

Guidelines for Alternative Examination Arrangements for Students with Disabilities

PURPOSE

This document provides guidance to staff involved in recommending, approving and arranging Alternative Examination Arrangements (AEA) at the Parkville campus.

BACKGROUND

The University is required to provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and Disability Standards for Education (2005). The most common form of reasonable adjustment is an alteration to the standard conditions or format of an exam, with over 500 AEAs implemented each examination period. These Guidelines detail the procedures for applying, approving and implementing an AEA.

ALTERNATIVE EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

1. An AEA is an adjustment or alteration to the standard conditions or format of an examination.
2. An AEA aims to lessen the impact of a disability under timed conditions such that the student's performance in the assessment is reflective of their progress towards achieving the academic requirements.
3. Students who demonstrate that their disability will adversely affect their performance and/or ability to undertake the standard form of examination may be eligible for an AEA.
4. An AEA should be identified as a reasonable adjustment in accordance with the University Students with Disabilities Policy.
5. Examples of Alternative Examination Arrangements include:
 - Exam Paper in alternative format (eg. large print, audio, Braille, electronic)
 - Additional reading and/or writing time
 - Use of a computer
 - Use of adaptive technology (eg. screen reader)
 - Rest breaks
 - Academic Support Workers (ASW eg. scribes, Auslan interpreters)
 - Ergonomic furniture
 - Separate venue
6. An AEA can apply to any timed assessment which may include:
 - End-of-semester exams
 - End-of-year exams
 - Special and supplementary exams
 - Winter and summer semester exams
 - In-class and mid-semester tests.
 - Practical examinations
7. An AEA may be approved for periods up to a maximum of 4 years depending on the nature of the disability.

8. Each faculty will appoint a Faculty Disability Contact Officer (FDCO) who has the following responsibilities:
 - Arranging approval of an application for AEA's.
 - Informing academic staff of students who have an AEA.
 - Implementing AEA's for winter semester, mid-semester or class tests and exams that have been referred to the faculty by Student Administration.
9. Faculties may appoint Departmental Disability Contact Officers (DDCO) to expedite the implementation of AEA's at a departmental level.
10. The University will endeavour to ensure that there is consistency in the application of AEA's for students enrolled in subjects across faculties.
11. Students are eligible for Special Consideration in cases where adjustments such as an AEA are not sufficient to accommodate the impact of a student's disability.

APPLICATIONS

Applications through the Disability Liaison Unit

1. In consultation with the student and after consideration of the information provided by a relevant health professional, the DLU identifies and recommends appropriate AEA's. If required the DLU liaises with relevant teaching staff to determine an appropriate AEA.
2. The student and the DLU complete and sign off on the AEA application.
3. The DLU forwards a copy of the completed AEA application to the relevant faculty(s) for approval. The application will indicate if the AEA's have already been approved by the subject coordinator(s). A copy of the application will be given to the student and to the Examinations Officer (AEA Coordinator), Student Administration.
4. The DLU provides the student with an AEA information sheet.
5. The DLU advises students who apply for AEA's within 4 weeks of the assessment date or at the beginning of the official examination period, to make their application directly to the FDCO.

Applications through the Faculty Disability Contact Officer

1. Applications for AEA's should be made through the FDCO in cases where the application is within 4 weeks of the assessment date or the disability is of a temporary nature.
2. In consultation with the student and after consideration of the information provided by a relevant health professional, the FDCO identifies and recommends appropriate AEA's. If required, the FDCO liaises with the DLU or the relevant teaching staff for advice on what may be an appropriate AEA.
3. The FDCO provides the student with an AEA information sheet and forwards the approved AEA to the Examinations Officer (AEA Coordinator), Student Administration.

Applications through relevant teaching staff

1. In consultation with the student and after consideration of the information provided by a relevant health professional, the teaching staff may either appraise, recommend and approve appropriate AEs, or refer the student to the FDCO or the DLU to recommend appropriate AEs.
2. If relevant teaching staff decide on an appropriate AEA, they then advise the FDCO of the approved AEs and any other information pertinent to the implementation of the exam.

APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS

1. AEs are to be approved by the faculty with responsibility for the course in which the student is enrolled.
2. In the case of a combined degree, each faculty has responsibility for approving AEs for the subjects taught by their faculty. The FDCO of the administering faculty will be responsible for liaising with the FDCO of the combined degree to ensure appropriate consistency of adjustments.
3. The Dean or Dean's nominee of the relevant faculty shall approve, decline or recommend AEs.
4. Where a recommended AEA has been declined, the Dean or Dean's nominee shall provide written advice to the student explaining the reasons why the application has been declined and indicate the options available for appeal.
5. Should a faculty not approve or not have the authority to approve the recommended AEs, the FDCO shall liaise with the relevant DLU staff member and/or the relevant teaching staff member as per the faculty guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION OF AEs

A End-of-Semester, Summer Semester, Special and Supplementary exams

Student Administration is responsible for implementing AEs for exams conducted in the Official Exam Periods (including special and supplementary exams). Student Administration may refer this responsibility to the relevant faculty or department should Student Administration be unable to implement the AEs.

