



Student Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Guidance

Part I: Reasonable Adjustments for Students with disabilities

1. What do we mean by 'Reasonable Adjustments'?

- 1.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, discrimination against people with disabilities can take place in either of two ways: by:
 - treating them less favourably than other people, or,
 - failing to make reasonable adjustments when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to other people for a reason relating to their disability.
- 1.2. Institutions are only expected to do what is reasonable. This will depend on individual circumstances, and on financial and other resources available. Health and safety issues and the interests of other people may be relevant here although this not likely to be the case. Many reasonable adjustments are free or low cost.
- 1.3. Under The Act, Higher Education institutions also have an anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments for applicants and students with disabilities. This means that in addition to providing individual reasonable adjustments for specific requirements, Guildhall School must plan ahead and take a strategic approach to addressing and removing the barriers that potentially impede the progress of students with disabilities.
- 1.4. An example of an individual reasonable adjustment is providing an Acting student who has a hearing impairment with a professional quality dual muff headset so that they can hear the cues (most students use just one earpiece). An example of an anticipatory adjustment is providing all written materials for the course in advance by email or intranet, so that all students can prepare for the session, including those with hearing or visual impairments and those with specific learning difficulties.
- 1.5. Where the term 'reasonable adjustment' is used alone in this policy, it refers to both individual and anticipatory adjustments.

2. What is covered by the term 'student with disabilities'?

- 2.1. Under The Equality Act a person is disabled if they have:
 - an impairment which has an adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;
 - the adverse effect is substantial;
 - the adverse effect is long-term. This means that it has lasted for 12 months, is likely to last for more than 12 months, or for the rest of a life

or (particularly in the case of conditions such as mental health difficulties and ME) is likely to reoccur.

- 2.2. The term 'person with disabilities' can include those with the following conditions, including neurodiverse needs:
- Dyslexia and other specific learning needs
 - Mental health difficulties
 - 'hidden impairments' such as diabetes, asthma and sickle cell anaemia
 - Visual impairments
 - Hearing impairments
 - Mobility difficulties
 - Medical conditions including cancer and HIV/Aids from the point of diagnosis;
 - Social and other communication and learning needs such as autism, Asperger syndrome and ADHD/ADD.
- 2.3. The meaning of the term 'student' is also very wide and includes postgraduates and undergraduates, home and overseas students, those on short courses (including fully fee-paying courses), those visiting from other institutions, applicants and those attending interview and audition. This policy is specific to Guildhall School students who are applying for or attending our higher education programmes.

3. What is the Social Model of Disability?

- 3.1. Guildhall School uses the Social Model of Disability and this is the perspective that helps the School to form its policy and guidance on reasonable adjustments. The 'Social Model' takes the view that society creates barriers that 'disable' people from participating fully and on an equal basis with others and that wherever possible, these barriers ought to be removed. Guildhall School has a commitment to identifying and removing the barriers a student with disabilities might face in their studies and training and to providing appropriate support through making reasonable adjustments (and other strategies where appropriate) so that all students can achieve their full potential.
- 3.2. An approach where staff take responsibility for identifying and removing potential barriers, takes the emphasis away from the more negative 'medical model' focus of what a disabled person cannot do and puts the emphasis on what a disabled person can achieve with appropriate support.

4. What is 'reasonable'? Maintaining academic and other standards and identifying the 'core elements' of the training and studies.

- 4.1. The purpose of the legislation on reasonable adjustments is to enable people with disabilities to gain access to learning opportunities that are available to their peers and would otherwise be denied to them. It is not expected that academic, artistic and other relevant learning standards should be lowered or compromised.
- 4.2. To achieve this, programme leaders and heads of department need to be precise on what is and what is not a core element of a programme so that they can assess what is just a traditional, 'tried and tested' method of teaching and what is an essential component of the course. This will help to see where appropriate individual or anticipatory adjustments can be made.

5. Under the reasonable adjustments policy and guidance, who has responsibility for developing and implementing adjustments?

- 5.1. Individual reasonable adjustments are usually developed by the programme team alongside expertise from the Student Affairs department and written in a **Support Plan**.
- 5.2. The student should always be a key part of developing and modifying their **Support Plan** based on their needs and within the requirements of their programme.

6. Confidentiality and disclosure of information

- 6.1. Students have the right to choose not to disclose information about their condition or impairment or to disclose information to particular members of staff and ask for this to be kept confidential to others.
- 6.2. Students need to understand that although they have the right not to disclose information, it may limit the possibility of making reasonable adjustments (although the School still has the responsibility to make anticipatory adjustments). The Data Protection Act considers information about disability to be confidential information and staff need to take great care not to pass information on to students or to other members of staff who might not have been included in the Support Plan which outlines the agreed adjustments.
- 6.3. Students should be involved in drawing up a list of reasonable adjustments and they have the right to say who should see this information. Normally the staff involved in the student's teaching and training will all be given access to the information, unless the student specifically disagrees. Staff need to accept that there are occasions when they will be asked to make

and/or agree an adjustment without being given all the details of the student's disability, medical or mental health condition.

