



Swiss International
Institute Lausanne

REASONABLE ACCOMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Swiss International Institute Lausanne - SIIL

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I INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy and the associated Code of Practice (Appendix 1) is to provide a framework for the provision of Reasonable Accommodations for students with special needs (disabilities) studying in SIIIL.

The policy defines standard and non-standard Reasonable Accommodations available to students with disabilities. The policy explains how Reasonable Accommodations are granted and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate students with disabilities studying at SIIIL who are registered with the Students Office, and only for the duration of their registration within SIIIL.

The most common forms of standard Reasonable Accommodations agreed in this policy are outlined in the Code of Practice (see Appendix 1). A procedure for requesting a non-standard Reasonable Accommodation is also outlined in the Code of Practice (see Appendix 1).

SIIIL strives to create an environment where students are comfortable in disclosing a disability and are provided with opportunities to do so at various stages throughout their time at SIIIL.

SIIIL endorses the principles of inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment. SIIIL strives to ensure that its courses and programmes are as inclusive and as accessible as possible.

Students with disabilities who are registered with the Students Services Office (Academic Assistance Team) have access to appropriate academic Reasonable Accommodations and/or additional services if needed, carried out by a suitably qualified staff member in the Academic Assistance team in accordance with the individual's certified disability.

The student, the academic staff, Faculties and the Academic Assistance team are key partners in the development and provision of Reasonable Accommodations, which enable the student's participation in all teaching, learning, and assessment

II DEFINITIONS

Disability: the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;
the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;

the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;

a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or

a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour and shall be taken to include a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future, or which is imputed to a person. A disability is significant, long term and/or enduring in nature, lasting longer than a year.

Reasonable Accommodation: A Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to a disability and/or a significant ongoing illness. Factors influencing the determination of what is reasonable will include: the effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the student to overcome the relevant disadvantage; whether the steps would significantly compromise the academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study; health and safety issues; the effect on other students; and the financial and other cost to the institution. For the purpose of this policy, Reasonable Accommodations are defined as standard or non-standard Reasonable Accommodations.

A **standard Reasonable Accommodation** is defined as an amendment to the student's teaching, learning and assessment which enables them to participate fully in their education.

A **non-standard Reasonable Accommodation** occurs when the Institute recognises that Faculties may need to consider providing alternative non-standard teaching, learning, and assessment methods where standard Reasonable Accommodations are not sufficient to meet the needs of the student.

III POLICY

SILL welcomes applications from prospective students with disabilities and is committed to making Reasonable Accommodations to enable students to fully participate in student life.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to disclose their disability to the Academic Assistance Team. Academic Assistance Team staff are facilitators in the process of advising and/or providing Reasonable Accommodations and, as such, are viewed as experts in the area of Reasonable Accommodations and as a resource to both students and academic departments in the identification and implementation of Reasonable Accommodations in teaching, learning, and assessment.

Standard Reasonable Accommodations carried out by a suitably qualified staff member in the Academic Assistance Team, are communicated to the relevant academic

and service area. The Reasonable Accommodation in question will be put in place, unless a specific rationale is provided by the academic area for not implementing it.

All Reasonable Accommodations not covered in Appendix 1 are considered as non-standard requests. The Academic Assistance Team will engage with the relevant Faculty Dean or Programme/Course Director to determine if the accommodation being requested can be implemented and/or if it constitutes a 'Reasonable Accommodation'.

All SIIIL staff should maintain appropriate confidentiality (as per Data Protection legislation and SIIIL policies) of records and communication concerning students with disabilities, except where the disclosure is authorised by the student.

Students with disabilities have a proactive responsibility to register with the Academic Assistance Team, provide the required disability evidence, and follow SIIIL's procedures if they wish to obtain Reasonable Accommodations.

IV APPENDIX 1: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For the purpose of this policy and all SIIIL policies relating to students with special needs, a Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to a disability and/or a significant ongoing illness.

1. Reasonable Accommodations in Assessment

The Institute has responsibilities to ensure that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged for reasons relating to their disability in its methods of assessment. Adjustments to assessment for a student with a disability may take one of two general forms:

- (a) Modifying the circumstances under which the existing assessment is taken
- (b) Providing an alternative/equivalent form of assessment.

In only a very small number of cases the effects of the student's disability are such that an alternative form of assessment is required.

