Procedure for the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Students with a Disability

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1. Purpose

Atlantic Technology University is committed to the provision of reasonable accommodations to ensure equal and equitable access to Higher Education for students with disabilities. This procedure supports the implementation of the *Reasonable Accommodations Policy for Students with a Disability (AQAE012)* and should be read in conjunction with that policy. This procedure details the processes for students to register with the Disability and Learning Support Services (DLSS), assessing need, recommending reasonable accommodations, communication of reasonable accommodations to relevant staff and the implementation of reasonable accommodations in teaching, learning and assessment settings.

Underpinning both the policy and this procedure is an understanding that students with disabilities may experience barriers and additional difficulties when accessing and participating in education and the provision of reasonable accommodations are designed to address these barriers and facilitate equal access, participation, and progression.

The University has a legal obligation to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability, under the Disability Act 2005, the Equal Status Acts 2000 (as amended), the Technological Universities Act 2018 and the HEA Act 2022. As outlined in the Equal Status Act 2000 (as amended), a reasonable accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to a disability and/or a significant ongoing illness.

In law, discrimination on the disability ground **includes**:

"A refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such accommodation it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service."

The University will comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, and other relevant health and safety legislation, to safeguard at all times the health and safety of students, staff or other persons who are impacted by the 'reasonable accommodation(s)' process.

In addition to our legal obligations, the University's *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* sets out our commitment to promoting equality in all aspects of our activities and to creating an environment and culture where all students, staff and others are mutually treated with dignity and respect.

2. Scope

Delivery of equitable learning environments is the responsibility of all ATU staff across academic, administrative, digital and physical functions. These procedures apply to all academic and professional services management and support staff in ATU.

The procedure outlines the processes for implementing reasonable accommodations (RAs), as defined by relevant legislation, to support undergraduate and postgraduate students with permanent or long- term disabilities (including learning differences and significant ongoing health conditions). It is designed to ensure these students have equitable access to a holistic learning experience, on an equal footing with all members of the University community. This procedure will guide students on how to apply for and avail of RAs.

The procedure addresses both standard and non-standard RAs and has been aligned with guidelines issued by DAWN (Disability Advisors Working Network) and AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) in their publication: *Inclusive Learning and the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation to students with Disabilities in Higher Education*.

Students with short-term disabilities or illnesses may receive temporary accommodations. The process is detailed in *AQAE063 Procedure for Provision of Temporary Accommodations due to Short-Term Disability or illness.* Additional support is available from Student Health Services, Student Counselling Services, and the Exams Office for temporary exam accommodations.

3. Reference Documents

- Equal Status Acts (as amended), 2000-2018
- Disability Act, 2005
- General Data Protection Regulation EU 2016/679 (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act, 2018
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- AHEAD, 2019. Inclusive Learning and Provision of Reasonable Accommodations to Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland.
- DAWN, 2019. DAWN Principles, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities.

4. Procedure

4.1 Disclosure and Confidentiality

4.1.1 Right to Disclose a Disability

There is no legal requirement for a student to disclose a disability (AHEAD, 2019). All students have the right to decide if, when, and to whom they disclose. This is a personal decision and should be made thoughtfully. The University provides reasonable accommodations to students who disclose a disability and register with the Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS). While students who wish to avail of supports are encouraged to register with the DLSS when they first join the University, we understand that some may choose to disclose their disability later, not disclose at all, or may develop a

condition during their studies. Students can register with the DLSS at any time during their programme. Disclosure enables the University to provide reasonable accommodations, which can help students succeed in their learning, teaching, and assessment activities, as well as in placements requiring safe and effective practice. If a student chooses not to disclose a disability, the University will not be able to provide reasonable accommodations. Students must allow sufficient time to implement reasonable accommodations when disclosing their disability.

Some programmes that are regulated by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) require students to meet proficiencies or competences of the profession. On acceptance of a programme with regulatory requirements, students will be advised of the *Fitness to Practice Policy (AQAE016)* which requires students to make themselves aware of the Fitness to Practice Statement for the programme and to commit to maintaining the necessary level of fitness to practice. ATU commit to informing students of these requirements when promoting these programmes. Disclosure of a disability pertaining to fitness to practice will enable ATU to explore all options for reasonable accommodations.