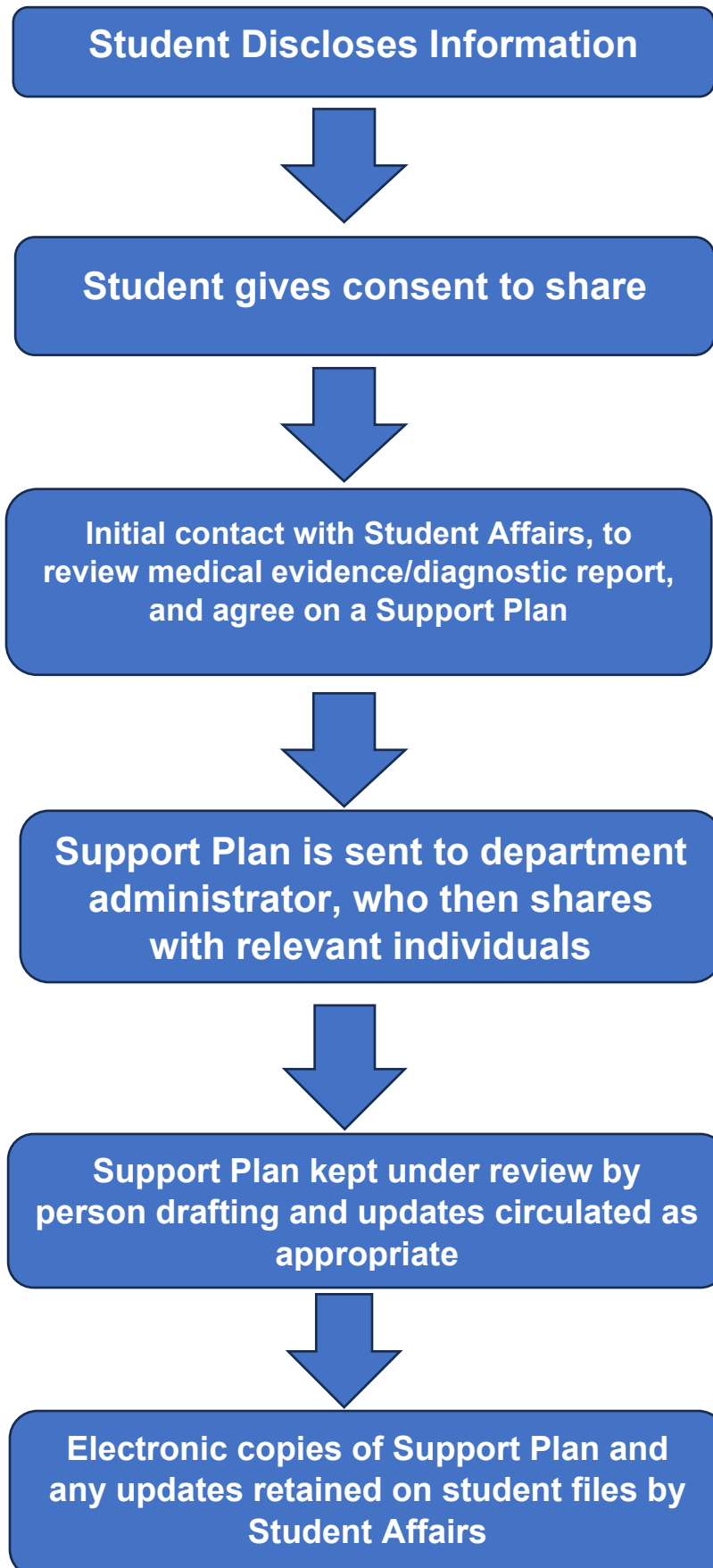
7. Staff and student responsibilities

7.1. All members of staff have the responsibility to:

- make sure that they read all Support Plans that are sent to them and keep up to date with any changes or developments;
- take a proactive approach to finding out about reasonable adjustments that they have responsibility for implementing;
- remember to implement the reasonable adjustments that have been approved and decided, not on a 'one-off' basis but throughout the course;
- take steps to see where, in their own teaching or work, an adjustment (both anticipatory and individual) might help a student to make progress and achieve their potential;
- have a sensitive and respectful approach to discussing adjustments with the student concerned;
- where possible, make anticipatory adjustments when a Support Plan is yet to be finalised
- respect confidentiality of information both within the classroom/studio/workshop and in the School
- notify the Student Affairs department where a student discloses a disability, mental health or medical condition. Members of staff should ensure that students understand that any such disclosure needs to be shared with Student Affairs to ensure they receive the right level of specialised support.
- discuss any problems or successes with their Head of Department/Programme Leader or equivalent and the Student Affairs department

7.2. Students have the responsibility to fully engage with the support offered to them by the School, including regularly keeping in touch with the Student Affairs department. Where students regularly fail to engage with the support offered to them, they may be referred to the Support to Train and Study process.

Appendix A: Record management and process



Appendix B: Case Studies

Case Study 1: Confidentiality and disclosure, who needs to know?

