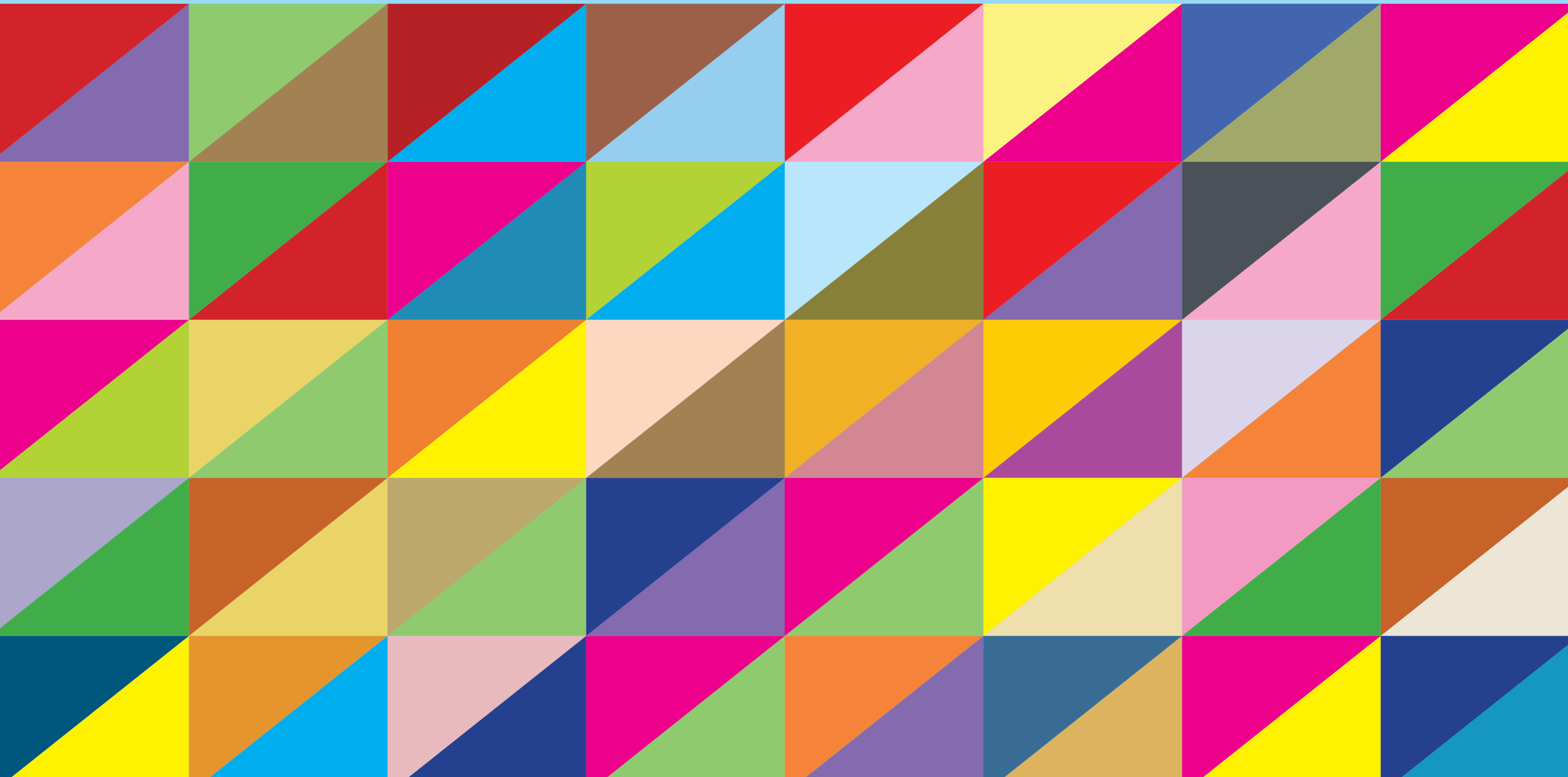


THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 2013



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome note

The University of Malta (UOM) welcomes all students with disability who satisfy the entry requirements of the UOM and wish to continue their education at tertiary level.

The UOM is proud to welcome students with disability and acknowledges the contribution they can make to the university as an inclusive learning community. One main purpose of this document is to reassure students that the UOM is intent on removing all barriers and obstacles within its power in order to enable students to choose and follow the course they would like to take up and for which they have the necessary requirements. The UOM aims to facilitate their full participation in all student activities throughout the time they spend on campus. The university will also strive to sensitise all staff and students as well as visitors to ensure an inclusive community.

It is hoped that students and staff/visitors will provide us with feedback on the booklet as well as on how support can be improved. Constructive criticism can help us, particularly when it comes from students themselves. Feedback on the student's personal experience vis à vis accessibility at university is encouraged. A form in Appendix 2 of this booklet may help the student to do this. This feedback and new developments in the field will be used for future updates. Feedback from staff is also encouraged. A form is available in Appendix 2 for this purpose. Readers who are neither staff nor students can refer to the form for other stakeholders in Appendix 2.

The main campus at Tal-Qroqq and the Gozo campus are becoming gradually more accessible. A lift has recently been installed to make the old University in Valletta physically accessible.

1.2 Organisation of information

The document is divided into six parts. This first introductory part is intended to map out the rest of the booklet.

The second part is an outline of the UOM outlook on students with disability vis à vis tertiary education and an overview of the support offered by the relevant bodies. It provides a straightforward exposition of how students are expected to develop alongside their peers and become independent learners able to take on the responsibilities of their future commitments once they leave University.