In circumstances where a student does not disclose a disability during a placement needs assessment, or chooses not to take up recommended reasonable accommodations, the student may be asked to sign a waiver acknowledging this decision. The student will be given an opportunity to disclose at any time throughout their course of study. Students who choose to disclose a disability throughout the academic year are advised that it can take up to three weeks for accommodations to be recommended and implemented.

4.1.2 Confidentiality

All information provided is treated as sensitive personal data and is held securely in accordance with the *Data Protection Acts (1998, as amended)* and the University's policies and procedures on data protection. This information may also be used for statistical and monitoring purposes, but only in anonymised form.

With the student's written consent, any medical or supporting documentation submitted will be retained by the DLSS and will not be disclosed to third parties unless required to facilitate agreed accommodations.

In consultation with the student, the DLSS will record recommended reasonable accommodations on the *Student Record System (SRS)* and only share the relevant information with the specific Department, Functions or Services responsible for implementation. Disclosure is strictly limited to what is necessary and made only with the student's consent. Where consent is not provided to share this information, the University will not be in a position to provide reasonable accommodations.

4.1.3 Data Protection and Usage

The DLSS will ensure student data is used solely for facilitating reasonable accommodations, fulfilling statutory reporting requirements, and accessing funding from the Fund for Students with a Disability (FSD). Aggregated and anonymised data may also be used for internal reporting purposes. Students will be presented with a data protection agreement and student consent will be obtained before processing personal data.

4.2 Procedure for the Approval of Reasonable Accommodations

4.2.1 Registering with the DLSS

The Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS) is the first point of contact for all students with disabilities. Staff in the DLSS work in partnership with staff from across the university and external stakeholders to offer a range of support mechanisms tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual students.

To avail of reasonable accommodation in ATU, students should register with the DLSS as early in the academic year as possible. Students can register for supports with the service under any of the following categories:

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Blind/Visually Impaired
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) or Dyspraxia
- Mental Health Conditions
- Neurological Conditions (including brain injuries and epilepsy)
- Physical Disability
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Speech and Language Communication Disorder
- Specific Learning Difficulty (including Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)
- Students with any other condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities should contact the DLSS office for advice and guidance

Students register with DLSS in one of three ways:

1. Incoming students who are DARE[1] eligible will be referred to the DLSS.

[1] *DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) is a third-level admissions scheme designed to support school-leavers whose disability has had a significant negative impact on their second-level education. The scheme aims to promote equity of access to higher education by recognising that some students may not achieve their full academic potential due to the impact of a disability.*

Once the student has accepted a place with ATU, the Admissions Office will forward the DARE documents -Evidence of Disability and Educational Impact Statement to DLSS, who will contact the student to arrange a Needs Assessment.[2]

2. Incoming students who are not DARE eligible, can register with the DLSS subject to meeting criteria. The student should contact the DLSS by email on the relevant campus to register.

3. Continuing students who are eligible to register with the service can do so at any time by contacting the DLSS on the relevant campus to register.

For students to access reasonable accommodations and/or exam accommodations they must register with the DLSS. Where a student requires support with this process, a lecturer/ Head of Department/ nominated person (e.g., support worker) may make contact on the student's behalf, providing evidence of the student's written consent. The DLSS will then contact the student to provide support with the registration process.

4.2.2 Submitting Documentary Evidence of a Disability

Documentary evidence confirming a diagnosis is required when registering with the DLSS. This documentation must meet the University's standards and align with nationally agreed criteria. Appendix 1 provides a list of disabilities and the type of documentary evidence accepted by the DLSS to evidence the disability. Where the age of the document/report is relevant this is also indicated.

This list is not exhaustive or conclusive and any student that wishes to register their disability for consideration of reasonable accommodations should discuss their individual circumstance with the DLSS.

The DLSS will advise on the documents required and how to submit them.

4.2.3 Needs Assessment

Students who seek to register for supports will be contacted by the DLSS to arrange a meeting to complete a **Needs Assessment**.

Each Needs Assessment is tailored to the individual and determines the level and type of support the student requires. The Needs Assessment considers the verified evidence of a disability and the information provided by the student about how their condition affects their learning and academic requirements.

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[2] DARE Eligible students who defer a CAO offer must contact the DLSS directly in the academic year in which they accept their University place in order to register, as documentation relating to deferred offers is not carried forward to the following academic year.

