

Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs) Policy

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| From | Student Disability and Inclusion |
| Date | 14 May 2025 |
| Related Policies | Student Disability and Inclusion Policy Disability Statement |
| Related procedures | Regulations Governing Academic Responsibility and Conduct Developing Inclusive Practices Inclusivity Good Practice Checklist Equality Opportunity and Diversity Policy Fitness to Study Reasonable Adjustment Guide for Staff and Managers. Regulations Governing Special Consideration |
| Approving Authority | Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee |
| Contact Point | Head of Student Disability and Inclusion |
| Review | Annually |
| Version | 1 |

POLICY INTENT

The Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs) policy is designed to ensure that all students, regardless of disability, neurodivergence, specific learning difference, long-term health condition, or mental health condition, have the opportunity to succeed in examinations. By implementing reasonable adjustments through Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs), we aim to ensure that every student can fully demonstrate their abilities and achieve their potential.

LEGISLATION

- Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty)
- Human Rights Act 1998

DEFINITIONS AND ANACRONYMS

- Disability: this policy follows the [definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010](#).

Anacronyms

- SSR: Student Support Recommendations
- SSA: Student Support Appointment
- AERs: Additional Exam Recommendations

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy applies to all students on all programmes where there is a requirement to complete an exam.
- 1.2 An exam is interpreted as short time-bound assessments (less than 8 hours) which are sat under traditional exam conditions, invigilated, and completed individually. This may include formative and summative assessments, and in-class tests.
- 1.3 This policy does also cover practical examinations, though it is recognised that for some programmes, professional regulations will impact the feasibility of certain reasonable adjustments being applied due to the requirement that certain competency standards must be demonstrated.

- 1.4 This policy does not apply to take away assessments such as coursework, assignments, or presentations. Reasonable adjustments should still be applied to these modes of assessment where needed, but they are not covered under this policy.

2. UNIVERSITY POLICY

2.1 Principles

Equality Act 2010

- 2.1.1 The university recognises its legal obligations to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students as set out under the Equality Act 2010. This includes reasonable adjustments for exams. At the University of Southampton, we refer to this as Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs).
- 2.1.2 We recognise that each student has unique needs. We will carefully consider each student's situation on an individual basis to provide reasonable adjustments that fit their specific needs, as long as it is reasonable and practicable to do so.
- 2.1.3 Reasonable adjustments in exams do not extend to adjustments of the 'competence standards' expected in relation to any particular examination.

Data

- 2.1.4 We will handle students' disability data sensitively and in line with the university's [Privacy Notice](#). Health and disability information will be shared within the university on a need to know basis only.

Language

- 2.1.5 This policy uses the term 'disability' and 'disabled' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that some students will choose not to identify with these terms but may still require reasonable adjustments.

Supporting information

- 2.1.6 We may request supporting information from students to help determine the appropriate reasonable adjustments for students' exams. For students who do not have this information or a formal diagnosis, we will strive to develop a constructive knowledge of their disability, with a view to putting

in place a reasonable adjustment where possible. We recognise that the university may still have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students who do not have a formal diagnosis of a disability.

2.2 Procedure

2.2.1 Students request AERs through completion of form or in a Student Support Appointment (SSA). At any point after enrolment, a student may request AERs by completing a request form which is held on the Student Disability and Inclusion SharePoint site. There are two routes for students to follow at this point: an AER only route, or to meet with a Specialist Practitioner to create a Student Support Recommendations document (SSR route).

AER only route

2.2.2 If a student opts for the AER only route, their request will be reviewed by the Student Disability and Inclusion team. If supporting information has been provided and there is clear need and eligibility under the Equality Act for the implementation of AERs, this will be processed by the Student Disability and Inclusion team and the student will receive an email confirmation. Their AERs will be inputted into Banner (university records system) and will be visible by module staff via Blackboard. An SSR will not be created.

In cases where the appropriateness of requested AERs is uncertain, students may be asked to provide further supporting information or to assist the university in developing a constructive knowledge of their disability.

SSR route

2.2.3 If a student wishes to meet with a Specialist Practitioner, they will be able to discuss their requirements for AERs in a Student Support Appointment and these will also be captured into an SSR alongside any other recommendations for reasonable adjustments at the university. Students who require AERs which are considered more bespoke and complex will usually require an SSR.

Deadlines for students

2.2.4 In order for the university to have sufficient time to process and implement all AERs, there is a need to provide a deadline for students to request AERs

for each exam period. This will typically be 8-10 weeks before the assessment period starts but this date will be communicated to all students each semester. If students request AERs after this deadline, they will be advised that AERs are unlikely to be able to be implemented until the subsequent exam period, although we will endeavour to implement these where it is possible to do so. In these cases, students may instead be advised to apply for special considerations if their performance in their exam has been significantly impacted.

Provision of AERs

2.2.5 The following is a non-exhaustive list of AERs which students may request:

- Extra time
- Flagged scripts to ensure a student is not penalized for typical spelling and syntax errors
- Rest breaks
- Use of a PC
- Use of Assistive Technology or Software
- A reader or a scribe
- A smaller venue

Alternative Assessments

2.2.6 In certain situations, providing extra time may result in excessively long exams. While most students will receive 25% extra time, there are instances where 50% or even 100% extra time may be appropriate. In such cases, it is essential to consider the reasonableness and impact of maintaining the student under examination conditions for an extended period of time, taking into account their individual circumstances. In these situations, the suitability of an alternative assessment method should be explored in consultation with both programme team and Student Disability and Inclusion. This would not apply in situations where competence standards need to be assessed through the method of examination such as OSCEs.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Disability and Inclusion Team

- 3.1 The Student Disability and Inclusion team will be responsible for assessing student's needs, making recommendations for AERs, and inputting these into the student records system.
- 3.2 They will also be responsible for the training and provision of readers, scribes and prompters.

Exams and Awards Team

- 3.3 The exams and awards team will be responsible for the coordination and scheduling of university examinations, and for the provision and training of invigilators who may be responsible for implementing AERs.

Invigilators

- 3.4 Exam invigilators will be responsible for ensuring the AERs are implemented within the examination e.g. that rest breaks are taken suitably, for ensuring that students with additional time are granted this.

Faculty Admin and Assessment Teams

- 3.5 Faculty Admin and Assessment Teams will be responsible for administering 'in school' examinations. They will also be responsible for requesting readers, scribes, and prompts from the Student disability and Inclusion team before key university deadlines.

Academic Staff

- 3.6 Academic staff will be responsible for informing support services if they believe that there is a student with unmet needs who needs support. This should ideally be done with the consent and agreement of the student, but this is not a strict requirement. They will also be responsible for the implementation of reasonable adjustments in assessments outside of the exam regulations such as in class tests. It is permissible for academic staff to put in place interim and informal reasonable adjustments in consultation with the student whilst awaiting formal recommendations for reasonable adjustments by the Student Disability and Inclusion team

Students

- 3.7 Students will be responsible for engaging with appropriate services at the university and sharing relevant information regarding their need for reasonable adjustments. This may include completing a form to request exam adjustments which must be completed before key university deadlines to maximise the likelihood of the university being able to implement the AERs.

| Document Information | |
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| Author | Student Disability and Inclusion |
| Owner (committee) | Academic Quality and Standards Subcommittee |
| Approved Date | May 2025 |
| Last Revision | N/A |
| Type of Document | Policy |