



**PRACTICE PLACEMENTS POLICY/PROCEDURE
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REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE Education Studies (ITE/PCET)

This policy and procedure applies only to ITE students and those on Education Studies programmes. Separate policy and procedure documents are available to support Social Care and Health students.

1. Introduction

Following the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1995) and its subsequent amendments, and the Special Education Needs Disability Act (SENDA) (2001), there is a duty for Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) to provide appropriate support to students with a disability. The University, in meeting this obligation, has a range of strategies in place to support students on campus. Placement Providers may meet this duty by making what are described as '**reasonable adjustments**' to ensure disabled students have the same opportunities as others to benefit from work based/practice placements, and to facilitate the student in meeting practice based learning outcomes/competencies.

DDA 2005 extends the requirements for public bodies (including HEI's) to **actively promote** equality of opportunity for disabled people and to publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES) setting out how this will be done. The University's DES was published in December 2006. The DES describes the University's commitment to the social model of disability.

Further guidance outlined in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) '*Code of practice for the assurance of quality and standards in higher education: Section 3: Student with disabilities*' – October 1999, indicates that HEI's should develop policies and procedures that highlight:

'...implications for disabled students of collaborative provision and articulate arrangement involving study in more than one institution and/or other partner organisation'

The development of this policy and procedure was led by the Practice Placements Policy and Procedures Group.

A broad variety of stakeholders were consulted in the development of this policy and procedure, including the Northumbria University Disability Advisor, Associate Dean for Education and Social Care, Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, Programme

Managers, Administrative Staff responsible for managing placements, students, representatives of the Admissions team and the partnership with schools and educational settings..

3. Policy Statement

To discharge its duty to the relevant Acts and meet the standards of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, in consultation with placement providers, has agreed the following policy and procedure to facilitate reasonable adjustments that support students with a disability, to access and make full use of off campus practice placements.

This policy and associated procedure applies to all programmes in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences that require student allocation to a practice placement as part of a programme of study.

“fit to teach: those who are in generally good health but who have conditions which are likely to interfere to some extent with their efficiency in teaching either all subjects or certain specified subjects, though these conditions are not serious enough to make the candidate unfit for the teaching profession. This includes those whose disability could require ITT providers to make a reasonable adjustment to enable them to provide effective and efficient teaching. (TDA 2004 Able to Teach: Page 5)

“In deciding whether a candidate is fit to teach, the provider’s occupational health adviser (OHA) will consider whether candidates:

- Have the health and well-being necessary to deal with specific types of teaching and associated duties (adjusted, as appropriate) they are engaged in
- Are able to communicate effectively with children, parents and colleagues
- Possess sound judgement and insight
- Remain alert at all times
- Can respond to pupils’ needs rapidly and effectively
- Are able to manage classes
- Do not constitute any risk to the health, safety or well-being of children in their care
- Can, wherever necessary and appropriate, be enabled by reasonable adjustment to meet these criteria.

‘Teaching’ is legally defined as:

- Planning and preparing lessons and courses for children
- Delivering lessons to children
- Assessing the development, progress and attainment of children, and
- Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of children.

This legislation is designed to ensure that teachers are not required to carry out tasks that could be delegated to other members of school staff. It may be helpful to bear this in mind when considering whether a person is fit to teach. It means that, for example,

there should be no presumption that a teacher has to be able to lift heavy objects, drive a car, swim, deal with every child's physical needs, or go on physically demanding trips.
(TDA 2007 Able to Teach)

2. Definitions

2.1 Disability

'A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities' **DDA 1995**

Social model of disability: 'the poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal or environmental barriers' **Disability Rights Commission, 2005**

QAA (Oct 1991, p.5) indicate that *'Institutions should be aware that disability covers a wide range of impairments including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems'*

2.2 Discrimination Against Disability

Under the DDA Part 4, discrimination against disabled applicants or students can take place in either of two ways:-

- by treating the person "less favourably" than other people
- by failing to make a "reasonable adjustment" when the person is placed at "substantial disadvantage" compared to other people for a reason relating to their disability

2.3 Reasonable Adjustment

What adjustments are reasonable for an institution/organisation to take will depend on individual circumstances, for example, the type of work placement being provided, the nature and length of the placement and the importance of the placement to the course or to the particular student's learning. The implications of a student's disability are also relevant in the context of a placement providers own Reasonable Adjustment policies and procedures and where appropriate the need to initiate organisational health and safety risk assessments.