The following areas are typically addressed during the Needs Assessment process:

1. Nature of the disability or condition – including its impact on education, severity, history of hospital admissions, etc.
2. Previous support – any arrangements made in secondary school or elsewhere.
3. Current difficulties – anticipated challenges the student may face in their course of studies.
4. Access to equipment and IT resources.
5. Eligibility for academic and disability-related supports.
6. Exploration of any health and safety related concerns.
7. Consideration of referral to other ATU services.

4.2.4 Outcome of Needs Assessment

A comprehensive needs assessment is completed, and reasonable accommodations are recommended and recorded for each student.

For students with significant support requirements a **Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS)** report is produced following the Needs Assessment. This report outlines additional relevant information and the recommended reasonable accommodations to support the student throughout their studies. Note: as per legacy arrangements, a LENS report is produced for all students registered with DLSS on the Sligo and St Angelas campuses.

The outcome of the Needs Assessment is determined by the Disability Office staff member and may include:

- No reasonable accommodations recommended
- Approval of Exam Accommodation(s) for Final Examinations (end of semester/academic year)
- Recommendation of Standard Reasonable Accommodation(s)
- Identification of requirement for Non-Standard Accommodation(s)[3]
- Identification of Health & Safety Concerns in the teaching, learning and assessment setting on a student's chosen course of study
- No appropriate Reasonable Accommodation to recommend (only applicable when all potential solutions have been explored)

The recommended outcome will then be communicated to the relevant academic and administrative staff as detailed in section 4.2.5.

[3] *Where a RA is likely to require a significant change to assessment format, delivery method or substantial additional staff time, the DLSS will consult (in confidence and with student consent) with the relevant academic staff member or programme coordinator at the recommendation stage to explore feasibility options and identify implementation supports*

Students will be informed during the needs assessment process that recommended accommodations may be subject to review where challenges arise in their implementation.

Where health and safety concerns are identified, the disability and learning support staff member will document the concerns, inform the student and contact the Head of Department immediately to discuss the situation. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of these procedures may be enacted as relevant.

4.2.5 Communication to Academic Staff

The DLSS shares accommodation information through approved institutional systems. across all campuses. Once RAs are recommended for a student, the information may be shared in the following ways (campus dependent and subject to change as the ATU-wide system is implemented):

1. The DLSS shares a password-protected MS Excel file and any LENS reports with the Head of Department or other senior member of administrative staff that details RAs recommended for students registered on programmes in their department. The Head of Department/administrative staff then shares this with the relevant academic staff (Galway, Mayo and Donegal campuses).
2. The student is responsible for informing the academic staff of their recommended reasonable accommodations by providing them with a copy of the LENS report (Sligo and St Angelas campuses).
3. The detail of the accommodations are recorded on the *Student Record System (SRS)* and a made available to relevant academic staff via a link on the *Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)* (this system is currently being piloted in the Faculty of Science and Health, Galway City Campus)[4].

A compendium of the standard reasonable accommodations commonly implemented at ATU along with the Standard Accommodation (SA) Banner Code assigned to the accommodation will be available on the DLSS Staff Hub.

4.2.6 Communication to Exams Office Staff

Students should register with the DLSS and make all requests for examination accommodations as early as possible in the academic year, and no later than five weeks prior to the start of each examination period. This deadline is set to ensure that the Examinations Office can adequately prepare and put the required accommodations in place

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[4] The DLSS are working towards implementing this system across the University. This will eliminate the existing system where the Head of Department/student communicates the information and centralise all RA information through a secure platform as recommended in the digital environment pillar of the Altitude Charter.
The ALTITUDE Charter is Ireland's National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education, guiding institutions to embed inclusive practices and equitable access for all learners.

within examination venues. Accommodation requests made after this deadline cannot be guaranteed.

Reasonable Accommodations for Final Exams will be communicated by the DLSS to the Examinations Office for implementation during the main examination periods.

A list of Standard Exam Accommodations will be available on the DLSS Staff Hub.

