

Draft Guidelines for Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities on School Placement

What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is any intervention or support which serves to reduce barriers to participation in education or employment for people who are at a substantial disadvantage. (Examples: transport to placement; support with lesson planning.)

Reasonable accommodations enable students to perform essential tasks whilst on their course and will also help them to practice competently in the workplace. The purpose of reasonable accommodations is not to give the students with disabilities/health issues an advantage over other students but to reduce the significant disadvantage caused by the impact of their disability, and to ensure safe practice.

N.B. The same professional standards, levels of competence and learning outcomes apply to all students.

1. Before Placement

Student registers with the Disability Support Officer:

- Students requiring learning supports are advised to register with the Disability office in St. Angela's College. A Needs Assessment will be carried out.
- If the student agrees to disclose the disability or specific learning difficulty, the School Placement office is informed. The School Placement Office communicates with tutors (when allocated.) The student may also consent to disclose to staff in a placement school.

Students who require specific accommodations in the placement school:

- Student consents to disclose to the school. The Disability officer and the Director of School Placement arranges a meeting with the student to identify reasonable accommodations on placement. This meeting ideally will take place at least 12 weeks before placement.
- Following the meeting, the Disability officer forwards a Placement LENS to the student and School Placement Office detailing the reasonable accommodations/supports required in advance of placement and during placement. This LENS report will be communicated by the School Placement Office to the School Placement tutors, where appropriate. Students are also responsible for communicating the LENS report to tutors.

Students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties:

- Student meets with the Disability Officer to explore different strategies to help overcome difficulties on school placement. The suggestions are documented by the Disability Officer and sent to the student. This meeting must occur 6-8 weeks before School Placement. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this meeting.

2. During your placement

During placement, if the student's needs change, and further reasonable accommodations are required, the student must contact the School Placement Office.

3. After your placement

- **For students with a specific learning difficulty:**
It is important to review the success of your strategies regarding planning, Power Point presentations, reading etc. If there were specific challenges, please consult the Disability officer in advance of the next school placement to review your needs.
- **For students granted specific accommodations in the placement school:**
If you were granted specific accommodations in your school, the student and Disability Officer evaluate these accommodations following placement. If changes are required for the next placement, changes must be made to the placement LENS by the Disability Officer.
- After your placement, you should reflect on how well the reasonable accommodations worked and discuss any concerns you have with your Disability Officer and the Director of School Placement. It may be necessary to review your needs and reasonable accommodations in preparation for your next placement.

To Note:

- **Disclosure**
Disclosure of a disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition is the student's responsibility.

There is no legal requirement for a student to disclose a disability / health issue. A student has the right to choose whether to disclose his/her disability and to whom and when to disclose. Disclosing a disability facilitates the provision of reasonable accommodations. However, the student has a professional responsibility to ensure that non-disclosure does not present a risk to yourself and/or others. The College has a legal obligation to disclose any factor which may have potential to cause harm or risk in the context of a school placement setting.

If a student chooses to disclose directly to a member of the Education or Home Economics Department, he/she will be advised to register with the Disability Office so that a needs assessment can be carried out. This is followed up an email to the student advising them to register with the Disability Office – this written advice is a legal requirement.

Current legislation requires that employers and educators provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and ensure that they do not discriminate against them.

- **What happens if I do not chose to disclose?**
If you chose not to disclose your disability/health issue you will not be afforded reasonable supports and accommodations. However, disclosure may be necessary where there may be a potential risk or harm to students or colleagues in a school placement setting.
- **Consent to Disclosure**
Once the student has agreed to disclose to the Disability Officer and signed the consent form, this consent is considered to be given for all subsequent placements for the student's course.
- **Confidentiality**
All information students wish to disclose will be treated in confidence, in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Information will only be disclosed to those persons identified in the Placement LENS with the consent of the student.

School staff may/may not need to be informed of specific details of the student's disability in order to implement support measures.

Relevant school staff will be informed of a student's reasonable accommodations by the School Placement Office in specific circumstances.

- **Review of Reasonable Accommodations**

If required, reasonable accommodations / supports can be reviewed and/or modified should the need arise during placement.

Reasonable accommodations must be evaluated following each placement and changes made if required.

Placement accommodation notes

- Disability Officer to send email regarding general supports for students available for School Placement in early October. Follow up email sent in January.
- If concerns were raised during the placement, the student is strongly advised to meet the Disability Officer well in advance of the next school placement, to consider strategies to help overcome challenges.

Possible Reasonable Accommodations for School Placement

- Accessible placement location
- Flexibility with hours worked in the day e.g. rest breaks/administering medication etc.
- Request support phone call/visit from School Placement Office.