Some of the other factors to be taken into account in determining what is reasonable are:-

- The financial resources available to the placement provider
- The cost or practicality of making a particular adjustment
- Grants or loans available to assist disabled students with reasonable adjustment such as the Disabled Students' Allowances
- The extent to which aids or services will otherwise be provided to disabled students

- The need to maintain academic and other standards as prescribed by Professional/Regulatory Bodies
- The relevant interests of other students / individuals
- The relevant interests of pupils/students in the placement sites

Some examples of adjustments that may be made include:-

- Provision of a support worker, where appropriate
- Modification of or provision of specific equipment, eg, a chair, a mouse, specialist software
- Relocation to a different educational placement setting
- Adjustments to premises
- Modification of Instructions, processes or procedures

4. Procedure – (Reference to Appendices 1 and 2)

4.1 Disability Disclosed on Application or at Interview

If disability is declared on the relevant application form or at interview, the Admissions Tutor will inform the relevant Programme Manager who in consultation with the applicant will recommend referral to Occupational Health/Disability Services to determine whether any reasonable adjustments may need to be made within the practice environment and whether it will impact on the applicant's ability to either access or make use of learning opportunities when allocated to practice placements. **This referral will be made within 1 week of receiving notification of the disability.**

The Admissions Tutor/ Programme Manager must advise the applicant that any offer of a place on the programme will be conditional upon:

- (a) Referral for Occupational Health/Disability Services assessment at least two and no later than four weeks before the commencement of the programme.
- (b) Occupational Health/Disability Services providing reports following such assessment usually within four weeks or at least four weeks before the commencement date of the first placement that will indicate whether:
 - **No reasonable adjustments are required** *or*
 - *There is a requirement for 'reasonable adjustments' to be made with a clear indication of what these should be* **or**
 - **No reasonable adjustments can be made**
- (c) The placement providers capacity to meet reasonable adjustments identified in the Occupational Health/Disability Services Report(s)
- (d) The availability of appropriate practice placements in partner organisations, which the applicant/student will be able to access/make effective use of

The relevant Programme Manager will liaise with the applicant throughout this process

4.1.1 Receipt of the declaration of a disability (i.e. via application form or interview)

Within one week of receiving the declaration, The Admissions Tutor (with student's consent) will inform the relevant Programme Manager who will complete and submit Form RA1 – Notification of applicant/student disability and forward to the University Occupational Health and the Disability Services Department to:

- Initiate Occupational Health/Disability Services Assessments
- Dependent upon outcome of Occupational Health Assessment / Disability Services Report(s) and in consultation with Programme Manager confirm suitability of applicant to meet the demands of the programme

4.1.2 No requirement for a Reasonable Adjustment - If there is no requirement for adjustment and the disability is such that it is not likely to prevent the applicant from accessing/making effective use of practice placement learning opportunities then a place on the programme would be confirmed by the relevant Programme Manager/Admissions tutor at this point subject to the applicant meeting all other requirements for access to the programme. The prospective student will be advised of the procedure/process, should there be a future requirement for a further assessment of reasonable adjustments to be made.

4.1.3 Reasonable Adjustment required

(a) If the report indicates that there is a requirement for 'reasonable adjustment' to be made the relevant Programme Manager will convene a Meeting with the placements coordinator/placement tutor within 2 weeks, and not less than 4 weeks before the date of commencement of the initial placement.

(b) The meeting will involve the prospective student (who will be invited to have someone accompany them for support purposes), relevant Programme Manager, Placement Co-ordinator and/or relevant Programme Placement Co-ordinator and member of placement office team coordinating placements for that programme of study. **(Reference to Appendix I)**

(c) The aim of this meeting will be to plan the student's initial placement and as many subsequent placements in advance as is possible at this time. Issues such as travel details, potential adjustments and support required will be discussed – this will allow a plan to be agreed by all parties. Further placement planning meetings may need to be reconvened prior to subsequent placements, or if there is any change in a student's/applicant's condition.

(d) It must be acknowledged that changes to placements may have to be made due to circumstances beyond the University's / Placement Providers control and that if no reasonable adjustment can be made, an alternative placement will be sought if available.

(e) The Placements Administrator, with support from the Programme Team, will liaise with the Placement Provider and relevant Placement Tutor/ Programme Placement Co-

ordinator to arrange appropriate placements and confirm that reasonable adjustments can be made, **(Reference to Appendix I)**. The planned programme of placements and any reasonable adjustments made are subject to periodic review and/or if there is a significant change in the nature of the student's disability or planned programme of allocation or the professional body requirements.

4.1.5 No reasonable adjustments can be made - University Occupational Health/Disability Service identify that no satisfactory/reasonable adjustments can be made and make recommendation that the student is not able to complete the programme. Applicant referred to Student Services / Careers Guidance to explore options for alternate programmes of study.