Student Administration Exams Officer (AEA coordinator) responsibilities

1. The AEA coordinator contacts each student with approved AEs asking them to confirm the exams for which they require AEs.
2. On receipt of confirmation from the student the AEA coordinator organises the venue, invigilation and adjustments as per the AEA application and advises the student of these details in writing.
3. If an ASW is required the AEA coordinator requests the DLU to source an appropriately trained person.
4. The AEA coordinator arranges for the conversion of examination papers into the required format - Braille, electronic or audiotape.

5. If the AEA needs to be scheduled at a different time to the main exam, the AEA coordinator arranges for students to complete Statutory Declarations indicating they will not communicate with other students about examination content.
6. The AEA coordinator notifies the FDCO/DDCO that their students are completing their exams at an alternative venue.
7. The AEA coordinator informs relevant teaching staff they should be available (in person or by telephone) at the beginning of and/or throughout the exam to answer any queries students may have about the examination paper.
8. The AEA coordinator refers the responsibility for the organisation of the venue, invigilation and AEA's to the faculty or department if the AEA coordinator is unable to implement the student's AEA's.
9. The AEA coordinator is responsible for briefing examination invigilators about the disability related needs that arise during an AEA and for organising professional development sessions for such staff where relevant.
10. The AEA coordinator is responsible for ensuring that computers used during examinations are set up to meet individual student requirements and maintain academic integrity of the assessment.
11. Student Administration is responsible for all costs associated with the examination with the following exceptions:
 - Salaries for Academic Support Workers
 - The cost of providing invigilation for exams managed by faculties or departments.
 - The cost of any venues for exam managed by faculties or departments.

Faculty and/or Department Responsibilities

Alternative Format Exam papers

1. Braille, electronic and audio formats: The FDCO/DDCO is responsible for forwarding examination papers to the AEA Coordinator at least 4 weeks prior to the exam. If this deadline cannot be met for any reason (e.g exam paper not available in time) the FDCO/DDCO should liaise with the AEA coordinator to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged by the delay in producing alternative format papers.
2. Large Print: The FDCO/DDCO is responsible for producing the examination paper in the required format and providing copies to the AEA coordinator at least 2 days before the exam is to be held.
3. The FDCO/DDCO is responsible for providing subject coordinators with a timely reminder that a student in their subject has an AEA, and they should be available to answer any queries students may have about the exam paper.

Student responsibilities

1. Students are required to respond to requests by AEA coordinator for confirmation of exams that require AEA.

2. In the event that a student does not confirm the requirement of an AEA, Student Administration shall not proceed with the implementation of AEA's and the student will complete the assessment with the rest of the student body.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification of their AEA should they not receive a request for confirmation of an AEA or be notified about the specific details of their AEA.
4. It is the responsibility of the student to have and maintain a valid University email account.

DLU Responsibilities

1. On request from the AEA co-ordinator, the DLU sources appropriate Academic Support Workers.
2. If required, the DLU arranges for the student and the ASW to trial a test exam to familiarise both the student and the ASW with the preferred examination protocol.
3. Refer students with approved AEA's to Student Administration for advice on processes re the implementation of AEA's.

B AEA's Referred to the Faculty for Implementation, Winter, In-class and Mid-semester exams or tests

1. Student Administration may refer AEA's to the faculty for implementation where appropriate, including circumstances where AEA venues are at capacity and where last minute arrangements are required.
2. AEA's for exams or tests conducted in Summer, Winter, mid-semester or in-class should be implemented by the faculty.

Faculty Responsibilities

1. The FDCO/DDCO organises the venue, invigilation and any other approved AEA's.
2. The FDCO/DDCO notifies the student of the final details for the examination including student name and ID, subject title and code, venue, date, starting and finishing time and a list of the approved AEA's.
3. If the student's exam is to be rescheduled, then either the FDCO/DDCO organises for the student to complete a statutory declaration form.
4. Where relevant, the FDCO/DDCO advises the relevant teaching staff of the names and details of venue, etc of students who have approved AEA's.
5. At least 4 weeks prior to the examination the FDCO organises for examination papers to be produced in Braille, electronic format, audio-taped or produced in large print. If this deadline cannot be met for any reason (e.g exam paper not available in time) the FDCO/DDCO should liaise with the DLU or the relevant teaching staff to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged by the delay in producing alternative format papers.

6. The FDCO/DDCO is responsible for ensuring that computers used during examinations are set up to meet individual student requirements and maintain academic integrity of the assessment.
7. If an Academic ASW is required the FDCO requests the DLU to source an appropriately trained person.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students with approved AEAs who require AEAs for Summer, Winter, in-class or mid-semester tests shall advise the relevant teaching staff of their needs at least 2 weeks prior to the assessment.
2. Depending on the nature of the test the students may request a variation to the approved AEAs. Variations must be approved by the relevant teaching staff.

DLU Responsibilities

1. On request from the FDCO/DDCO source ASWs.
2. If required the DLU will arrange for the student and the ASW to trial a test exam to familiarise both the student and the ASW with the preferred examination protocol.
3. Provide advice and assistance to the faculty with the development of examination papers in Alternative Format or any other matter in relation to the provision of approved AEAs.