



Reasonable Adjustments Policy

September 2023

Version 1.0
Approved by the Board of Governors

Introduction

The Vantage College (“Vantage” or “College”) is committed to supporting students' well-being as they work towards fulfilling their academic and personal potential. Together as staff and students we form a community working to facilitate learning within a culture based on mutual respect in which individual rights, responsibilities and diverse needs are promoted and celebrated. As such it is in the best interests of the students themselves that college provides a supporting and enriching learning and teaching environment that all students can develop and achieve their personal and professional goals.

Scope of Policy

This policy is particularly focused on supporting students to achieve their potential and considers the key barriers that may occur within the students' experience:

- A physical or mental health need or disability
- Support for student with additional learning needs
- Reasonable adjustment (see also appendix 1)
- Additional support during assessment periods

Vantage is committed to ensuring that students receive educational experience that is free from threat, oppression, or abuse, and celebrates equality and diversity within the authority of the Equality Act (2010) The Student Code of Conduct reinforces the view that bullying and harassment are unacceptable and inconsistent with Vantage vision and mission.

Student Support Staff will be available to support all students with mental health needs whether arising from within the college or external influence. In line with the safeguarding and prevent policy, students are free to discuss concerns in private with college staff, be that personal tutor or support staff or another member of staff that they feel comfortable speaking to.

All staff will set a good example to students and promote mutual co-operation, respect within the Vantage community, providing advice and guidance on seeking support with mental health during induction and on the college website.

Physical Needs, Mental Health Needs and Disability

At any point in their academic journey students are encouraged to speak to staff if they experience any health need and/or disability.

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects students from discrimination and makes provision for education providers to ensure make every reasonable adjustment to prevent a student being disadvantaged during their academic journey.

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is considered to have a disability 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. 'Substantial' is defined by the Act as 'more than minor or trivial'. An impairment is considered to have a long-term effect if it:

- has lasted for at least 12 months
- is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.

Normal day-to-day activities are not defined in the Act, but in general they are things people do on a regular or daily basis, for example eating, washing, walking, reading, writing, or having a conversation. Disabilities that are declared to Vantage are coded under the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) include but are not limited to:

- A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, or AD(H)D,
- A social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder
- A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- A mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia, or anxiety disorder
- A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- Deaf or a serious hearing impairment
- Blind or a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- A disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed

Support for Students with Additional Learning Needs

The College is committed to developing academic processes to enable learning and academic progression for all students, leading to reasonable adjustment of teaching, learning or assessment activity where relevant and practical.

Vantage supports all prospective, applicants and current students. All applications are considered in the first instance based on academic merit without consideration of disability. The college then endeavours to make such practicable and reasonable adjustments to each applicant with a disability or requiring special support. Vantage will align, where feasible, our policies and procedures to the approach of our partner Universities making reasonable adjustments to support and meet the needs of all students.

The college will take every initiative to continuously improve student support systems with specific reference to meet the needs of any vulnerable student who is experiencing difficulties. Information about students' needs will be managed consistently with established industry practices. The desire to further develop an inclusive approach and to meet individual student needs will also be reflected in the reasonable adjustment of learning, teaching and assessment activities.

Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable adjustments can be automatically applied to assessment (e.g., extra-time for assessment or adaptation of examination condition) and learning and teaching (e.g., provision of slides in advance and with appropriate font/colour choices) to support those students who declare a disability. All students who declare a disability at any point in their academic journey will be supported to apply for and access Disabled Students Allowances (DSA). Information about students' needs will be treated with confidentiality and only disclosed to members of staff, when necessary, to enhance the students learning experience, the learning environment and teaching practise.

Students will be informed about the management of the information relating to their disabilities or special needs and their consent will be sought verbally before sharing any information. Disclosure would only occur to ensure protection of the student and others (see Safeguarding and Prevent policy). Further guidance on reasonable adjustments can be found in appendix 1.

At all points in the student journey when a disability or health need is disclosed, discussion will be made regarding what personalised support and reasonable adjustment is required to sustain

the student and whether this can be located within the college or if a referral to an external agency is required. Depending on the level of health need, potential for the student to achieve the relevant qualification within the previously agreed schedule, further discussion, at an appropriately sensitive time, will be undertaken to explore the relevance of a temporary deferment of study (see Fitness to Study Policy). This is always discussed with the view that the student will be able to resume studies and achieve their desired qualification.

Additional Support during and Assessment Period

At times unplanned and severe events relating to health and well-being occur that may have a significant impact on a student's ability to meet an assessment deadline. Vantage understands this and as such will support all students in line with the partner Academic Assessment Regulation, to minimise the effect on the assessment outcome and academic disadvantage. Student Support Services are the best place for students to seek additional support and advice in such circumstances.

Appendix 1. Additional Supporting students through individual reasonable adjustments: an overview

Introduction: What are reasonable adjustments?

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty upon higher education institutions to make reasonable adjustments to support students with disabilities in Higher Education. A reasonable adjustment is any action which is taken arising out of the legal obligation to overcome disadvantage experienced by a person because of having a disability. 'Disability' includes long term health conditions, mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

In relation to students, a reasonable adjustment may be defined as an accommodation or alteration to existing admission arrangements, academic programmes, learning and teaching, student services, examination arrangements and rules relating to qualifications where these contain inherent barriers for students with disabilities. The implementation of a reasonable adjustment aims to enable students to access higher education without disadvantage within a framework of academic standards. There is however no duty to adjust a 'competence standard' to make allowance for a disability.

Examples of reasonable adjustments

Examples of reasonable adjustments for students with evidence of a disability of Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) include, but are by no means limited to:

Physical adjustments: for example, putting in a ramp for a wheelchair user, using contrasting coloured flooring to help people with visual impairments to see changes in floor level, or allocating parking spaces for use by disabled staff or students.

Special study arrangements: for example, modifying course materials and curriculum resources or allowing a disabled student to suspend their studies for a period.

Additional examination recommendations: for example, allowing the use of a word processor, providing examination scripts on coloured paper, using a different method of assessment for a disabled person, or allowing a disabled person extra time to complete their exam, where feasible.

Anticipatory reasonable adjustments

Vantage also has an anticipatory duty to act in advance and make adjustments to remove any disadvantage that might reasonably be foreseen as likely to affect students or service users with disabilities. For example, ensuring that there is a functional lift on campus and making provision for evacuation of disabled students in an emergency.

Who is responsible for putting in place reasonable adjustments?

Recommendations for reasonable adjustments for students enrolled at Vantage are made by Support Services and can be identified via the Student Management System (SMS).

Recommendations are communicated to staff on a need-to-know basis, including to Personal Academic Tutors, Module Coordinators, Health, and Safety officers. This process is facilitated by Student Support Services; however, it is everyone's responsibility to act on reasonable adjustments and to ensure that these are maintained in place and to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments through inclusive approaches to learning and teaching.

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