

Reasonable Accommodation Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) This policy sets out the principles for how the college supports students with disabilities, learning support needs or long-term illnesses in participating in their programme and assessments. It also assists Hibernia College meet its legal responsibilities towards these students.

Scope

To whom does the policy apply?

(2) The policy applies to all Hibernia College students.

(3) The policy applies to students with disabilities, learning support needs or long-term illnesses, whether present at the start of the programme or developing during the programme.

(4) The policy does not apply if a student is seeking consideration for extenuating circumstances during an assessment. Please refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) for more details.

Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

(5) The Department of the Registrar, or their nominee, is responsible for implementing the policy. They will work with the Head of Student Affairs and consult with the appropriate Programme Director, or their nominee.

Definitions

(6) Disability, learning support need or long-term illness, as defined by Hibernia College, adopts the definition of disability outlined in the [Equal Status Act, 2000](#). It can be summarised as:

- a. The total or partial absence of a student's bodily or mental functions, including the absence, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of the student's body
- b. When a student has a diagnosed long-term or potentially long-term disease
- c. When a student learns differently due to a condition or disorder, or when their thinking, perception of reality, emotions or behaviour are affected

When considering reasonable accommodations, a disability, learning support need or illness must be long-term, typically lasting over a year. The disability must be substantial, meaning that the impairment, whether cognitive, physical or mental, is more than minor. A substantial restriction is one that is permanent or likely to be permanent, leading to significant difficulties in communication, learning or mobility, or causing significant cognitive impairments that require ongoing services.

(7) 'A Reasonable Accommodation is defined as any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to an impairment or medical condition.' (AHEAD) When supporting higher education students, a reasonable accommodation is any provision made for a student to help them show they have achieved the learning outcomes of a piece of learning without being disadvantaged due to a disability, learning support need or long-term illness.

Section 2 - Legal or Regulatory Context

Irish and European Law and Regulation

(8) This policy is intended to guide Hibernia College in meeting its obligations under the [Equal Status Act, 2000](#), the [Disability Act 2005](#) and the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UNCPRD\)](#).

(9) The College is aware of the importance of handling data about students' disabilities and illnesses carefully. Therefore, the policy is designed in line with Irish and European laws on processing sensitive personal information. This includes: [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council \(General Data Protection Regulation\) \(2016\)](#), the [Data Protection Act, 1998](#) and the [Data Protection \(Amendment\) Act 2003](#).

Assessment and Standards

(10) Hibernia College gives reasonable accommodations according to the sectoral conventions outlined in the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) [Assessment and Standards](#), as well as any other organisation or higher education institute that we work with.

Quality Assurance Guidelines

(11) This policy is based on the [European Standards and Guidelines](#) and QQI's [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#). These guidelines require the College to implement policies and procedures in place to support students with disabilities, learning support needs and long-term illnesses.

Effective Practice Recommendations

AHEAD

(12) The College has adopted and strives to implement the [Charter for Inclusive Teaching and Learning](#).

Dawn

(13) The College uses the Dawn guidance document [DAWN: Everything you wanted to know about Reasonable Accommodations and supporting students with disabilities but nobody bothered to tell you...](#) to inform our approach to providing reasonable accommodations and create policies and procedures to support provision.

DARE

(14) Hibernia College also adopts and strives to facilitate the use of [DARE: Disability Access Route to Education — Handbook 2023](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statements

Part A - Principles for Reasonable Accommodation

Removing Disadvantage

(15) Reasonable accommodations are intended to help students with disabilities, learning support needs or conditions so that they can show that they meet the learning outcomes of their programme, including programme placements, without giving them an unfair advantage over other students.

(16) The College will provide reasonable accommodations for all aspects of a student's programme of learning. Reasonable Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis through a needs assessment and

determined by each student's specific needs.

Disclosure

(17) Students seeking reasonable accommodation must fully participate in the needs assessment and application process to obtain any reasonable accommodation.

(18) Normally, reasonable accommodation cannot be requested after an assessment task has already taken place. Students need to request accommodations before the assessment. For more information, students should refer to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

(19) Students who receive reasonable accommodations and have a Certificate of Support are encouraged to inform relevant faculty and staff members about their accommodations. In consultation with the College, the student may ask for assistance from the College in disclosing to select members of Faculty and Staff where reasonable accommodations are in place.

Costs

(20) Hibernia College absorbs the cost of any agreed reasonable accommodation that are detailed in the Certificate of Support. Where applicable, these are agreed in writing with the College before undertaking any assessment task or learning activity in any learning environment.

(21) The College reserves the right to decide what is reasonable.

Student Responsibility

(22) Students need to apply for reasonable accommodation themselves. The College cannot provide reasonable accommodations without students requesting them. Students should refer to the [Reasonable Accommodations Procedure](#).

(23) Students need to show proof of their disability, learning support need or long-term illness. The type of evidence and the age of the report should follow [DARE guidelines](#).

(24) If the student does not ask the College to share their reasonable accommodations, they must tell all relevant Faculty themselves by providing their Certificate of Support to ensure they can access any approved reasonable accommodations.

Possible Reasonable Accommodations

(25) After a student is approved for reasonable accommodations, they may receive individualised accommodations in these ways:

- a. Changes to assessment conditions that do not interfere with the intended objectives of the assessment
- b. Provision of assistance, either physical or technological, for assessment or learning that does not distract from the learning process
- c. Support during programme placements that do not interfere with the intended learning objectives of the placement

Status and Details

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Effective Date	25th November 2024
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Approval Date	25th November 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Eoin Crossen Quality Assurance Administrator <hr/> Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Assessment" - The assessment of a student's learning means inference (for example, judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a student's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard and based on appropriate evidence. This includes self-assessment.

"Policy" - Policies are principled statements adopted by the College at a high level to enable decisions about actions and desired outcomes to which the College is committed. They clearly articulate the formal position of the College on specific issues in order to guide internal decision-making. Policies set out 'what to do' on a given issue. They have a medium- to long-term review cycle.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)