

Document Name and Version	5.6 Learners with Learning Difficulties
Policy Number	5.6
Policies that Interact with Policy 5.6	<p>Policy 5.1 Policy and Procedure: Examinations Board Regulations.</p> <p>Policy 5.2 Assessment Regulations</p> <p>Policy 5.3 External Examiner Policy</p> <p>Policy 5.4 Moderation of Assessment Material and Results</p> <p>Policy 5.5 Learner Information Provision and Feedback in Assessment.</p> <p>Policy 5.7 Examination Results: Review, Recheck and Appeal</p>
Approval Body	Academic Council
Date of Approval	February 2020
Date Policy Comes into Force	25 th January 2021
Date of Review	2025
Revisions	

1. Preamble.

- 1.1. Fair and equitable assessment requires differentiated approaches that accommodate the ability of different learners while maintaining academic standards.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to support learners with disabilities by opening up possibilities for participation in IICP College's activities. In particular this policy provides a framework for the provision of Reasonable Accommodations in Assessments and related activities for learners with disabilities.
- 1.3. This policy addresses the requirements of (i) QQI's suite of QA guidelines, and (ii) QQI Assessment and Standards (revised 2013) and the requirements of Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2004, which forbid discrimination in education.

2. Scope.

- 2.1. This policy applies to all QQI validated programmes in IICP College.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1. The Decision regarding special accommodation is made by the Head of Academic Studies.
- 3.2. Formal applications are made to the Head of Academic Studies.
- 3.3. The Programme Co-ordinator and Programme Leader may provide assistance to the learner.

4. Policy.

- 4.1. There are many different definitions of disability, which apply in different contexts. One useful description for the purposes of this policy is Disability: The [Disability Act 2005](#) (Sec. 2(1)) set out the following definition:
““disability”, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on 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.”

4.2. Learners with disabilities are encouraged to disclose their disability to the College where they wish to seek special accommodation.

4.3. IICP College has two approaches to providing equality of opportunity: (i) Developing inclusive assessments, and (ii) Special accommodation.

4.4. Inclusive assessments:

4.4.1. Developing Inclusive Assessments involves thinking about assessments from the beginning to be sure that they can be accessed by diverse learners. This involves think about all learners who will participate in the assessment when designing assessments.

4.4.2. In particular, developing inclusive assessments requires:

4.4.2.1. Precisely defined test content, so that assessment criteria are clearly stated.

4.4.2.2. Accessible instructions for learners, so that accessibility is built into assessment items from the beginning.

4.4.2.3. Amenability to accommodations. Here, assessment design facilitates the use of needed accommodations.

4.4.2.4. Maximum readability and comprehensibility. Plain language strategies and other approaches that reduce ambiguity and increase understandability are particularly useful in this regard.

4.4.2.5. Maximum legibility. This requires attending to characteristics that ensure easy decipherability are applied to text, tables, figures and illustrations, and response formats.

4.5. Reasonable Accommodation:

4.5.1. Reasonable Accommodation provides an opportunity to learners to show what they have learned on an assessment through providing assessment conditions that creates parity to the conditions provided to learners without disabilities. For

some learners, this parity can be increased through the use of assessment accommodations.

4.5.2. Accommodations are changes in the conditions of assessment, without changing the actual assessment itself. The goal is to find a balance that gives learners equal opportunities to demonstrate their learning in an assessment, but does not make the assessment easier.

4.5.3. IICP College is committed to making Reasonable Accommodations where this can be shown to enable learners to fully participate in College assessments.

4.5.4. Reasonable Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis. This is carried out by the Head of Academic Studies in consultation with relevant faculty members. The agreed Reasonable Accommodations are reported in the learner file.

4.5.5. All records and communication concerning learners with disabilities are confidential to the College, except where the disclosure is authorised by the learner, and are in accordance with Data Protection legislation and IICP College's policies.

5. Procedure.

5.1. Seeking Special Accommodation in Assessments:

5.1.1. Learners with disabilities are encouraged to disclose this to the College in order to seek reasonable accommodation where appropriate. Reasonable accommodation will be considered where it is demonstrated that the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in the course, and in particular to carry out assessments. Reasonable Accommodations can only be put in place when a learner provides evidence of the disability.

