



Hull York Medical School

Policy on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments in Assessments

Approval Process:	
Committee	Outcome/ Date of approval
Board of Studies	11 June 2019 Administrative review: no amendment was needed for academic year 2020-21
Joint Senate Committee	12 July 2019
To be implemented from:	2 November 2020
Responsibility to update:	Director of Assessment

To obtain this Policy in an alternative format, please contact governance@hyms.ac.uk

Definitions:

Reasonable adjustments

Practical adjustments to the planned delivery of an assessment or examination which mitigate a disadvantage because of particular characteristics or circumstances (e.g. a disability, health condition or impairment) on a student's ability to undertake the assessment or examination, without changing the demands of the assessment. Hence, not reasonable would be an adjustment that: (a) is not effective in removing or reducing disadvantage; (b) alters the competency required; or (c) poses an unacceptable security risk.

Parent Universities

University of Hull and University of York

Abbreviations:

BoE

Board of Examiners

GMC

General Medical Council

HYMS

Hull York Medical School

MSCAA

Medical Schools Council Assessment Alliance

OSCE

Objective Structured Clinical Examination

QAA

Quality Assurance Agency

SSO

Student Support Office

SpLD

Specific Learning Disability

WDS

Wellbeing and Disability Service

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Students are strongly encouraged to consider the detail of this Policy carefully in conjunction with the following HYMS documents:

Policy on Student Welfare and Support which can be found at: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>

Policy on Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment and Examination which can be found at: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Policy draws on guidance from the University of York, the University of Hull, *Promoting Excellence: standards for medical education and training (2016)*, *Welcomed and Valued (2019)* and the GMC. HYMS aligns its key policies with its parent Universities to avoid duplication and to ensure that we consistently meet the standard set out in the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. Adjustments in line with the University of York and University of Hull Policies are made to ensure that this Policy meets the specific requirements of academic programmes and governance processes at HYMS.
- 1.2. This Policy applies to all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate and is reviewed regularly to remain in line with current accepted policies and procedures.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. HYMS is responsible for ensuring that all assessments taken across each academic programme are compliant with the Equality Act (2010), the regulations as laid out by the two parent Universities and the GMC, and best-practice agreements with the MSCAA.
- 2.2. For students taking the MB BS Programme HYMS is also responsible for ensuring that assessments are compliant with the specific GMC guidance outlined in the Appendix A.
- 2.3. HYMS is responsible for ensuring that all students are offered a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate competence through the assessment procedures.
- 2.4. HYMS will ensure there is fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate competence through the assessment procedures by approving reasonable adjustments to the assessment procedures on a case by case basis.

- 2.5. HYMS will work closely with the WDS of both parent Universities to ensure students receive consistent information regarding reasonable adjustments.
- 2.6. The WDS at each parent university will ensure that HYMS is informed that a student is due to undergo an Assessment of Needs.
- 2.7. The WDS at each parent university will ensure that students are advised and assessed regarding impairment, disability and health conditions.
- 2.8. The WDS at each parent university will ensure that HYMS is advised, through an Assessment of Needs, whether reasonable adjustment to the assessment procedures should be considered for a student.
- 2.9. Students are responsible for adhering to the assessment procedures as prescribed by HYMS.
- 2.10. Students are responsible for engaging with the WDS at each parent university regarding confirmed or suspected impairment, disability or health conditions, in a timely manner (e.g., as outlined in the Exceptional Circumstances policy, students with a known disability are strongly recommended to inform the university at the start of their programme).
- 2.11. Where reasonable adjustments are approved by HYMS, students are responsible for adhering to the reasonable adjustments applied to their assessment procedures.

3. Procedure

- 3.1. Students are supported through the HYMS SSO, and the WDS at each parent university. These services provide a confidential opportunity to disclose any impairment, disability or health condition. Further information and contact details for these services are available through the relevant student handbooks, the virtual learning environment and the links in Appendix B.
- 3.2. Students with a confirmed or suspected impairment, disability or health condition for which adjustments are likely to be reasonable, should actively engage with the HYMS SSO, and the WDS offices at each parent university.
- 3.3. The WDS at each parent university will advise and assess students regarding impairments, disabilities or health conditions.
- 3.4. The assessment process may differ slightly between University sites. In general, this is an informal interview, usually on a one-to-one basis, between the student and a qualified assessor. The purpose of the assessment is to identify support requirements, recommend learning strategies and assess the need for reasonable adjustments to assessments.
- 3.5. The WDS at each parent university will advise the Disability Liaison Officer for HYMS, through an Assessment of Needs, whether reasonable adjustments to the assessment procedures should be considered for a student.
- 3.6. The Disability Liaison Officer will advise the Chair of the relevant BoE on whether a reasonable adjustment to the assessment procedures has been recommended for a student.

- 3.7. The relevant BoE will approve or reject any reasonable adjustments to the assessment procedures for the student, according to the guidelines below.
- 3.8. The relevant BoE will report decisions related to reasonable adjustments to the Board of Studies, annually, in an anonymised format.

