



# Student Disability Support and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations and people have to make for you if your disability puts you at a disadvantage compared with non-disabled students. Whilst not everyone who has a disability will need adjustments to be made, every effort should be made to consider provisions to provide access to everything that is necessary to maintain your study with NMITE. NMITE has a legal obligation to consider reasonable adjustments, but they often also benefit the rest of the students at NMITE.
- 1.2 This policy does not seek to explain how we will approach every situation, it is intended as a general statement of our policy and:
- Confirms our commitment to improving accessibility for everybody that we deal with.
  - Sets out some of the basic principles of our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students.



- iii. Sets out the factors that we will take into account when dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy specifically refers to and deals with disability support and reasonable adjustment applications by applicants and students undertaking an NMITE programme of study or short course. The phrase 'student' is used as an inclusive phrase for any individual study or learning with NMITE.
- 2.2 Short term health conditions are not covered by legislation. However, staff are encouraged to take a flexible and sympathetic approach to significant and properly verified short term needs, for example, students may apply for extenuating circumstances if attendance, engagement, and assessment are affected by short term conditions.

## **3. The Equality Act 2010**

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act the legal duty to make reasonable adjustments arises in three circumstances:
  - i. Where the provision, criterion or practice which puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disadvantaged.
  - ii. Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.
  - iii. Where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

## **4. What is a disability**

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Disabled students at NMITE may include those with:



- i. Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (AD(H)D)
  - ii. Mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar affective disorder, psychosis
  - iii. Autistic spectrum conditions, such as Asperger syndrome, high functioning, or atypical autism
  - iv. Sensory impairments
  - v. Mobility difficulties
  - vi. Long term health conditions
- 4.3 Students with any of the conditions listed above are regarded as disabled because they meet the definition of disability under the Act. This list is not exhaustive. A person with a long-term health condition or mental health difficulty continues to be regarded as disabled despite fluctuations in the severity of their condition.

## 5. What is a reasonable adjustment?

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 NMITE has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to learning and assessment to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged. Reasonable adjustments are also available for students who might not consider themselves to have a 'disability' but who nevertheless would benefit from additional support due to an ongoing medical or mental health condition.
- 5.3 Reasonable adjustments must be implemented where a disabled student may experience disadvantage compared to their peers. Reasonable adjustments can be broadly identified as those made at an individual level e.g. provision of a note taker, alternative formats, or special assessment arrangements, and those which are made at a whole Institutional level e.g., publishing materials in Canvas and ensuring accessibility, which need to be considered at the planning stage.
- 5.4 The parameters of what is considered 'reasonable' will depend on circumstances related to:
- available resources
  - cost



- practicality
- level of disability-related need

5.5 There is no restriction on what adjustments could be considered because every individual will have unique needs which will be identified within an individual plan. Examples include:

- Assessment adjustments
- Learning support
- Assistive software
- Mentoring support

## **6. Responsibility – Students and applicants**

6.1 Students and applicants are responsible for notifying NMITE if they have a disability and/or believe they require reasonable adjustment. This is encouraged at Stage 1 of the admissions process and if an applicant does declare a disability, they will be contacted by the Student Support Team to gather further information and assess if a reasonable adjustment is required at any stage of the admissions process.

6.2 All students applying to NMITE will be assessed for suitability based upon the selection process stated within the Admissions Policy.

6.3 Students are responsible for applying for and taking up their funding entitlement through Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) via relevant Student Finance, or other funding body, where there are likely to be additional costs related to their needs. The Student Support team can advise and support students with their applications for DSAs.

6.4 Students who apply for Disabled Students Allowances will undertake an independent Needs Assessment conducted by an external agency and will provide medical evidence or a recognised (post 16) report of their specific learning difficulties as appropriate.

6.5 Students are required to make an application to NMITE for Reasonable Adjustments, the Student Support Team or their Personal Tutor are able to support the application. Please contact [studentsupport@nmite.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@nmite.ac.uk) for an application form. The application must be accompanied by evidence of the disability and/or reasonable adjustment required; this could be a letter from a medical practitioner, educational psychologist report, a needs assessment, or an individual learning plan (post 16).



- 6.6 Where reasonable adjustments are approved by the Reasonable Adjustment Panel and implemented by NMITE, the student has a responsibility to engage with and utilise the reasonable adjustments and/or funded support provided to gain maximum benefit.
- 6.7 Students should notify the Student Support Team if there are any problems in the implementation of reasonable adjustments or funded support as identified in their needs assessment, or if their condition changes and support needs are altered.

## **7. Responsibility - NMITE**

- 7.1 All staff members are expected to treat others with dignity and respect. It is illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability.
- 7.2 NMITE is responsible for the implementation of this policy and resulting arrangements for reasonable adjustments. While NMITE will make every reasonable effort to apply the principles set out in this statement and help students to make the best use of available specialist support, accreditation, budgetary and other resource constraints make it impossible to guarantee that all potential adjustments and adaptations will be available to students without restriction.
- 7.3 A student may develop a disability during the period of their studies, or it may become apparent that a student is thought to have a previously undiagnosed disability (this could be raised by the student or a member of NMITE staff). In either of these circumstances the Student Support Team can provide support and signposting to external agencies that can undertake diagnostic testing or provide appropriate evidence dependant on the type of disability.

Note: the student may apply for extenuating circumstances or interim reasonable adjustments to cover the duration that it takes to gather evidence and or complete diagnostic and needs assessment (this can take up to three months).

- 7.4 Where requested the Student Support Team in liaison with the Personal Tutor have a responsibility to work with a student to make an application for Reasonable Adjustments. The application should be sent to the Head of Student Experience.



- 7.5 The Reasonable Adjustments Panel will convene within 10 working days of receiving an application. The Panel is made up of the Head of Student Experience, the Academic Director, and the Student Support Manager.
- 7.6 The student will be informed of the outcome in writing within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.
- 7.7 Student Support Team will share information with the academic team, as agreed with that student, via the Source student records system and within a document accessible to module leaders.
- 7.8 Individual staff members are responsible for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place for students as authorised by the Reasonable Adjustments Panel.

## **8. Appealing the Decision of the Reasonable Adjustments Panel**

- 8.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a Reasonable Adjustments Panel you may appeal the decision in writing to the Head of Student Experience within 5 working days of the decision. The only ground for appeal is the student has new evidence which it was not possible for the student to submit at the time of submitting their original claim for reasonable adjustments.

## **9. On-going support**

- 9.1 Students should maintain ongoing conversation with Student Support Team, to ensure any reasonable adjustments made remain fit for purpose. A record should be made of any agreed adjustments.