

Appendix XVIII – Learner Disability and Learner Support



Policy & Procedure Title:

Learner Disability and Learning Support Policy

Effective Date	1 st December 2018	Version	4.0
Approved By	Academic Council Governing Body	Date Approved	26 th November 2018 29 th November 2018

Form(s)	Responsibilities/ Owner
	Learner Services/Access Office/Head of Department/Faculty/Campus
	Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar
Superseded or Obsolete Procedures	
Version 03 – June 2016 - Policy reviewed to reflect requirements under Equality Diversity & Inclusion	
Version 02 - June 2013 – Policy review to include DAWN Guidelines and reflect changes to title of Faculty	
Version 01 - June 2005 – Policy Review to reflect changes in legislation and practice	

Learner Disability and Learning Support Policy

Policy

SETU Carlow is committed to ensuring that learners with disabilities are treated in a fair and inclusive manner and given the opportunity to achieve their academic goals in a supportive learning environment. As a result, SETU Carlow ensures its learners with disabilities can access and participate fully in college life. In order to support this commitment, SETU Carlow shall endeavour to provide the necessary supports and facilities that learners may need as required by the Disability Act, 2005, Equal Status Act, 2000 and the Equality Act, 2010

Background

In line with current legislation, specifically as required by the Disability Act 2005, SETU Carlow is reviewing its existing Learner Disability Policy.

Definitions

Disability is understood to mean: “a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry out a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment. Substantial restriction means a restriction that is permanent (or likely to be permanent) which results in significant difficulty in communication, learning or mobility and means that the person has a need for services to be provided on a continuous basis”¹

AHEAD – Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for learners with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

Access Office – The Access Office at the Wexford Campus is serviced by administration. Hereafter, Access Office refers to both main Campus SETU Carlow and the Wexford Campus.

Reasonable Accommodation

“A Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to an impairment or medical condition”²

Terminal exam refers to formal/end of module exam.

Scope

In line with recommendations from organisations such as AHEAD, SETU Carlow recognises all disabilities which include but are not limited to:

¹Disability Act (2005) p.6.

² http://www.ahead.ie/employment_employers_reasonableaccommodation accessed 19.03.13

Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Blind/Vision Impaired
Deaf/Hearing Impaired
Mental Health Condition Neurological Condition
Speech/Language/Communication Disorders
Significant on-going Illness
Physical on-going Illness
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (e.g. Dyspraxia)
Specific Learning Difficulties e.g. Dyslexia/Dyscalculia etc.

The aim of this Disability Policy is to promote disability awareness among staff and learners, to facilitate entry to and participation in the academic programmes and learner life. The Access Office provides a professional, confidential, responsive and approachable service to support the needs of learners who have a disability enabling these learners to become independent learners. This support of learners is done in conjunction with other SETU Carlow staff, specifically academic and professional services staff.

The Learner Disability Policy shall address the following areas of concern for learners and staff:

1. Inclusion
2. Disclosure and Needs Assessment
3. Applications and Admissions
4. Support Services
5. Examinations
6. Teaching and Learning
7. Disability Awareness and Staff Training
8. Health and Safety - Physical Access
9. Dissemination

1. Inclusion

1.1 SETU Carlow welcomes applications from learners with disabilities and shall take every reasonable accommodation to ensure that specific requirements are met and that all learners are able to participate as fully as is practicable in the academic life of SETU Carlow.

1.2 SETU Carlow shall ensure that all facilities are accessible to all learners insofar as is practicable and appropriate. This includes physical accessibility to and within the buildings including maintenance and refurbishment as well as access to information.

2. Disclosure and Needs Assessment

2.1 SETU Carlow encourages learners to disclose their disabilities during the application, as non-disclosure would severely limit ability to access appropriate procedures,

accommodations and supports. Consequently, learners are encouraged to register with the Access Office through the scheduling of a Needs Assessment early in the academic year.

2.2 It is the learner's responsibility to provide adequate and relevant documentation pertaining to their disability from appropriate qualified professionals. SETU Carlow requires that documentation pertaining to the individual disability is not older than five years at the time of initial registration. Disclosed information shall be treated in the strictest confidence. SETU Carlow shall require explicit, informed and written authority for the giving of consent in respect of the processing of any sensitive personal information which is disclosed.

2.3 On recommendation by the Access Office/Learner Services, in consultation with the relevant academic staff and full-time learner (if a learner has diminished responsibility, then their legal guardian is consulted) a full time learner may apply for a qualified professional assessment of need. If the assessment of need is approved by the Registrar, the cost shall be borne by SETU Carlow.

2.4 After a learner discloses a disability, the Access Office, in consultation with the learner and relevant staff is required to complete a standardised Needs Assessment in order to determine what supports and accommodations will be required throughout the learner's programme of study. The Access Office shall complete a standardised Needs Assessment for all learners who disclose a disability. The Needs Assessment is strictly confidential and the Access Office shall seek signed consent from the learner to release any details within SETU Carlow as required.

2.5 The Needs Assessment is a working document and can be revised at any point throughout the learners programme of study.

3. Applications and Admissions

3.1 All prospective learners shall apply through the appropriate process, and refer to the Admissions Office policy and procedures for guidance.

