

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 81 – SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

1. Policy Statement

Providing access to education and learning to a wide and diverse a body of students is an integral principle of Arden University’s operating ethos. Its modes of delivering higher education are designed with the diverse needs of students in mind and to provide students with flexibility and choice to help overcome some of the barriers they may face to learning. The University also recognises that individual students may have specific disability needs that may require additional support and special arrangements to be made. This policy sets out the principles by which reasonable adjustments will be made in dialogue and consultation with the student.

Arden University is committed to dealing in a fair and considerate manner with the disability needs that individual students may have and wherever possible to make reasonable adjustments to its operating procedures to accommodate those needs, whilst maintaining the integrity of the academic standards and quality of the qualifications it offers.

Students are expected to make a disability known either to their Admissions Advisor at point of application or to their Student Support team as soon as the disability becomes known to them. Arden University staff will endeavour to assess the student’s needs and the implications for their study. Where appropriate, evidence may be required to support a request for special arrangements and/or applications for hardship funding in support of DSA.

1. Special Arrangements for Assessment

Students with special educational needs or disabilities may request special arrangements in examinations or assessments by applying to the Student Support, in writing, including documentary evidence where appropriate.

Special arrangements will be made on an individual basis, based on precedent, and may include, but are not limited to:

- Special arrangements in examinations
- Extra time in examinations (e.g. for students with a learning disability)
- Accessibility arrangements
- Provision of learning materials in large/or alternative formats and fonts

The Student Affairs Committee will consider requests if a change in assessment or unprecedented conditions on behalf of the Programme Team Leader and may approve such requests on behalf of the Academic Board. The SEN team will consider all applications in advance of the review meeting and make detailed recommendations to the Student Affairs Committee.

Unprecedented requests maybe escalated to the Registrar and the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) if they require a policy decision to be made.

2. **QA 41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment**

Students with special arrangements for assessments may need to follow the QA41 Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Student Assessment procedure should circumstances arise that have had a serious adverse effect on the student's performance. These circumstances must have been unanticipated and beyond the student's control such as worsening of conditions which means that assessment arrangements not sufficient. Medical evidence will not be required when student submits a claim for mitigating circumstances if they experience an acute episode or worsening of an existing condition which means that the reasonable adjustments in place are no longer sufficient.

Mitigation forms are available within ilearn or from the Student Support team. Students are strongly recommended to ensure that claims for mitigation are submitted to a member of the Student Support team for an initial check prior to formal consideration. All claims for mitigation are considered by the Student Affairs Committee in confidence.

3. **QA76 Leave of Absence Policy**

Should more longer-term medical conditions or bouts of issues from an existing condition occur, students can temporarily suspend their studies for a specified period of up to a maximum of 12 months through the QA76 Leave of Absence Policy. Leave of absences cannot be backdated so students are advised to contact their Student Support Co-ordinator at the earliest opportunity.

A leave of absence form should be submitted to the Student Support Co-ordinator in the first instance, evidence is not required. Leave of absence requests are considered by the relevant Programme Team Leader with the outcome communicated by the Student Support team.

A leave of absence may have implications for progression, study intensity, student finance and other issues which are outside of Arden University's control.

4. **QA72 Cause for Concern Procedure**

In some instances, where there are particular concerns with and not limited to the health and wellbeing of a student, Arden University maybe required to instigate the QA72 Cause for Concern procedure. Upon review, a referral to proceed to the Fitness to Study Policy, Student Disciplinary Procedure or decide that no further action is required.

5. **QA73 Fitness to Study Policy**

Arden University seeks to maintain a safe learning environment that is conducive to the well-being, academic and personal development of all. The Fitness to Study policy aims to address concerns when a student's health maybe jeopardising their studies or the studies of others.

There are three stages within the policy involving a discussions and meetings with the student. Outcomes from each stage including the setting of an action plan, enforced Leave of Absence, change of study mode/intensity or withdrawal.

6. Support of Students applying to SEN/DSA hardship fund

The Arden SEN/DSA hardship support fund (the fund) is designed to provide financial support to students who may be eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) but who are unable to meet the associated costs of:

1. the initial assessment.
2. other funding requirements that come from an assessment e.g. £200 maximum contribution to the cost of a PC.

The above costs can provide barriers to students who are eligible, or likely to be eligible for funding but unable to meet initial or associated costs of assessment.

Limits:

7. £1,000 maximum payment per student over the lifetime of study with Arden.
8. No limit to the number of students that will be supported, but the scheme will be reviewed after 6 months to assess continuing viability on this basis.

Eligibility:

To be eligible to apply for support from the fund, students must meet the eligibility criteria for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) as set out below (extracted from Student Finance website).

Students with disabilities can apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs), for example of disabilities include:

- Long-term health condition
- Mental health condition
- Specific learning difficulty like dyslexia or dyspraxia

In order to be eligible students must also:

- Be an undergraduate including foundation year or postgraduate student
- Have a condition that affects your ability to study
- Qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- Be studying on a course that lasts at least a year

EU or international students are not eligible for DSA from Student Finance England.

Requests for support should be submitted to the Student Support team at sen@arden.ac.uk As part of applications a DSA Entitlement letter OR diagnostic quotation along with an income and expenditure form must be submitted.

Claims can be supported by providing any of following:

Evidence of income support such as Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA)



Disability Management Centre (DMC)/Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) statement

If these documents are unavailable, then a bank statement or any other suitable evidence that shows financial difficulty may be considered.

Applications will be assessed by the Student Affairs Committee with outcomes provided within 10 working days of consideration at the Student Affairs Committee. In cases where additional information is required, this may be longer.