4.2.7 Input from Academic Staff

In determining reasonable accommodations for any student, the following must be maintained:

- Academic standards and learning outcomes
- Professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements
- Health and safety obligations[5]
- Relevant institutional policies

An accommodation may be considered unreasonable if it adversely affects the wider university community. For example, granting an extension to a submission deadline may delay feedback for the rest of the class. In such cases, an alternative accommodation should be considered. (See additional information in Section 4.2 "Determining what accommodations are reasonable" of the *AQAE012 Reasonable Accommodations Policy for Students with a Disability).*

The University recognises that, in some cases, academic staff may encounter challenges in implementing certain accommodations within the specific teaching, learning, and assessment context of a programme. In such instances, academic staff are required to notify the DLSS of the difficulty, and both parties will work collaboratively to identify an alternative, appropriate accommodation. Section 4.3 provides guidance on the implementation of reasonable accommodations.

4.2.8 Notifying DLSS of implementation challenges

On receipt of recommended accommodations academic staff will be required to review recommended accommodations and indicate one of the following:

A: Accommodation implemented - Academic staff are not required to respond when the recommended accommodation can be implemented. Clarification or guidance on implementation can be sought by contacting the DLSS at any stage.

[5] *Advice may be sought from the Health and Safety Team and/or other health and safety professionals.*

B: Consultation required

- the accommodation can be implemented subject to additional supports,
- the accommodation may not be feasible in its current form and further discussion is required.

Where a challenge in implementing the recommended accommodation arises (B above), academic staff will submit their issue via the designated online form (*AQAE060_001 Academic Staff RA Implementation Form*), which will be used to identify additional supports required or initiate consultation with the DLSS on alternative solutions.

This process must begin as soon as possible after the recommended accommodations are communicated to academic staff to ensure timely communication with the student and to allow adequate time to consider alternatives.

DLSS will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and will arrange a meeting with the relevant staff, to include the academic staff, Programme Coordinator, Head of Department (as appropriate) within the following 5 working days. The purpose of the meeting is to explore whether additional support can be provided or if an alternative, effective, and reasonable accommodation can be identified, ensuring that the legal obligations of the university are met and the principles of equity are upheld. The resolution (where possible) will be agreed and implemented within a further 5 working days. All feasible options should be exhausted before determining that a particular accommodation cannot be provided.

4.3 Implementing Reasonable Accommodations in Teaching, Learning and Coursework Assessment

The University has responsibilities under the Equal Status Act to ensure that students with disabilities are not placed at a disadvantage in any aspect of teaching, learning, or assessment because of their disability.

The University supports the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across all programmes and is committed to ensuring that programmes are accessible and promote full participation for all students. Faculties are encouraged to ensure that UDL principles and accessibility considerations are embedded when developing new programmes, and when reviewing, redesigning, or evaluating existing ones.

Reasonable Accommodations must be provided for any aspect of teaching or assessment that would otherwise place a student with a disability at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers, unless doing so would compromise the academic standards or professional requirements of the programme.

Adjustments to assessment for a student with a disability may take one of two general forms:

- Modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment is taken
- Providing an alternative/equivalent form of assessment.

4.3.1 Implementation of Standard Reasonable Accommodations

It is the responsibility of the academic staff member to be aware of the recommended reasonable accommodations and to implement the reasonable accommodations in teaching and for coursework assessments.

It is expected that standard Reasonable Accommodations to teaching, learning and assessment, as recommended by the DLSS through the Needs Assessment process, will be implemented for most students. A compendium of standard reasonable accommodations which provides a short implementation guide to support the effective implementation of standard accommodations commonly implemented at ATU in teaching and coursework assessment will be available on the DLSS Staff Hub. This document contains logistical arrangements for implementing reasonable accommodations and will be regularly updated to reflect common practices of implementing RA's in ATU.

To support the effective implementation of reasonable accommodations and promote inclusive teaching and learning practices, Programme Boards may review the Compendium of Standard Reasonable Accommodations and identify how these can be facilitated within individual modules, particularly those with practical components where specific considerations may arise. This may include, for example, a standardised approach to accommodations relating to assessment arrangements, the provision of teaching materials in advance, or the use of assistive technologies, that do not alter programme learning outcomes or academic standards.

As part of monitoring and review activities Programme Boards may also identify modules where certain accommodations may require alternative arrangements or further consultation due to the nature of the teaching environment, assessment design, professional accreditation requirements or health and safety consideration. Options for alternatives can be considered in advance, supporting proactive planning for inclusive education while maintaining the responsibility of academic staff to ensure that programme requirements are maintained.

The DLSS will assign a key contact to each faculty, who can be contacted in the event there are concerns relating to the implementation of standard reasonable accommodations.

