



# Alternative Academic Arrangements for Students with a Disability - Procedures



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**Document Number:**

3.50.08b

**Topic:**

[3.50.08 Alternative Academic Arrangements for Students with a Disability](#) [2]

**Approval Authority:**

Academic Registrar

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**Audience:**

All Staff

All Students

**Document Web Links:**

[PPL 3.50.06 Academic Adjustments](#) [3]

[PPL 3.50.09 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments in Examinations for Students with a Disability](#) [4]

[PPL 3.50.07 Programs and Assessment for Elite Athletes](#) [5]

[Student Access Plan Disability \(SAPD\)](#) [6]

[Privacy Management Policy](#) [7]

[Disability Discrimination Act \(1992\)](#) [8]

[Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education \(2005\)](#) [9]

[Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare \(2010\)](#) [10]

**Notes:**

December 2013 - Minor amendments to text; January 2020 - Administrative updates to broken links.

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## 1. Purpose and Objectives

These procedures enact [PPL 3.50.06a Academic Adjustments – Policy](#) [11].

## 2. Definitions, Terms, Acronyms

**Academic Programs** – sequence of study leading to the award of a qualification such as an undergraduate degree or diploma, and/or postgraduate coursework qualification.

**Exposure prone procedures** – those procedures with the potential for direct contact between the skin (usually finger or thumb) of the health care worker, and sharp surgical instruments, needles or sharp tissues (spicules of bone or teeth) in body cavities, or in poorly visualised or confined body sites including the mouth of a patient (NSW Health 1995a). An exposure prone procedure is one in which there is a potentially high risk of transmitting a blood-borne disease between a health care worker and a patient during a medical or dental procedure.

**Invasive procedures** – includes any situation where a health care worker enters the tissue, body, body cavities or organs of a patient, or surgically repairs traumatic injury to a patient.

**Reasonable adjustment** – for these procedures, a reasonable adjustment is a change to a course or program which may alter, within reason, the specific activities but retains the essential learning objectives for the course or program.

1. For these procedures, an adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all parties affected.  
Judgements about what is reasonable for a particular student, or a group of students, may change over time.
2. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable, regard should be had to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including the following:
  1. the student's circumstances;
  2. the views of the student;
  3. the effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student's:
    - a. ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
    - b. ability to participate in courses or programs; and
    - c. independence;
  4. the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including the University, staff and other students;
  5. the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

A detailed assessment, which might include an independent expert assessment, may be required in order to determine what adjustments are necessary for a student. The type and extent of the adjustments may vary depending on the individual requirements of the student and other relevant circumstances. Multiple adjustments may be required and may include multiple activities. Adjustments may not be required for a student in some circumstances.

3. In assessing whether an adjustment to the course or program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, the University is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

[for further information regarding reasonable adjustment for disabilities, see [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) <sup>[9]</sup>]

**Student with a disability** – is a student identified as having a disability as defined in the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) <sup>[8]</sup>.

### **3. Procedures Scope/Coverage**

These procedures apply in all instances where an academic program must be reasonably adjusted to accommodate a student with a disability and are particularly relevant to programs where a threshold level of competence is required for professional practice and/or registration after graduation.

### **4. Procedures Statement**

For these procedures, a reasonable adjustment may include (but is not limited to):

- alternative arrangements for examinations;
- extensions to deadlines;
- study-load adjustments;
- deferment of enrolment;
- provision of alternate modes of delivery;
- provision of alternate methods of assessment;
- allocation of a participation assistant or access tuto;
- adaptation of premises or facilities;
- specific equipment or adaptation to existing equipment.

It is the responsibility of the relevant faculty and the student to liaise with professional and registration bodies regarding the acceptability of any adjustment to an academic program regarding the impact on professional practice and/or registration.

