undergo a needs assessment with a member of the Disability Service. Students have the right not to disclose a disability or to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as strictly confidential and therefore not shared with relevant staff across the Institute. Requests for strict confidentiality may mean that fewer accommodations and supports can be provided.
Disability Service	The Disability Service has a responsibility to complete needs assessments with eligible students and to support, advise and guide the students regarding accessing suitable reasonable accommodations for on-campus teaching and learning and for work placement/internships where relevant.

6 References

Disability Act 2005

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/html>

Equal Status Act 2000 – 2018

<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/8/enacted/en/html>

Admissions Policy

<https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/Policies-and-Guidelines%20/Academic-Policies/Admission-Progression-Recognition-and-Certification/Admissions-Policy.pdf>

Equity of Access and Participation Policy

<https://www.dkit.ie/assets/uploads/documents/%20Policies-and-Guidelines/Academic-Policies/Admission-Progression-Recognition-and-Certification/Equal-Access-and-Participation-Policy.pdf>

AHEAD (2008)

Good Practice Guidelines for the Providers of Supports and Services for Students with Disabilities in Education. Dublin AHEAD

[AHEADGoodPracticeGuidelines.pdf](#)

ALTITUDE Charter

Banks, J., Burke, K., Cooney, R., Haran, M., et al., (2024). *ALTITUDE The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education: Technical Report*. Dublin: AHEAD

Appendix 1: Definition of Disability and Reasonable Accommodations

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Disability	The legal definition of disability, which is outlined in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2018), defines disability as follows: 1. “The total or partial absence of a person’s bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person’s body, 2. The presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness, 3. The malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of a person’s body, 4. A condition or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or 5. A condition, illness or disease which affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour”. These include “a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future, or which is imputed to a person.” A disability is significant, long term and/or enduring in nature. Disability covers a broad range of physical and sensory impairments, medical conditions specific learning difficulties, and mental health conditions that have a long-term and adverse effect on work and study.
Reasonable Accommodation	Reasonable Accommodations support equity of access for students with disability/specific learning difficulty/ongoing health condition associated with their teaching, learning, assessment, examination and work placement environment. Reasonable accommodation relates to the action of the service provider that alleviates a disadvantage. This may include altering the physical environment, the use of assistive technology or simply allowing extra time for completion of documentation (AHEAD, 2008). A Standard Reasonable Accommodation is defined as an amendment to the student’s teaching, learning assessment which enables them to participate fully in their education. A Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodation occurs when DkIT recognises that Schools may need to consider providing alternative non-standard teaching, learning and assessment methods where standard Reasonable Accommodations are not sufficient to meet the needs of the student. In the event of a student crisis/temporary health condition, which impacts the student’s ability to engage in their studies/examinations, the relevant

	Student Support Service will engage with the relevant stakeholders regarding Reasonable Accommodations if necessary.
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Appendix 2: Example of Documentation Required for Verifying a Disability

Disability	Medical Consultant/ Specialist	Evidence of Disability Required
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHA)	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician.	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional. The report must be less than 3 years old.
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including Asperger's syndrome.	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician.	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Blind/ Vision Impaired	Ophthalmologist or Ophthalmic surgeon.	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional. Reports from High Street Retailers are not accepted.
Deaf/ Hard of Hearing	a) Applicants who have an audiogram: Diagnostic/ Clinical Audiologist Registered with the Irish Academy of Audiologists (IAA) or HSE Audiologist. b) School for the Deaf Principal. c) ENT Consultant or cochlear Implant Programme Co Ordinator.	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by a) Audiogram. b) Letter of attendance from the Principal of School for the Deaf. c) Existing Report confirming Cochlear Implant. Reports from High Street Retailers are not accepted.
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD)/ Dyspraxia	Appropriately qualified Occupational Therapist or Neurologist or Physiotherapist or Paediatrician.	A full psycho-educational assessment from a Psychologist or a report that assesses motor skills and functioning from an Occupational Therapist or Neurologist.
	Psychiatrist or Specialist Registrar.	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail

Mental Health Condition		completed by the appropriate professional. The report must be less than 3 years old and the condition ongoing.
Neurological Conditions including Brain Injury, Epilepsy, Speech and Language and Communication Disorders	Neurologist/ other relevant Consultant/ Speech and Language Therapist.	CAO evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Physical Disability	Orthopaedic consultant or other relevant consultant appropriate to the disability/ condition.	CAO evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Significant ongoing illness	<u>Diabetes Type 1:</u> Endocrinologist or Paediatrician <u>Cystic Fibrosis (CF):</u> Consultant respiratory physician or Paediatrician. <u>Gastroenterology Conditions:</u> Gastroenterologist. <u>Others:</u> Relevant consultant in the area of condition or consultant Registrar.	CAO evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Specific Learning Difficulty: Dyslexia/ Dyscalculia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist.	A full psycho-educational assessment. Attainment scores must be less than two years old.