An academic staff member who requires guidance on implementing RAs may seek a meeting with the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) or the DLSS for guidance on implementing reasonable accommodations. The TLC/DLSS will endeavour to support the

academic staff member in implementing the reasonable accommodation by exploring the supports, technical or otherwise, available to them. They may seek input from others across the university, such as the local Estates Team, the relevant health and safety officer for the faculty, the Head of Department, etc to reach a solution to any specific implementation challenges faced.

DAWN (2019) can be consulted for more detailed guidance on implementing reasonable accommodations for assessment.

4.3.2 Requested Changes to Reasonable Accommodations

It is the responsibility of the student to request changes to their approved accommodations. Requests for amendments to reasonable accommodations must be submitted to the DLSS no later than two weeks in advance of the scheduled assessment date. Extensions to deadlines cannot be granted within one week of the date for entry of results to Faculty Self Service. Where these timeframes cannot be met, students may apply for a deferral in accordance with university procedures.

4.3.3 Implementation of Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations

Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations (NSRAs) are explored when a student with a disability, a significant ongoing health condition, or a learning difference is unable to engage with the standard methods of teaching, learning, or assessment or when standard accommodations are insufficient. NSRAs may involve alternative teaching, learning, or assessment methods that differ from the university's standard academic processes while maintaining academic standards.

The need for a non-standard reasonable accommodation may be identified during the initial needs assessment where it is determined that standard accommodations are inadequate. It may also arise where it becomes evident that previously recommended standard accommodations are no longer sufficient to meet the student's needs.

Because the impact on teaching, learning and assessment varies and may not be measurable by a fixed threshold, each case is considered individually. For students with high support needs or exceptional circumstances requiring NSRAs the Disability and Learning Support Staff member will meet with the academic staff member(s), Programme Coordinator, Head of Department (as appropriate) to consider alternative, effective options for non-standard accommodations while ensuring that the principles of equity are upheld.

It is the responsibility of the Programme Board to determine appropriate alternative assessment formats, informed by input from the relevant academic staff member(s),to determine the appropriate alternative format, having regard to all relevant factors including learning outcomes, accreditation requirements, marks and standards, the integrity of the assessment process, and the legal obligations of HEIs towards students with a disability.

Programme Boards are advised to consider potential options for alternative assessment with external examiners and accrediting bodies and include in module documents during programmatic review.

Examples of Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations will be available on the DLSS staff hub.

4.3.4 Support for Academic Staff for developing alternative assessment

An alternative assessment format should be academically equivalent to the assessment it replaces and measure the required learning outcomes.

Support is available to assist academic staff to develop alternative assessments. The following are available:

1. Book an appointment slot with the Teaching and Learning Centre
2. Guidelines on the Teaching and Learning Centre SharePoint
3. Refer to the Compendium on Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations on the DLSS Staff Hub for case studies of non-standard accommodations

4.3.5 Alternative Assessment and the Student Record

Alternative assessments do not require module alterations within Banner. Results are recorded against the existing module, as learning outcomes are deemed met regardless of assessment instrument. Internal recording mechanisms may note that an alternative assessment was completed, by entering the code for alternative assessment type in comments section in the relevant screen on Banner. This detail can be used to generate relevant data on nonstandard accommodations for university use, but it will not appear on student transcripts.

4.3.6 Reasonable Accommodations in Placement

The provision of RAs for students going on placement is addressed in *AQAE061 Procedure for the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Students with a disability whilst on placement/work practice (programmes accredited by a regulatory body).*

4.3.7 Reasonable Accommodations - Research Students

The principles of reasonable accommodation must be similarly applied to students registered on programmes of study leading to research degrees (see *AQAE011 Research Degree Policy*). The distinctive nature of learning on research degrees requires that Reasonable Accommodations may differ in form or scope from those applicable to taught programmes.

Reasonable Accommodations will be agreed on a case-by-case basis and may include any of those outlined in the compendium of reasonable accommodations document on the DLSS

staff hub, or additional academic RAs based on an individual's needs and pertaining to the type of study the research student is undertaking.

Reasonable accommodations will be recommended by the Disability Service as part of the Needs Assessment and communicated to the Supervisory Team, Head of Department, and Research Office in line with the interim process set out in Section 4.2.5, until all communication can be conducted via the VLE.