#### **4.1 Academic standards and threshold of competence**

To ensure academic standards are maintained, and a required threshold of competence is attained by the student, the following should be identified:

- a. the necessary threshold of competence for the program;
- b. the core components of the program including core knowledge and core skills;
- c. those core program components which cannot be omitted or adjusted if the threshold of competence is to be attained;
- d. the particular program components which can and must be adjusted if the student is to attain the threshold;
- e. what adjustments may be suitable to enable the student to equitably participate in the program without compromising core competencies.

##### **4.1.1 Defining the threshold of competence**

In defining the threshold of competence the following questions should be asked:

- a. are those particular program components which may disadvantage a student with a disability among the core academic requirements of the program?
- b. can the student with a disability address the core academic requirements of the program if a reasonable adjustment is made or reasonable help provided?

#### 4.1.2 Staff involved in the process

Staff involved in working with the individual concerned in order to develop reasonable adjustments and to consider issues such as the threshold of competence will include:

- a. the executive dean; Dean, Graduate School; head of the relevant school, centre or nominee (as appropriate);
- b. the Academic Registrar or nominee; and
- c. a Disability Adviser, Student Services.

Others who might usefully be involved can include:

- a. individuals who may need to be consulted about the precise nature of the disability, the implications of the disability for completion of specific program requirements, and the nature of any specific adjustments needed to assist the student equitably participate in the program with a view to attaining the required threshold of competence;
- b. a support person to accompany the student during discussions. A representative of the UQ Union or any other person the student nominates, may fill this role.

The privacy of the student should be a prime consideration throughout the process of assessing and/or devising an alternative academic program and be consistent with the University's [Privacy Management Policy](#) [7]. The number of people made aware of the alternative program for implementation purposes should be on a 'need to know' basis only and where possible, information should be restricted to the functional implication of a disability.

Although optional, a [Student Access Plan Disability \(SAPD\)](#) [6] is frequently implemented in order to facilitate adjustments. For more information on SAPD, please see the [Student Services website](#) [6].

#### 4.2 Particular issues relating to students with a blood-borne virus

The development of alternative academic programs for students with a blood-borne virus who are undertaking or applying for entry to programs in the health and biological sciences should draw on the [Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare \(2010\)](#) [10].

These guidelines identify the differing restrictions on the performance of invasive and exposure prone procedures by those affected by the various blood-borne viruses. Blood-borne viruses discussed in the guidelines include the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV). The same approach would apply to any new or emerging viruses which are considered to be transmissible by blood or other body fluids.

Reasonable adjustments will need to take account of these restrictions as well as those on ultimate professional practice. Within this context, it should be noted that it is not considered unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability if this is necessary to protect public health.

Issues associated with practice and/or registration are particularly relevant when adjusting programs for current or prospective students with a blood-borne virus. Specifically:

- a. in relation to medicine students undertaking modified programs because of their potential infectivity when performing certain clinical activities almost certainly will

have limitations placed on their subsequent practice. Such conditional medical practice is likely to require an undertaking that exposure prone procedures will not be performed by individuals infected with HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C.

- b. A number of programs have specific rules that make specific reference to blood borne viruses.

Individuals with a blood-borne virus who are applying for entry to one of these programs or students who become infected during the program, should be alerted by the University that restrictions on professional practice may apply.

Current or prospective students with a blood-borne virus will be responsible for ascertaining any specific professional registration requirements or restrictions.

Current and prospective students with a blood-borne virus should be encouraged to seek appropriate advice regarding the personal and public health issues associated with both study and practice in the health and biological science fields.

### **Custodians**

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### **Links:**

[1] <https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/print/node/636>

[2] <https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.50.08-alternative-academic-arrangements-students-disability#Procedures>

[3] <http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.50.06-academic-adjustments>

[4] <http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.50.09-arrangements-reasonable-adjustments-examinations-students-disability>

[5] <http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.50.07-programs-and-assessment-elite-athletes>

[6] <http://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/Disability+policies>

[7] <https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/1.60.02-privacy-management>

[8] [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/dda1992264/s4.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/s4.html)

[9] <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/F2005L00767>

[10] <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/node/30290>

[11] <http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/3.50.06-academic-adjustments#Policy>

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