4. Guidelines

- 4.1. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs or timeframes, is not effective in reducing disadvantage, alters the competency being assessed, or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.
- 4.2. Where requests are submitted within six weeks of an examination period, it may not be operationally possible to implement the arrangements for the forthcoming examination(s); especially regarding requests submitted within two weeks of an assessment, implementation cannot be guaranteed.
- 4.3. For closed examinations, reasonable adjustments such as an alternative examination room and/or additional time to allow for breaks will be considered.
- 4.4. Reasonable adjustments allowing up to 25% extra time in closed examinations of up to 3 hours duration and open assessments of up to 72 hours will be considered.
- 4.5. Extra time allowed in open assessments should be expressed in additional hours allowed after the deadline and between 9am and 5pm. For example, a 72-hour open assessment with a hand in time of 11am and 25% extra time (6 hours) approved, should be handed in by 5pm. Extra time allowances should be communicated in advance of assessment commencing.
- 4.6. Where extra time is requested beyond the limits above, the BoE should seek approval from the Boards of Studies. This recommendation should be on a case by case basis for each paper the student will sit. The recommendation should be based on quantitative assessments of the amount and intensity of reading and writing involved in the paper, together with various contributing factors (e.g. the candidate's writing speed) and demonstrating compatibility with the learning outcomes being assessed. The BoE may also wish to consider alternative assessments that may be appropriate for individual students as an alternative to extra time.
- 4.7. Where the relevant University WDS advises that a student is due to undergo an Assessment of Needs for which extra time would be the likely recommendation, the student will initially be granted the standard reasonable adjustment of 25% extra time for summative closed written examinations of up to 3 hours. For open assessments of up to 72 hours, this ensures that no student is disadvantaged due to the relative timing of the Assessment of Needs and any forthcoming written examination.
- 4.8. For open examinations, occasional extensions related to the nature of a disability will be considered.
- 4.9. Where occasional extensions are approved as a reasonable adjustment, students are encouraged to meet the prescribed deadlines as normal.
- 4.10. If an extension is necessary, and occasional extensions have been approved as a reasonable adjustment, the student should apply for an extension to each affected assessment using the Exceptional Circumstances Claim Form, available at:

<https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>. Students should indicate that the reason for the request is related to their approved reasonable adjustment. This must relate to their disability and, where appropriate, should include details of the duration, with dates, for the period of particular difficulty. Requests for extensions on disability grounds are considered by the BoE rather than the Exceptional Circumstances Committee, in order to ensure that a holistic approach to the student's assessment is taken.

- 4.11. Where students should not be penalised for errors of spelling or grammar in a closed examination or an open assessment, stickers should be placed on students' submitted work prior to marking, or in the case of online assessments, this information should be provided on the electronic coversheet attached. The stickers or coversheet will alert the marker that errors of spelling or grammar should be ignored.
- 4.12. In practical assessments, such as the OSCEs, which directly replicate clinical practice, additional time is not permitted. Where instructions to students are provided, they are brief and succinct. Sufficient time is provided to allow students with a SpLD to read the instructions, while remaining consistent with the assessment procedures. Disability officers from parent Universities are openly invited to attend HYMS practical assessments, to ensure they are compliant with current regulations.
- 4.13. In practical assessments, the use of equipment or adjustments to the examination environment will be considered. Where approved, examiners will be notified of such adjustments on the morning of the assessment.
- 4.14. Students with permanent or temporary physical impairments that may affect performance in the clinical examinations are actively encouraged to contact HYMS SSO, to discuss any equipment or environment adjustments, such as the use of an amplified stethoscope or alterations to the layout of a station to facilitate performance.
- 4.15. Whilst HYMS recognises that pregnancy is not a disability, it will work with pregnant students to ensure they receive appropriate reasonable adjustments that will support them in demonstrating competence throughout the assessments.

Appendix A: Guidance and Policy Documents

This policy draws on guidance from the following sources:

- Welcomed and Valued (GMC), Chapter 3: What is expected of medical education organisations and employers?
<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/welcomed-and-valued>
- Promoting Excellence (GMC) <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/27394.asp>
Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments
Reasonable adjustments
R5.12 Organisations must make reasonable adjustments to help disabled learners meet the standards of competence in line with the Equality Act 2010, although the standards of competence themselves cannot be changed. Reasonable adjustments may be made to the way that the standards are assessed or performed (except where the method of performance is part of the competence to be attained), and to how curricula and clinical placements are delivered.
- HYMS Policy on Student Welfare and Support
<https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>
- University of Hull Disability Advice webpage
<https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/student-life/student-support/looking-after-yourself/disability-advice.aspx>
- University of York Disability and medical conditions webpage
<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/assessment-and-examination/disability/>

Appendix B: Links to relevant University Support Services

- HYMS Student Support: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/student-support>
- University of Hull Student Wellbeing, Learning and Welfare Support:
<https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/student-life/student-support/looking-after-yourself/disability-advice.aspx>
- University of York Disability Services: www.york.ac.uk/students/support/disability/