2. SIIIL Policy on Confidentiality for Students with Special Needs

SIIIL encourages students with special needs to disclose information on their disability to the Academic Assistance Team before they apply to SIIIL or at any point during their studies. Such disclosure is encouraged so that SIIIL can work with the student to ensure that reasonable accommodations are identified and facilitated in conjunction with the student. An electronic record of the student's contact with the Academic Assistance Team is held securely in accordance with the SIIIL Data Protection Policies, and information provided to the Academic Assistance Team is regarded as 'sensitive personal data'. The information may also be used for statistical and monitoring

purposes without the student's identity being revealed. Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability is held by the Academic Assistance Team, and specific medical or other documentation will not be disclosed to any third party except where necessary to provide Reasonable Accommodations. Where a student requests, and is granted any form of Reasonable Accommodation, such as extra time in exams, or permission to record lectures, the Academic Assistance Team will, in consultation with the student, disclose relevant information to the individuals in those Faculties/Student Services (e.g. Academic Registry) responsible for providing or facilitating students in accessing such accommodations. In such instances, only information relevant to the particular situation will be disclosed. Where academic staff contact the Academic Assistance Team for advice regarding individual students, staff will be informed that it necessary to obtain the permission of the student in writing, before the individual case is discussed.

The Academic Assistance Team is the first point of contact for all students with disabilities. The Academic Assistance Team works in partnership with staff from across the Institute and external stakeholders to offer a range of support mechanisms tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual students.

3. Reasonable Accommodation Decision Making Process

a). Needs Assessment

Based on appropriate evidence of a disability and information obtained from the student on the impact of their disability and their academic course requirements, the Academic Assistance Team member will identify supports designed to meet the student's disability support needs.

The following areas are addressed:

- Nature of disability or condition, to include impact on education, severity, hospital admissions etc.
- Treatment: any medication they are taking, outpatient appointments, such as physiotherapy
- Previous support: arrangements made at secondary school, if any
- Current difficulties: difficulties the student anticipates that they have or may have with their course requirements
- Access to equipment and IT facilities.
- Appropriate academic and disability support. These might include, for example, in-course support, examination support arrangements, etc.

b). Review of support

Students registered with the Academic Assistance Team with requirement of special needs support will be contacted twice-yearly to review their support requirements. This process provides students with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the quality of support received during the year. It also allows students to discuss their needs for the following academic year and to request changes to their support provision where additional support is required or support is no longer necessary.

Students can contact the Academic Assistance Team for a review of their support at any time during the academic year if the impact of their disability changes or they do not feel the Reasonable Accommodations in place adequately address their needs.

4. Standard Reasonable Accommodations: Teaching and Learning

As stated in the Reasonable Accommodation Policy, standard Reasonable Accommodations identified through the Needs Assessment process by the Academic Assistance Team are accommodations that alleviate a substantial disadvantage for students with disabilities. It is expected that the standard Reasonable Accommodations will be put in place. In cases where a Reasonable Accommodation cannot be applied and a specific rationale is provided, the non-standard decision route will apply.

The SIIL endorses the practice of inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment, and aims to ensure that courses are accessible and enable full participation for all students. Faculties are encouraged to ensure that accessibility is a key consideration when developing new courses or when redesigning or evaluating existing courses.

Reasonable Accommodations must be made to any aspect of teaching or assessment that would substantially disadvantage a student with a disability in relation to their peers, unless this accommodation would compromise the academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study. As indicated in the policy, Reasonable Accommodations are based on disability evidence and information obtained at the Needs Assessment carried out by the Academic Assessment Team.

5. Non-standard Reasonable Accommodations

In an event where standard Reasonable Accommodations are not sufficient to meet the needs of the student and they cannot undertake the standard teaching, learning, and assessment, the SIIL recognises that faculties may need to consider providing alternative non-standard teaching, learning, and assessment methods, while maintaining academic standards. These are referred to as 'non-standard Reasonable Accommodations'. The Academic Assistance Team will explore appropriate non-standard Reasonable Accommodations with the individual student and the Faculty to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to their peers.

If non-standard Reasonable Accommodations are approved by the Faculty this shall then be forwarded by the Academic Assistance Team to the relevant Dean for consideration and/or approval.

If non-standard Reasonable Accommodations are not approved or an alternative is not found, the relevant Dean will be asked to determine whether the recommended Reasonable Accommodation, or an alternative may be implemented. In all cases, the Dean's decision will be final and binding on all parties.

A process and timelines will be agreed by the Deans and communicated to all stakeholders.

a). Non-standard Reasonable Accommodations - Examinations

Examples of non-standard examination accommodation include, but are not limited to:

Reschedule exams (dates and times) within the examination session – this may be required for students who have significant physical difficulties, stamina, anxiety and fatigue management issues as a result of a disability. For example:

- When there are two 3-hour exams on the same day, some students with a physical, sensory or medical disability may tire easily or as a result of taking medication and require additional time or rest breaks.
- Candidates with conditions which result in early fatigue and impaired concentration may require morning examinations in preference to afternoon or evening examinations.
- A candidate with a physical disability who requires extra time to complete an examination and who experiences fatigue may find it difficult to manage a number of examinations in quick succession. Examinations may therefore need to be scheduled so that, where possible, rest periods are provided between examinations.