5.1.2. It is recognised that applying for special accommodation can be a delicate matter, and that assistance may be required by a learner to do so. Where they so wish, learners may approach their Programme Leader or Co-ordinator, either personally or in writing. The Programme Leader or Co-ordinator will advise on the manner in which the College should be notified of the disability. This will include advice on the type of evidence required.

5.1.3. The application for special accommodation is then formally submitted to the Head of Academic Studies, who decides on (i) whether the learner is entitled to special accommodation due to the impact of the disability and (ii) the types of Special Accommodation, if any, that may be offered.

5.2. The Head of Academic Studies, in consultation as appropriate will decide whether any of the following steps may be taken:

5.2.1. Providing learners with a breakdown of course work, assessments and professional requirements prior to programme commencement and discussing individually with the learner;

5.2.2. At the request of the learner, a faculty member will meet with them to discuss how he/she feels his/her disability impacts on his/her ability to learn and how the Programme Board can appropriately format programme material;

5.2.3. Devising a strategy, on the basis of this information, as to how best the learner can be supported during his/her programme of study;

5.2.4. Recording details of the support structures identified for the learner on the centralised learner database and on the learner's file.

5.3. Implementing Reasonable Accommodations for learners: Consideration of what is reasonable will include:

5.3.1. The effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the learner to overcome the relevant disadvantage;

5.3.2. Whether the steps would significantly compromise academic or professional standards;

5.3.3. The effect on consistency with assessment conditions for other learners; and

5.3.4. The financial and other cost to the College.

5.4. Accommodations can be categorized according to whether they are changes in

- Presentation (assessment is presented in alternative visual or digital formats);
- Response (learners submit their assessments in alternate ways such as typed rather than handwritten);

- Setting (change the location in which an assessment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting); or
- Timing/scheduling (change the allowable length of testing time, or the way the time is organized, such as by extension of submission dates).

5.4.1. Decisions about which accommodations to use are individualised and are tailored to the particular circumstances of each learner.

5.5. Implementing Special Accommodation:

5.5.1. The first steps in deciding whether to offer special accommodation, and if so which assessment accommodations could be offered, involves consideration of (i) the accommodations used by that particular learner for classroom instruction, and (ii) the particular assessment and how a learner's disability may interfere with that assessment.

5.5.2. Including Learners in the Decision-Making Process: Crucially, each learner's experience of the usefulness, familiarity and effectiveness of different types of special accommodations needs to be taken into account.

5.5.3. A decision about which accommodations will be used should include a statement of any individual modifications in the administration of assessments of learner achievement that are used.

5.6. Possible Accommodations:

5.6.1. *Assessment Accommodations:*

5.6.1.1. Reasonable accommodations can be made available to learners in relation to written assessments, in order to limit the impact of the candidate's disability on their assessment performance, while not giving the candidate any unfair advantage. The standard forms of accommodation are as follows:

- Use of Assistive Technology provided by the learner, where this does not jeopardise the integrity of the assessment and the learner can show that they use this technology on a regular basis.
- Waiver from the assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation;

- Changes to submission dates;

5.6.2. *Programme Accommodations:*

- 5.6.2.1. Professional Placement support can provide assistance to learners on professionally-accredited courses to prepare for placement/internships. They can also provide advice to placement staff on disability related issues.
- 5.6.2.2. Ensuring off-campus programme events are accessible. This involves considering the accessibility of field trip/ off campus training locations. By providing full details of locations in advance, learners can make sure that off-campus programme components are accessible, and organise travel arrangements accordingly.
- 5.6.2.3. Where flexibility with course assessment schedules is a Reasonable Accommodation, the College may provide an alternative assessment / attendance schedule for the particular learner. Learners must negotiate this Reasonable Accommodation in advance with the College.
- 5.6.2.4. Providing flexibility with course attendance requirements. Attendance at all course components is a requirement for all learners, and a requirement of professional body registration. However, where a learner is unable to attend due to their disability they should not be penalised or be required to provide additional medical documentation for non-attendance. Learners should note that they will still need to ensure the required level of attendance.
- 5.6.2.5. Non-standard examination accommodations may include consent to use copy-editing services for the preparation of a high stakes written assignment or dissertation. This recommendation may be granted following consultation with the learner. The learner will be responsible for the cost of any such service.