

The Code of Practice of the Disability Office Student Life and Learning

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Code of Practice of the Disability Office at SETU Waterford

Introduction

SETU Waterford is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and to ensuring that students with a disability have as complete and equitable access to all facets of Institute life as can reasonably be provided. SETU Waterford has adopted a code of practice which is applicable to all students with disabilities studying in the Institute. This is in accordance with the Disability Act 2005 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 (as amended). Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the Disability Office to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

This Code of Practice applies to all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate with permanent or long term disabilities, at SETU Waterford. It aims to provide a high standard of service to students with disabilities. SETU Waterford will provide disabled students with reasonable accommodations (as assessed and approved in the Needs Assessment undertaken by Disability Office staff at the Institute) to ensure that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled student. A substantial disadvantage is one that entails time; inconvenience, effort or discomfort, compared to other students and which is more than minor or trivial.

For the purposes of all SETU Waterford policies relating to disabled students, reasonable accommodations are determined through a needs assessment process taking into account the nature of a disability, course requirements and individual differences.

The purpose of this Code of Practice for SETU Waterford is twofold:

- to outline to students with disabilities their rights and responsibilities in receiving reasonable accommodations in SETU Waterford ;
- to define the rights and responsibilities of SETU Waterford in relation to supporting students with disabilities.

For the purpose of this document and all SETU Waterford policies relating to students with disabilities, a reasonable accommodation might be any action that helps alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to disability. Making a reasonable accommodation might involve changing procedures, modifying the delivery of aspects of the course taken, providing additional services (e.g. examination arrangements, materials in large print), or altering the physical environment. SETU Waterford is committed to the creation of a learning and teaching environment where provision is seen as equal to and not different from provision for other students.

Every student with a disability has the right to:

- Equitable access to courses, services, activities and facilities offered by SETU Waterford.
- Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or additional services determined and approved by a needs assessment and in accord with the individual's certified disability/specific learning difficulty
- Request a review of their reasonable accommodations
- Appropriate confidentiality of disability records (files) and that disclosure of information will only happen with the student's written consent
- Information reasonably available in accessible formats
- Be treated with dignity and respect.

Every student with a disability has the responsibility to:

- Identify themselves in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation.
- Provide disability documentation from the required professional source that verifies the nature of the disability.
- Register with the Disability Office and follow Disability Office and SETU Waterford procedures if they wish to obtain reasonable accommodations. This includes signing this Code of Practice and consenting to release of information.
- Students must follow specific procedures for obtaining reasonable accommodations, such as:
 - Examination Arrangements

- Academic Adjustments
- Applications to the ESF Student with Disabilities Fund for funded supports such as Assistive Technologies
- Access to Educational Support Worker services
- Treat staff of the College with dignity and respect.

SETU Waterford has the right to:

- Maintain the Institute's academic standards.
- Request disability documentation from the required professional source that verifies the nature of the disability or an 'Evidence of Disability Form' completed by the required professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations and/or support aids. The 'Evidence of Disability Form' can be found on our web page.
- Discuss a student's need for reasonable accommodations with the professional source of his/her documentation, having obtained the student's signed consent authorising such disclosure and discussion.
- Select from equally effective and appropriate accommodations in consultation with students with disabilities.
- Review an individual's reasonable accommodations to determine they are working effectively in line with good practice.
- Deny a request for reasonable accommodation if the documentation does not identify a specific disability and/or functional limitation, or if it fails to verify the need for the requested services.
- Refuse to provide an accommodation that is inappropriate or unreasonable, including any that: pose a direct threat to the health or safety of student and others, constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or programme, or pose undue financial or administrative hardship on SETU Waterford.

SETU Waterford has the responsibility to:

- Ensure that the Institute's courses, programmes, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are delivered in the most integrated and accessible settings possible.

- Provide to students with disabilities information regarding SETU Waterford's policies and procedures and ensure that they are available in accessible formats on request.
- Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations and/or support aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by a student.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where the disclosure is authorised by the student.

More specifically, SETU Waterford's Disability Office personnel have the responsibility to:

- Assist students with disabilities to self-identify and meet SETU Waterford's criteria for eligibility to receive reasonable accommodations determined and approved through a Needs Assessment on registering with the Disability Office.
- Assure confidentiality (subject to the student signing the disclosure of information form) of all information pertaining to a student's disability.
- Inform students on professional courses of additional responsibilities and the need to plan reasonable accommodations for placements in advance.
- Identify students who may require a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).
- Request feedback from students about the effectiveness of the supports provided in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of the service provided

SETU Waterford's Policy on confidentiality for students with disabilities

SETU Waterford encourages students with disabilities to disclose information on their disability/specific learning difficulty to the Disability Office before they apply to the Institute or at any point during their studies. Such disclosure is encouraged so that the Institute can work with the student in ensuring that they can register with the Disability Office and thereby avail of any reasonable accommodations required through Needs Assessment.

An electronic record of your contact with us is held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Acts (1998-2018) and information provided to the Disability Office is

regarded as 'sensitive personal data'. The information may also be used for statistical and monitoring purposes without your identity being revealed.

Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability is held by the Disability Office and specific medical or other documentation will not be disclosed to any third party except where necessary to provide reasonable accommodations. Where a student is granted any form of reasonable accommodation, such as extra time in exams, or permission to record lecturers, the Institute of Technology will, in consultation with the student, disclose relevant information to the individuals in those Departments/Schools responsible for providing or facilitating students in accessing such accommodations. In such instances, only information relevant to the particular situation will be disclosed.

Disability Service Complaints

Complaints in relation to decisions made by Disability Office staff or with service delivery should be dealt with through SETU Waterford's Complaints Procedure.