Examinations split into more than one session - When extra time is provided for an examination which is already lengthy (for example a three-hour paper) the result may be too physically and mentally challenging for some candidates with disabilities. Splitting such examinations into more than one session may be a more suitable arrangement.

A small number of students may require their exams to be scheduled over two examination sessions. This Reasonable Accommodation request may occur when the workload is considered too great for the student with a disability to take on and be fairly assessed in comparison with their peers. It may also occur when preparation for, or the sitting of, exams has been significantly interrupted by the nature of the disability.

Alternative forms of assessments - For some students with disabilities, where appropriate standard assessment accommodations cannot be made, it may be necessary to consider an alternative form of assessment to continuous assessment and examinations.

Principles to consider in designing an alternative assessment:

- Are current learning outcomes effectively measured using the proposed assessment?
- How are the needs of the student with disabilities met by using the proposed assessment?
- Have the proposals been discussed with the student?

- If it is not possible to meet their needs through use of an alternative assessment, it would have to be considered whether or not the learning outcomes are in any way discriminatory. If so, they may need to be reevaluated.
- Will academic standards or professional practices be maintained if the alternative assessment is used?
- Examples of alternative methods of assessment:
- A student with Cerebral Palsy who was unable to undertake all end of year exams due to pain and fatigue issues may be offered a reweighting in favour of continuous assessment (60%) over end of year examinations (40%).
- A student with Autism and anxiety issues, who was unable to attend tutorials and carry out presentations and group assignments may have alternative continuous assessments (Viva Voce to Lecturer alone and solo assignment or presentation) agreed. Non-standard accommodations listed above are examples and other academic Reasonable Accommodations may arise from time to time based on an individual's disability needs.

b). Non-standard Reasonable Accommodation - Teaching & Learning

Examples of non-standard teaching and learning accommodations include:

Flexible assessment deadlines - All Faculties within the Institute accept that students may require additional time to complete some aspects of their coursework arising from their disability. The reasons may include a period of illness for someone with a fluctuating medical condition or difficulties completing a high level of reading within a standard timeframe for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The individual needs of each student are considered alongside specific course requirements, meaning the length of an extension may vary. Flexibility of assessment deadlines is normally granted for a limited duration and/ or for specific circumstances. Repeated or ongoing requests for flexibility shall be reviewed by the relevant Dean and will be subject to consideration and approval by Academic Director, as appropriate.

Flexibility with course attendance requirements - Attendance at lectures, webinars, tutorials, labs and other teaching and learning activities is a requirement for all students as per SII regulations. However, where a student is unable to attend due to their disability (for example, students with mental health difficulties who are registered with the Academic Assistance Team who are unable to participate in small group webinars for a period of time), they should not be penalised or be required to provide additional medical documentation for non-attendance.

Students with disabilities should be treated differently in this regard when a request for flexibility with attendance is deemed a Reasonable Accommodation for a fixed period of time.

V REQUEST FORM NON-STANDARD REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Request for Non-standard Reasonable Accommodation in teaching, learning, and/or assessment

Part A - To be completed by Academic Assistance Team

Student Name:	
Student Number:	
Faculty:	
Study Programme	
Year of Study:	
Responsible Academic Assistant:	
Date:	
Current method of teaching, learning and/or assessment that requires a Non-standard reasonable accommodation Specify Modules and Codes and assessment	
Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations proposed and rationale by the Academic Assistance Team. Specify Modules and Codes and alternative assessments:	

<p>Other Supporting Information</p>

Part B - To be completed by relevant Academic Director / Programme Director

Student Name:	
Student Number:	

Please consider Part A above, completed by Academic Assistance Team, regarding evidence and rationale for non-standard Reasonable Accommodations: an alternative form of teaching, learning, and/or assessment on disability grounds for this student.

Please return this form to the Academic Assistance Team on completion, within 5 working days.

<p>Can the non-standard Reasonable Accommodation recommended be implemented? <i>Select Yes/No as appropriate below</i></p>	
<p>Yes</p>	<p>Please complete details of these arrangements below, date and sign this pro-forma and forward to the Academic Assistance Team detailed in Part A.</p>

No	<p>Please outline the academic reasons below, including what further action/ alternative can be put in place and return this form to the Academic Assistance Team detailed in Part A.</p> <p>State whether there is an academic reason the recommended reasonable accommodation cannot be implemented in the form suggested e.g. the recommendation would disadvantage the student in terms of learning outcomes, academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study.</p>
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