Possible accommodations organised by the Disability Office:

- Transport to placement if required
- Assistant e.g. PA
- Information in alternative formats if required e.g. for sensory impairments
- Assistive technology e.g. electronic dictionary; recording pen
- Personal Emergency evacuation plan in the placement school
- Management of risk for students with disabilities

Note: The provision of reasonable accommodation on school placement is undertaken in a spirit of partnership with your placement school with a view to supporting you as far as practicable.

Student Responsibilities

1. You are strongly encouraged to register with the Disability Service as early as possible following entry to your course to discuss your needs and how you might be reasonably accommodated on school placement. While you can register with the Disability Service at any time throughout the year, you are strongly advised to register early to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be put in place for you before you commence school placement.
2. You can only avail of reasonable accommodations if you disclose your disability and register with the Disability Service. If you do not inform the disability officer of your disability and are unsuccessful on school placement, you will not be in a position to claim that you were not reasonably accommodated because you have a disability.

3. If you require assistance sourcing a school placement, you should contact the School Placement Office as soon as possible to ensure that this assistance can be provided.
4. It is your responsibility to communicate to the School Placement Office if there is a problem whilst you are on school placement.
5. If a particular need emerges during placement or a change of need emerges or where a student acquires a disability or experiences a change in the level of their disability during the course of their studies, a student should communicate such information to the School Placement Office.
6. You may need to attend a review meeting on completion of your school placement with the Disability Officer to review how the accommodations worked and if any changes are required for future placements.

College Responsibilities

1. The School Placement Office will liaise with schools to facilitate inclusive school placement experiences for students with disabilities in specific circumstances.
2. The Disability Officer will make students aware that a Disability Service is available to them and that reasonable accommodations for school placement will be made where needed when students disclose a disability and register with the Disability Service.
3. The Disability Officer will invite students to review how accommodations put in place have worked. A review of how accommodations for individual students worked and whether the reasonable accommodations supported the student during placement.
4. **The School Placement Office will, where appropriate, seek the co-operation of a school with regard to providing a placement and/ or providing reasonable accommodations recommended to facilitate a student's school placement in so far as is possible bearing in mind the voluntary nature of school engagement in school placement.**

*College and Student responsibilities taken from:
DAWN 2014 Guidelines for supporting students with disabilities on school placement*

Appendix 1

Students with Dyslexia/Specific learning difficulties:

In advance of School Placement, we strongly recommend that you follow the steps laid out below:

1. Consider your own specific needs/difficulties:

Make a list of what you might find challenging on School Placement and devise your own strategies for managing those challenges e.g. spelling / reading aloud / following a lesson plan.

2. Get support from the Disability Officer:

Email the Disability Officer to make an appointment to talk through the challenges you may face on School Placement. The Disability Officer will help you to develop strategies to deal with your specific challenges e.g. compile a list of spellings for each class / practice reading the text aloud / personal organisation strategies to follow/deliver a lesson using a lesson plan

The Disability Officer will record the strategies agreed in the meeting and forward the document to the student.

3. Support in advance of School Placement:

Additional support may be available from the Subject Specific Methodologists/SEN team on development of lesson plans/Support for Specific Educational Needs.

***Please note that it is your responsibility to request and avail of these supports well in advance of your School Placement.**

Appendix 2

Student teachers with dyslexia may need to develop strategies in the following areas*:

- Development of lesson plans – may need additional support (Contact Disability Officer / School Placement Office / Subject Specific Methodologists)
- Personal organisation strategies to follow a lesson plan during a lesson e.g. cue cards/list of main points of lesson- Learning Support Tutor
- Spelling /construction of sentences in PowerPoint etc.– use of spell check / proof reading - advice from Learning Support Tutor and/or Ian Kennedy Academic Writing Centre.
- Advice re construction of sentences e.g. use free software Grammerly; advice from Learning Support Tutor and/or Ian Kennedy Academic Writing Centre
- Spelling in class: list of spellings for each lesson
- Reading strategy e.g. plan to ask students to read / rehearse reading aloud
- Pronunciation strategy – make sure you are correctly pronouncing all scientific words etc.
 - Use speaking facility in Microsoft if unsure.
 - Request an electronic dictionary with pronunciation facility from Disability Office (must be requested at least 2/3 months before School Placement).

Please discuss possible strategies (such as those above) with the Disability Officer so you can deal with potential challenges during your School Placement.

***Please note that it is your responsibility to request and avail of these supports well in advance of your School Placement.**

Acknowledgements:

St Angela's College Nursing Health Sciences and Disability Studies Dept. (2016) *Guidelines for St Angela's College Nursing Students and Associated Service Partners with Disabilities Requiring Reasonable Accommodations/Supports on Practice Placements* (Draft document)

DAWN (2014) *Guidelines for supporting students with disabilities on school placement*

DAWN (2016) *Guidelines for the provision of supports and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities in HE*

TCD (2013) *Guide for students with disabilities on Professional Placement*

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