Appendix 3: Reasonable Accommodations

A standard Reasonable Accommodation is defined as an amendment to the student's teaching, learning and assessment which enables them to participate fully in their education.

The application of a Reasonable Accommodation will result from consideration of the circumstances of the individual student and will involve the student in discussion of possible courses of action. What is 'reasonable' for DkIT will vary according to a range of factors and will depend on the circumstances of the individual case. Factors influencing the determination of what is reasonable will include: the effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the student to overcome the relevant disadvantage; whether the steps would significantly compromise the academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study; health and safety issues; the effect on other students; and the financial and other cost to the institution.

Examples of Standard Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations	
Main Exam Centre/ Own Room/Alternative Venue (Small Group) Sticker and Marking Guidelines (SpLD or Hearing Impairment) Reader/ Invigilator to read words/ Coloured overlay for reading Reading software e.g. Texthelp Exam pen (scanning pen) Exam paper in Audio Format e.g. MP3 player. Scribe Speech to text software e.g. Dragon Naturally Speaking Personal Assistant in attendance outside the venue Enlarged paper/ colour/ size Coloured exam script (answer booklet)	Exam on Disc/ Exam on Tape Use of Laptop/ PC Use of AT/ Jaws/ Texthelp/ ZoomText/ Hal/ Lunar/ Supernova Use of Hand Magnifier Permission to bring food or drink to exam hall Epilepsy Awareness Extra Time/ Regular rest breaks (10 minutes per hour, in exceptional circumstances this can be increased to 15 minutes per hour depending on the individual case) Special Conditions at Exam Centre / e.g. near door, lighting etc /Near bathroom /Special seating/ Adaptive furniture/ Permission to leave/return

Examples of Standard Reasonable Accommodations in Teaching and Learning	
Preferential Seating Use of Assistive Technology including audio recording of lectures Provision of Notes in advance	Permission to Leave and Return for movement breaks, Use of Noise Cancelling Headphones, Assistance of Personal Assistant or Note Taker

There may be instances where standard reasonable accommodations are not sufficient to meet the needs of the student. DkIT recognises that Schools may need to consider providing alternative non-standard reasonable accommodation while keeping academic standards and integrity. The Disability Service will explore appropriate non-standard reasonable accommodations with the individual student and the School to ensure the student is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to their peers.

Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations
Scheduling of exams (dates and exams) within the examination session if the exams are scheduled close together. This may be required for a student who has significant physical difficulties, stamina, anxiety and fatigue issues. Examinations may need to be scheduled, where possible, to allow extra time and rest periods between them. Alternative forms of assessment, in the event where standard accommodations cannot be made, it may be necessary to consider an alternative form of assessment to continuous assessment and examinations. For example, a student with ASD and anxiety issues who was unable to attend tutorials and complete groups assignments may have alternative continuous assessments agreed with School.

Non-standard reasonable accommodations may arise based on individual needs. This can be explored during a follow-up needs assessment process and subject to approval of the relevant Head of Department following consultation with lecturer.

Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations in Teaching and Learning
Flexibility with course attendance requirements: Where a student is unable to attend due to their diagnosed disability/ specific learning difficulty/ significant ongoing health condition, they should not be penalised or be required to provide additional medical documentation for non-attendance. Students with a disability/specific learning difficulty/ongoing health condition should be treated differently in this regard when a request for flexibility with attendance is deemed a Reasonable Accommodation for a fixed period. Splitting the course over 2 years: In a small number of cases, students with life long and enduring disability are unable to participate effectively without splitting their modules over 2 years. Permitting this non-standard reasonable accommodation will allow the student to work at a more manageable pace that will not adversely impact them.

Please note: the above lists are not comprehensive. Individual student needs, identified as part of their needs assessments, may result in other unforeseen accommodations being explored.