4.2 Disability Disclosed During the Programme of Study

We strongly recommend that students with a known disability, register themselves as disabled at the earliest opportunity, in order to gain access to the full range of support available.

Whilst applicants to higher education have a statutory duty to disclose information about disabilities or long-term health conditions for teaching courses in England and Wales, this does not always happen. Students are often uncertain about what information they have to disclose or may be anxious that in disclosing information, they may somehow be disadvantaged or discriminated against.

If it becomes apparent or the student's Mentor/Tutor suspects that the student has a disability or the student discloses to their Mentor/Tutor that they have a disability this (with the student's consent) should be reported immediately to the Placement Co-ordinator or relevant Programme Leader. The Placement Co-ordinator /Programme Placement Co-ordinator /Programme Leader must inform the student's Programme Manager at the earliest opportunity who will then advise the student that a referral to Occupational Health/Disability Services is required to ensure the student can meet the requirements of the programme.

4.2.1 The relevant Programme Manager will complete and submit Form RA1 – Notification of applicant/student disability within one week of being notified that a student may have a disability (Reference to Appendix II) to the University Occupational Health and the Disability Services Department to:

- Initiate Occupational Health/Disability Services Assessments
 - With the student's consent inform the student's Professional Tutor / Guidance Tutor
- (e)** If it is felt that the disability is such that it materially impacts on the student's ability to continue on their current placement then consideration may be given to removing the student from the placement until the Occupational Health Assessment is completed

- (f) Occupational Health/Disability Services will provide a report following such an assessment usually within four weeks. The report will indicate whether:
- **No reasonable adjustments are required** *or*
 - *There is a requirement for 'reasonable adjustments' to be made with a clear indication of what these should be* **or**
 - **No reasonable adjustments can be made**
- (g) Placement providers will determine whether any appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made
- (h) The availability of appropriate placements, with partner organisations, which the applicant/student will be able to access/make effective use of

The Programme Manager will liaise with the student throughout this process

4.2.2 No requirement for a Reasonable Adjustment - If there is no requirement for adjustment and the disability is such that it is not likely to prevent the applicant from accessing/making effective use of placement learning opportunities then the student's programme will continue as planned. The student will be advised of the procedure/process, should there be a requirement in the future for a reasonable adjustment to be made.

4.2.3 Reasonable Adjustment required

(a) If the report indicates that there is a requirement for 'reasonable adjustment' to be made the Programme Manager will convene a Placements Meeting within 2 weeks.

(b) The meeting will involve the Student (who will be invited to have someone accompany them for support purposes), Placement Co-ordinator and/or relevant Programme Placement Co-ordinator and Professional Tutor /Guidance Tutor and if necessary a member of placement office team coordinating placements for that programme of study. **(Reference to Appendix II)**

(c) The aim of this meeting will be to plan the student's future placements as far in advance as is possible at the time. Issues such as travel details, potential adjustments and support required will be discussed and the plan will be agreed by all parties.

(d) It may be necessary to ask the Placement Provider to undertake a Risk Assessment or placement providers may invoke relevant local policies to initiate a Risk Assessment. The Placement Co-ordinator or relevant Programme Placement Co-ordinator will advise on the specific requirements of the placement provider organisation.

4.2.4 No reasonable adjustments can be made – Should the University Occupational Health/Disability Service identify that no satisfactory/reasonable adjustments can be made; the matter will be referred to the Professional Suitability Panel for review, with the potential for a student's removal from the programme (Vice Chancellor's decision).

4.3 Monitoring and Review

4.3.1 Placement staff (Professional /Guidance Tutors, School Based Tutors /Liaison Tutors / Mentors/ Placement or Programme Placement co-ordinator etc) in consultation with the student will monitor any adjustments in placement to ensure they are working well for disabled students and that they are responsive to the student's current needs.

4.3.2 Any complaints of harassment and/or discrimination in a work placement should be reported to the placement provider and placement co-ordinator and investigated promptly. The aim should always be to resolve complaints locally and speedily to minimise disruption to the placement. Northumbria University may in some cases need to terminate the placement if the provider fails to ensure that the student will not face further harassment or discrimination. In such cases, alternative arrangements need to be put in place to allow the student to gain appropriate work experience elsewhere.

4.3.3 Students should be offered a debriefing session by one of the following: their Link Tutor / Placement Co-ordinator /Professional or Guidance Tutor within one month of the end of their placement, to discuss their placement experience within a context of personal development.

4.4 Evaluation and Development

Placements that make reasonable adjustments in order to accommodate students with a disability will be evaluated by the student at the end of the placement to ensure that they are providing appropriate standards and learning opportunities.