4.4 Procedures pertaining to circumstance where RAs cannot appropriately address Student Needs

4.4.1 Process for when there are no appropriate RAs to recommend

If appropriate reasonable accommodations cannot be identified with the consent of the student, the Disability Officer may request an independent occupational health assessment to further inform practice (see section 4.5.2 outcome of occupational health practitioner assessment).

In exceptional circumstances, where, after a full review of all options for standard and non-standard accommodations, it is determined that no reasonable accommodation can be implemented without compromising academic standards, professional competency requirements, or essential health and safety considerations, and where students cannot continue on the programme without reasonable accommodations, the student may not be permitted to proceed with their programme. The student will be kept informed of the concerns/challenges/issues throughout the process and will have the opportunity to contribute to the process and the right to respond.

The DLSS and the relevant academic department must document the rationale clearly, outlining the accommodations explored and the reasons they were deemed unfeasible. The matter must then be referred for formal review by the reasonable accommodations review committee chaired by the Vice President for Students, Teaching and Learning. This review will confirm that all feasible alternatives have been exhausted and that no suitable accommodation can be provided. Where professional accreditation or Fitness to Practice standards are stated, the case may be referred to the relevant Fitness to Practice Committee in accordance with the *Fitness to Practice Policy (AQAE016)*.

The student will be notified of the decision in writing, informed of any alternative pathways or programme options available, and advised of their right to appeal under the University's appeals procedure. The University is committed to providing this information at the earliest possible opportunity to allow the student sufficient time to explore alternative routes or other viable options.

4.3.2 Competency requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Many programmes are accredited by relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs). Accredited programmes must adhere to the standards and competency requirements set by the relevant PSRB. Regulatory bodies specify competency requirements which serve as the benchmarks for student proficiency and eligibility to register to work in such a regulated profession is dependent on a student demonstrating such competencies.

In determining whether accommodations are reasonable for a student registered on a programme accredited by a regulatory body, the competency requirements must be considered. The DLSS may request a meeting with relevant academic staff to come to this determination.

If, after all reasonable options have been explored, the provision of accommodations are insufficient to enable the student to meet the necessary professional standards and competencies, the matter will be referred to the relevant Fitness to Practice (FtP) Committee established in accordance with *AQAE016 Fitness to Practise Policy* and associated procedures.

4.5 Health and Safety Concerns

An accommodation is not reasonable if it impacts on the student's ability to safely participate in the programme of study. The University recognises that there are instances where a disability type may impact on a student's ability to safely participate in aspects of their programme of study.

In addition, an accommodation will not be considered reasonable where it presents a risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of others, including fellow students, staff or members of the public. The University has a duty of care to ensure that its learning, teaching, and placement environments are safe for all participants. Where a proposed accommodation could compromise this duty, a holistic assessment will be undertaken, balancing the needs of the student with the requirement to maintain a safe environment. In such cases, alternative reasonable accommodations will be explored where possible, provided they do not introduce unacceptable risk.

The following are examples of teaching, learning and assessment activities where risk may arise:

- Practical classes or work placements where students are required to handle and interact with hazardous chemical processes, hazardous chemicals and/or substances.
- Practical classes or work placements where students are required to operate and interact with heavy machinery or sharp tools.

- Practical classes or work placements where students are required to participate in manual handling or physical support of other people.
- Practical classes or work placements where students are responsible for the supervision and safety of other people.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive or prescriptive.

All options for alternative teaching practices and placement options should be explored to identify alternative options where it a health and safety concern is verified.

If a significant health and safety concern is identified at any stage during a student's programme of study, including work placement, by a Disability and Learning Support Staff member, an academic staff member, the relevant Head of Department, or other person (e.g. technical staff); the student must be informed of the potential risk as soon as possible. The student will be advised that a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the identified risks can be mitigated through reasonable accommodations. If the risks cannot be sufficiently reduced, it may be necessary to refer the case for an occupational health assessment to obtain further guidance. The student will be informed of the decision to proceed with this referral. The University will at all times comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, and other relevant health and safety legislation, in ensuring the health and safety of students, staff or other persons impacted by each 'reasonable accommodation(s)' assessment.

4.5.1 Procedure for Addressing Health and Safety Concerns

Students with a disability will be given appropriate consideration where health and safety concerns arise. Outlined below is the process for managing health and safety concerns for students with a disability. This process also applies to professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) programmes and should be considered in conjunction with Fitness to Practice processes.