3.2 SETU Carlow Access Programme (CAP) offers a supplementary admissions route for CAO applicants with disabilities and is available at <http://www.itcarlow.ie/study-at-itc/access-office/carlow-access-programme.htm>

4. Support Services

4.1 SETU Carlow provides services and personnel to support the academic and social inclusion of all learners, including those with disabilities. These services and personnel are listed in the learner handbook, an updated version of which is provided to all learners at the beginning of each academic year.

4.2 The Access Office assists learners with disabilities with relevant information and advice, and assists SETU Carlow to deliver its agreed commitments.

4.3 Learning-related supports that are available to eligible learners include but are not limited to: access to lecture notes in advance, personal assistant/note taker, extra tuition (subject specific), dyslexia tuition, assistive technology, assistive technology training

and sign language interpreter.

4.4 Information regarding the learning needs of specific learners with disabilities shall be disseminated in the form of synopsis reports which the Access Office shall forward to relevant Heads of Faculty/Campus, and copy to Heads of Departments and Faculty Administrators.

4.5 If there is a change to a learner's specific needs, the Access Office shall forward a synopsis report to the relevant Head of Faculty/Campus, and copy to the Head of Department and Faculty Administrator.

4.6 It is the responsibility of the Heads of Faculty/Department/Campus to ensure that each learner's synopsis report (and any ensuing revisions) is forwarded to the relevant programme directors, lecturers for each year that the learner is registered at SETU Carlow. Programme boards shall consider the report and agree on possible mechanisms of support to facilitate the learner's learning including but not limited to learning supports, missed study opportunities, continuous assessments and terminal exams.

4.7 Should a Head of Faculty/Campus/Department and or lecturer require clarification as to a learner's identified needs and/or how to meet these needs, they are encouraged to seek advice from the Access Office.

4.8 Where appropriate, and with the learner's consent, a learner with disabilities may receive referrals to external support services.

4.9 External support services can carry out environmental assessments on site as required.

4.10 Should the learner be deemed eligible, Learner Services shall apply for funding from the Higher Education Authority (the Fund for Full-Time Learners with Disabilities)

5. Examinations

5.1 SETU Carlow shall ensure that all learners deemed eligible for terminal exam accommodations through their Needs Assessment shall receive the appropriate accommodations including but not limited to: access to toilet, access to food, extra time, spelling & grammar waiver, instructions required, quiet room, printer, reader, rest periods, scribe, use of a computer, and the use of voice activated software, or other assistive technology. Refer to Appendix 1 for Guidelines for Reasonable Accommodation in Examinations for Learners with Disabilities.

6. Teaching and Learning

6.1 SETU Carlow shall ensure that, when drafting and reviewing programmes, the requirements of learners with disabilities will be considered and that equal access will be provided to all entrants wherever possible. This should be reflected in the proposed/existing programme documentation

6.2 Academic departments, in conjunction with Learner Services and the Teaching and Learning Centre, shall plan, design and adopt teaching and learning strategies, which make the teaching of the programme as inclusive as is possible and, where reasonable, allow adaptation and assistive technology to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities.

6.3 SETU Carlow shall ensure that, wherever possible, learners with disabilities have equal opportunity to access placements or to study abroad.

7. Disability Awareness and Staff Development

7.1 SETU Carlow is committed to raising disability awareness amongst learners and staff.

7.2 Opportunities for staff development in inclusive teaching, learning and assessment shall be made available to all staff involved in teaching and supporting learners with disabilities.

8. Health and Safety - Physical Access

8.1 The Access Office/ Head of Department/Faculty/Campus shall liaise with the Estates Office on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the physical access issues of learners with disabilities are met

8.2 Should a learner with a disability have concerns about a physical access issue, they are encouraged to report it to the Access Office/ Head of Department immediately so that the concern can be dealt with.

8.3 Disability parking for SETU Carlow's parking facilities are available to learners who have a valid Disability Parking Permit.

8.4 In line with Section 25 of Disability Act part 3 and Part M of the Building Regulations 1997 as amended re: building compliance by 31/12/2015, SETU Carlow has compliance with building regulations.

9. Dissemination

9.1 This policy shall be located in the Quality Assurance Handbook and is publically and electronically available.

Annex A: Documentation Required for Verifying a Disability

DISABILITY	MEDICAL CONSULTANT/SPECIALIST	EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY REQUIRED
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	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.
Asperger's Syndrome/Autism	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.
Deaf/Hearing Impaired	Professionally qualified Audiologist	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional. A Bilateral Audiogram from a qualified Audiologist is also required.
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder/Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist and an Occupational Therapist or Neurologist	A full psycho-educational assessment from an appropriately Psychologist and a report that assesses motor skills and functioning from an Occupational Therapist or Neurologist.
Mental Health Condition	Psychiatrist	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.

DISABILITY	MEDICAL CONSULTANT/SPECIALIST	EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY REQUIRED
Neurological Conditions	Neurologist/other relevant Consultant	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Neurological Conditions – speech, language and communication disorders and written language difficulties associated with these disorders	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 On-going Illness	Diabetes Type 1: Endocrinologist or Paediatrician Cystic Fibrosis (CF): Consultant respiratory physician or Paediatrician Gastroenterology Conditions: Gastroenterologist Others: Relevant consultant in area of condition or Consultant Registrar/Registrar	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Dyscalculia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist	A full psycho-educational assessment.
Dyslexia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist	A full psycho-educational assessment.