A student has a long term medical condition and one aspect of this is that they can have difficulties with bladder control. This information is shared with the Head of Department but, the student feels uncomfortable to have it discussed with other staff or students. The agreed adjustment is for the student to be able to leave class when necessary, without asking permission. Teaching staff are asked to respect that this adjustment has been approved by senior staff and they do not have the right to know more about why it has been agreed.

Case Study 2: Confidentiality and disclosure, who needs to know?

A first year student was diagnosed with a specific learning disability (SpLD) while completing sixth form. The student decides not to tell the School about their SpLD during enrolment. After receiving poor feedback on written assignments, the student realises they need help. They talk to their tutor who suggests that the student contacts Student Affairs. The student tells the tutor that they want their SpLD to be kept confidential. The tutor explains that they will respect the student's decision but this might impact on the level of support that can be arranged. The student agrees to see Student Affairs and the tutor helps them to make an appointment. Student Affairs offer them support and advice, and agree that only specific staff members will be informed of their SpLD.

Case Study 3: What is a competence standard?

A first year student with a hearing impairment starts their acting degree at the School. She uses both speech and British Sign Language. She has never sung before and is nervous about this aspect of the training. This is discussed by the Programme Leader and the Principal before the module starts and it is decided that singing was not a competence standard of acting training and she could still pass the course without studying this component. However, the student very reluctant to miss out on singing training and after some discussion, the following reasonable adjustments were agreed: lessons were arranged in an echo free room, she has extra time with a support worker who played the piano and the singing tutor selected has experience of working with people with hearing impairments. This proves to be very successful and she performs her song at the end of term with other students. She passes the course and her teachers noted that it had a positive, long term impact on her voice, posture and confidence.

Case Study 4: What is a competence standard?

A student who uses a wheelchair is studying on a music course. Some rooms with specialised equipment are difficult to access because they are upstairs. However, being able to get up and down stairs is not one of the standards of proficiency for musicians: it is not a competency. Being unable to use stairs would not prevent her from meeting the professional standards for entry into the music profession. The School makes reasonable adjustments to the study and work environment so that the student can access the relevant rooms and equipment.

Case Study 5: Adjustments at audition

The Admissions Officer is contacted by a dyslexic applicant who is concerned that his impairment might be a disadvantage at the final audition, following an experience at another institution. The Admissions Officer raises this with the Panel and then informs the tutor leading the applicant's workshop group, asking for a copy of the scene in case it is decided the applicant will benefit from seeing it the night before. The applicant is invited to come in early and chat with a panel member not involved in his audition to help contextualise the process. Given the choice, the applicant decided that he did not wish to see the audition piece in advance and would be fine with the half an hour allocated preparation time given to all students during the audition workshop.

Part II: Short term adjustments for students with a physical, medical or emotional condition that is likely to be temporary

8. What are short term adjustments and where are they applied?

- 8.1. Policy and guidance for **short term adjustments** apply to a student who has a physical, medical or emotional difficulty that is likely to be **temporary**.
- 8.2. A short term adjustment is not a legal entitlement as is the case for disabled students but it is good practice, enabling a student to continue their training during a period of adjustment and/or recovery.
- 8.3. There is a separate form to use in these cases: the Short Term Adjustments Form. The procedure for drawing up agreed reasonable adjustments is similar to that for students with disabilities and staff should read Part I of this policy to familiarise themselves with their responsibilities and for information about confidentiality. All information about a student's health and wellbeing is considered personal information (whether or not they can be described as 'students with disabilities') and due regard needs to be paid to confidentiality of information.

9. Examples of situations where 'short term adjustments' would be beneficial and appropriate support.

- 9.1. A student who has recently had a bereavement is experiencing a period of anxiety and depression. He is seeing his GP and a Student Affairs counsellor and taking medication. It is agreed that he can have time off so that he can spend some long weekends with his family and when he needs to attend medical appointments. He has brief, weekly meetings with

his tutor to check in and see how things are going. A Short Term Adjustments Form is sent to all his teachers, explaining the situation and asking them to show understanding for the next few weeks.

- 9.2. A Production Arts student breaks her ankle during training. She is in plaster and can walk with difficulty. The doctors have advised her that she will need to use crutches for six weeks, followed by a period of regular physiotherapy. Her Short Term Adjustments Form gives teaching staff this information and says she will inform staff when she will be absent to attend medical appointments. In the meantime, she is given a project to work on which can be done without having to work at height or use ladders.

10. How do Short Term Adjustments differ from Extenuating Circumstances?

- 10.1. Extenuating Circumstances are defined as a significant personal, medical or family problem that was unplanned and unforeseen and is outside of a student's control that is negatively affecting their academic performance (please see section 3 of the Academic Regulatory Framework). While circumstances around short term adjustments may be unforeseen to begin with, they are likely to affect a student's academic engagement on the course for a longer temporary period of time (more than two weeks but less than 12 months). In such cases, it is recommended that the short term adjustments process applies so students do not have to apply for repeated requests for extenuating circumstances and/ or extensions.

Approved by Operations Board in June 2023

Next review due June 2024