The Professional/ Guidance Tutor will provide the student with a copy of **Form RA2 - Placement evaluation after reasonable adjustment/s**. Completed copies of this form will be retained within the student's file and by the Placement Office. Feedback will be provided to the placement providers (via the Placement Co-ordinator) from the Professional / Guidance Tutor within four weeks of the student completing the placement to help improve and develop provision for disabled students. Lessons learned from the evaluation will also be fed into the strategic planning of placements.

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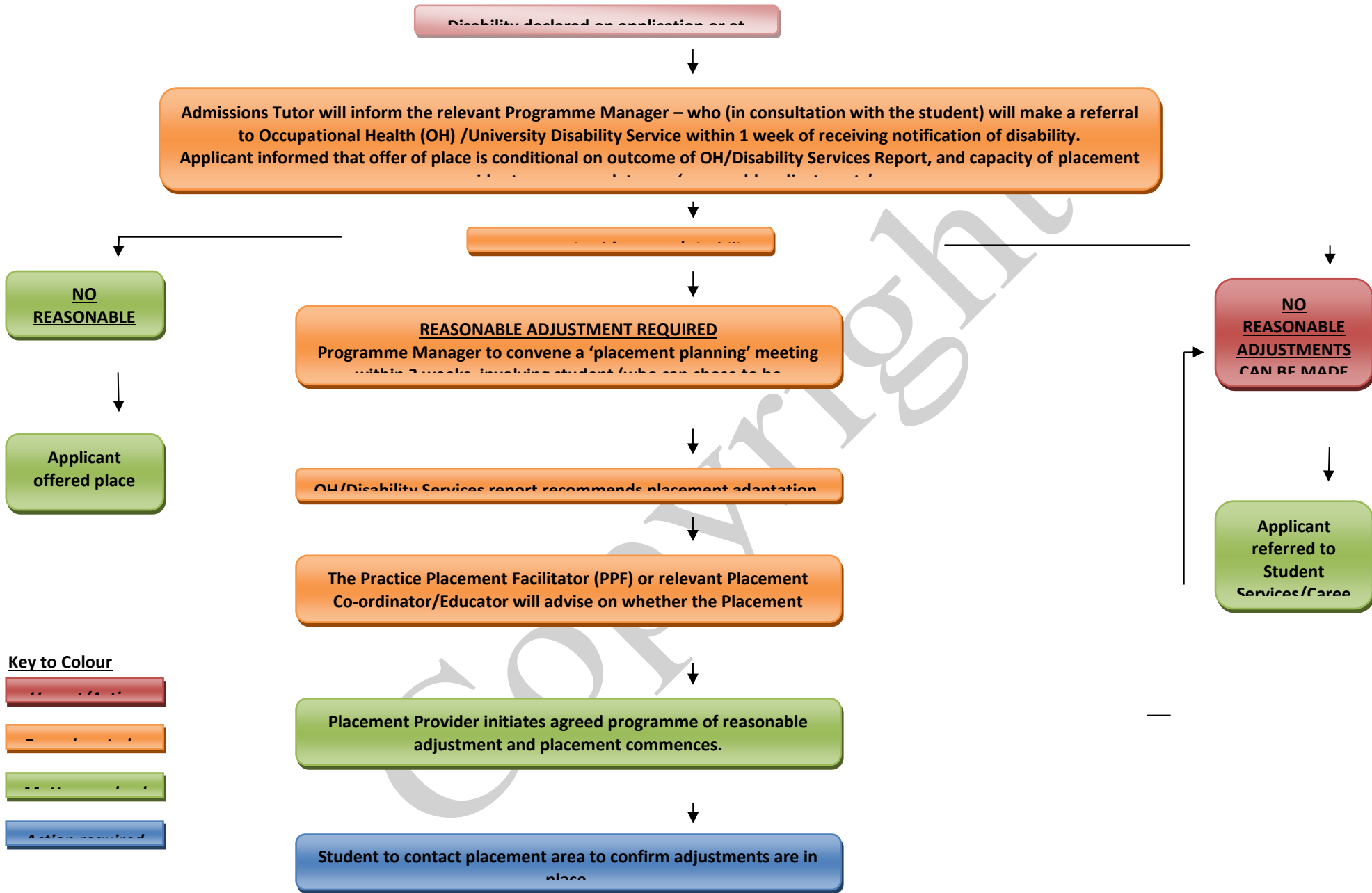
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Appendix 1: Process to be Followed if Disability Disclosed on Application or at Interview



Appendix 2: Process to be Followed if Disability Disclosed During Programme of Study