The person who identifies the risk or health and safety concern should complete the *AQAE060_002 Health & Safety Concern (Academic Impact) Form*. This form captures the potential risks or concerns, times and dates of any incidents, referrals to support services and any interventions/supports provided. The form should be submitted to the Head of Department and the Health and Safety office. Any incident should also formally be submitted to the Health and Safety Team using the relevant online form.

The detail in the completed *AQAE060_002 Health & Safety Concern (Academic Impact) Form* will be discussed with the student by the Head of Department to inform the student of the concerns, and the student will be required to sign it to acknowledge awareness of the process. A list of the risks and hazards' associated with programme participation will be documented by the Head of Department and/or Health & Safety Office. The Disability Officer will be consulted to review appropriate reasonable accommodations and to offer

advice and support. *AQAE060_003 Risk Assessment template* should be used to guide the process.

On confirmation that a health and safety risk exists, the Head of Department may direct that the activity be suspended pending further investigation, and the student may be restricted from undertaking certain elements of their programme (e.g. using certain equipment) until the 'Health & Safety Concern' process is completed in full.

If the disability officer cannot identify appropriate reasonable accommodations to mitigate the risk, with the consent of the student, the Disability Officer will request an independent occupational health assessment to further inform practice.

On confirmation of the appointment for the assessment and with the consent of the student, all information pertaining to the student, which includes, or may include, medical evidence, other relevant documentation (e.g. health and safety incidents) and a list of the risks and hazards associated with the programme of study, will be sent to the Occupational Health Practitioner (OHP).

The OHP will review the existing documentation and arrange an appointment for the student. The process may involve a practical assessment of the student by the OHP in the relevant learning environment. The details of the assessment will be provided to the student in advance. If necessary, the OHP may consult with the relevant health care providers of the student to ascertain the details surrounding the disability.

On completion of the assessment the OHP will provide a written report to the Head of Department and the Disability Officer advising of the students' ability to safely participate in all of the required programme requirements. The report may contain a list of reasonable accommodations that are required to enable the student to continue their studies. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be prohibited from participating in a programme where serious health and safety considerations have been verified.

Note: When an occupational health practitioner service is used, the report received is advisory, decisions remain with ATU under the policy and relevant academic governance processes.

4.5.2 Outcome Occupational Health Practitioner Assessment

On receipt of the report, the relevant staff involved in the process (e.g. Head of Department, Disability Officer, Academic Staff, Health and Safety representative) will meet to consider the content of the report and decide on next steps.

Where reasonable accommodations are recommended, in so far as is reasonable, the DLSS and the department will work together to implement the recommended reasonable accommodations.

Where serious health and safety considerations have been verified and it is not safe for a student to continue to participate on the programme, the documented decision will be forwarded to the VP for Students and Registrar and Chief Academic Officer for consideration and final decision. The Head of Department will inform the student on the decisions around programme participation.

If the outcome of the OH assessment has significant impact on the student's employability within their chosen profession or discipline, the student will be informed by the HoD.

The Disability Officer will support the student throughout these processes and assist in informing the student of the outcome. The University commits to providing comprehensive guidance in relation to alternative programmes available to the student within the University. ATU may seek legal advice where required.

4.6 Mechanisms for Review, Appeal and Resolutions of Disputes

4.6.1 Resolution of Disputes

If, following discussions between the DLSS and the relevant academic department regarding challenges in implementing standard or non-standard accommodations, no agreement can be reached, the matter will be referred to an independent committee chaired by the Vice President for Students, Teaching, and Learning for adjudication.

The nature of recurring disputes will be documented and submitted to the Universal Design Implementation Group, Student Experience and Access committee and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee of Academic Council, who will review and provide recommendations for resolution.

4.6.2 Student Request for Review

Students can request a review or modification of their accommodations if

- the impact of their disability changes, or
- they do not feel the Reasonable Accommodations in place adequately address their needs, or
- no reasonable accommodation is recommended, or
- the student cannot continue on the programme due to verified health and safety risk.

The DLSS will conduct these reviews.

4.6.3 Student Appeals

A student may also appeal the decision of DLSS in respect of the provision of reasonable accommodations. Students should first contact the DLSS and request a review of their

support as soon as the issue arises. If, following this review, the issue remains unresolved, the student may submit an appeal in accordance with *AQAE062 Procedure for Students to Appeal Decisions Related to the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations.*

5. Documents Related to this Procedure

5.1 Policies

- AQAE012 Reasonable Accommodations Policy for Students with a Disability
- AQAE016 Fitness to Practice Policy
- AQAE011 Research Degree Policy
- ATU Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy

5.2 Procedures

- AQAE061 Procedure for the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations for Students with a disability whilst on placement/work practice (programmes accredited by a regulatory body) – (under development)
- AQAE062 Procedure for Students to Appeal Decisions Related to the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations – (under development)
- AQAE063 Procedure for Provision of Temporary Accommodations due to Short-Term Disability – (under Development)

5.3 Forms

- AQAE060_001 Academic Staff Reasonable Accommodation Implementation Form
- AQAE060_002 Health & Safety Concern (Academic Impact) Form
- AQAE060_003 Risk Assessment Template

6. Measurement of Effectiveness of this Procedure

The Equity of Student Access, Participation and Success Report is produced annually by the Disability and Learner Support Service and Access and Widening Participation Service. This report provides comprehensive details on the profile of students registering with the DLSS and details of the supports provided by the DLSS.

Data related to the provision of Reasonable Accommodations and appeals will be included in the report as systems are developed.

7. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
000	New Procedure	19/10/26

Appendix 1 Accepted Documentary Evidence of a Disability

Table 1 provides a list of disabilities and the type of documentary evidence accepted by the DLSS to evidence the disability. Where the age of the document/report is relevant this is also indicated.

This list is not exhaustive or conclusive and any student that wishes to register their disability for consideration of reasonable accommodations should discuss their individual circumstance with the DLSS.

Disability	**Documentary Evidence**	**Age of Report**
Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	A report from an appropriately qualified consultant psychiatrist or a psychologist **or** a neurologist **or** a paediatrician providing a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD.	No age limit
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	A report from an appropriately qualified consultant psychiatrist **or** a psychologist **or** a neurologist **or** a paediatrician providing a diagnosis of ASD.	No age limit
Blind/Visual Impairment	A report from one or more of the following: Ophthalmologist/ophthalmic surgeon providing a diagnosis of severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses. The diagnosis must be in relation to best-corrected visual acuity or field of vision. A letter from the National Council for the Blind of Ireland confirming registration. A letter from the principal from a school for the blind confirming attendance.	No age limit
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	A report from one or more of the following: An audiogram from a professionally qualified audiologist and/or ENT consultant, indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e., above 40dB). A letter from the principal from a school for the deaf confirming attendance.	No age limit

Disability	Documentary Evidence	Age of Report
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)	A report from a psychologist or an occupational therapist or a neurologist diagnosing developmental co-ordination disorder (dyspraxia). *Please note: The CAO/DARE evidence of disability form is **not** acceptable evidence of disability for this category of disability.*	No age limit
Mental Health Condition (i.e., Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Clinical Depression, Severe Anxiety, Severe Phobias, OCD, Severe Eating Disorders, Psychosis)	A report from a consultant psychiatrist **or** a specialist registrar.	Less than five years
Neurological Condition	A report from one or more of the following: Neurological conditions – neurologist **or** another relevant consultant. Speech and language disabilities – speech and language therapist.	No age limit
Significant Ongoing Illness	A report diagnosing a significant ongoing illness such as: Diabetes type 1 – endocrinologist **or** a paediatrician. Cystic fibrosis – consultant respiratory physician or a paediatrician. Gastroenterology condition – gastroenterologist. Other – consultant **or** a consultant registrar.	Less than five years
Physical/Mobility	A report from an orthopaedic consultant **or** another relevant specialist diagnosing a significant physical or mobility difficulty.	No age limit

Disability	Documentary Evidence	Age of Report
Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)	The report of a psycho-educational assessment by a psychologist **or** by an assessor (PATOSS accredited) diagnosing a specific learning difficulty. Students may be asked for their latest assessment scores/educational reports to assist HEIs in determining the appropriate level of support. All tests used in the assessment must be valid, reliable and age-appropriate. *The CAO/DARE evidence of disability form is **not** acceptable evidence of disability for this category of disability.*	No age limit

Table 1: Accepted documentary evidence of a disability