The third part explains the structures that exist and are intended to support students and staff with disability. This is intended to explain what support is available to enable them to follow a course of study at university and to participate in events on campus. Students with disability are expected to lead as full a student life as possible during the years spent as university students both during the sixth form preparatory course at Junior College and as students reading for a degree, diploma or certificate. They are also expected to increase their sense of independence and to become more autonomous. This third part is also intended to indicate how the needs of staff with a disability may be met on campus.

The fourth part looks at arrangements that can be made to help students access the course programme as well as other activities on campus. It is hoped that in later updates this fourth part will grow to respond to future developments.

The fifth part is made up of the guidelines that are followed by the Access Disability Support Committee (ADSC) to enable students with disability to access university examinations as well as other forms of assessment at the various levels for certificates, diplomas and degrees.

The sixth part consists of a listing of disabilities and a summary of the arrangements that are considered appropriate for students in order to enable them to access examinations and assessments.

1.3 Confidentiality

During the processing of the students' requests for access arrangements, it might be necessary for relevant personal information to be either:

- (a) passed on to relevant third parties or
- (b) for the ADSC to request further relevant personal information from third parties.

In either case the ADSC will safeguard all of the student's rights under the 2002 Data Protection Act (CAP 440).

2. THE ACCESS - DISABILITY SUPPORT COMMITTEE AND THE ACCESS - DISABILITY SUPPORT UNIT

2.1 Introduction

This part of the booklet is an overview of the support that can be made available (a) to students with disability both in terms of qualifying to start a University course and to follow the various course components and (b) to staff and visitors with disability. It looks at the work of the ACCESS - Disability Support Committee (henceforth ADSC) and the ACCESS – Disability Support Unit (henceforth ADSU). Moreover, it details how students with disability should apply for support as soon as they complete secondary education and apply for a course of study at a post-secondary educational institution. It explains how students should apply for support in subsequent years when they have chosen or are about to choose a course of study at University. It looks at provisions that can be made to facilitate university life for students, staff and visitors with disability.

2.2 The ACCESS - Disability Support Committee (ADSC)

The ADSC is a joint Council and Senate appointed committee chaired by the *Pro-Rector for Students and Institutional Affairs*. The committee reflects the UOM's commitment to create an environment that is as fully accessible as possible for all students, visitors and staff. The role of the committee is to ensure that the ADSU is given the facilities to support students with disability and to deal with all matters related to access. The term 'access' is applied in its widest sense and is therefore not restricted to physical access. It includes access to means of communication and to information, and encompasses the removal of attitudinal barriers.

Members of the ADSC have various areas of expertise. They are appointed to the committee in order to ensure that each request is fully understood and handled as effectively as possible. The ADSC consults with other experts whenever necessary and makes recommendations to Council and Senate regarding the ways that accessibility, in its widest sense, can be achieved for each group and individual.

2.3 The ACCESS- Disability Support Unit (ADSU)

The ADSU is the operational centre for support to students, staff and visitors with disability. The coordinator of the ADSU, who is also secretary of the ADSC, is the referral point for all requests for access arrangements and has the following roles:

1. To receive requests for access arrangements and forward them to the ADSC.
2. To liaise with the ADSC regarding any requests for access arrangements.
3. To coordinate the necessary resources for the implementation of the decisions made by the ADSC.
4. To liaise with academic, administrative and technical staff about matters related to disability issues.

The ADSU office is gradually being equipped to provide more comprehensive support services for students with disability on campus. Currently, the equipment includes a scanner to facilitate access to printed texts either on campus or in the student's home, a Braille printer and software for enlarging print and digital recorders. The ADSU can make arrangements for the use of motorised wheelchairs on campus and also has links with agencies that may be able to supply more specialised equipment when necessary.

2.4 Approaching the ADSU as early as possible

The equipment available so far reflects the needs of students who have followed or are currently following University courses. The ADSC monitors the needs of students and attempts to meet these needs by investing in specialised equipment wherever it is required and ensuring that the required human resources are made available to the student with disability. It is the policy of the University - through the ADSC and the ADSU - to cater for all students with disability throughout their course. It is therefore in the interest of the students to approach the ADSU as early as possible before they start their course to ensure that their needs are met as fully as possible. This can be done once the student has decided to follow a sixth form course, preferably before the end of secondary school. It may be difficult to provide last minute access arrangements.

2.5 Becoming independent learners

It is hoped that the UOM can be made accessible to all those who are qualified to follow a course at tertiary level notwithstanding their disability. The UOM aims to provide students with support to enable them to become independent learners. Hence, the support provided at the beginning of the course they follow is intended to bridge the path from sixth form to UOM. Students are expected to become conversant with tools and equipment, such as laptops, that make them more independent.

2.6 Obtaining appropriate access arrangements

Arrangements are made to enable all students to make the most of their time at University. Several students have struggled to follow courses at the University. These include a large proportion of students with mild or moderate disabilities who did not declare their needs and/or did not request support. It is hoped that, from now on, students will recognise that declaring their disability will put them in a better position to maximise their learning opportunities by accepting the support that can be made available without altering the course or assessment objectives.

The range of disabilities that students at University have presented with is broad. Access arrangements (AAs) include various measures taken to enable students with disability to start, follow and complete a course of study successfully. All students will have very specific requirements depending on the nature and severity of their impairments.

Access arrangements may include, in exceptional instances, the waiving of specific entry requirements listed in the admission regulations, a time extension for course completion, or extension of deadlines for assessments of study units, as well as the use of additional resources on campus. Some students cannot follow a course in the same time-frame as their peers and may need to follow it on a part-time basis. However, such arrangements have to be discussed according to the student's needs. Such arrangements require very careful planning since not all courses run in the same way every year and so it is not simply a matter of halving the course content to stretch over twice the time.

The coordinator, who runs the ADSU, usually meets the students before they start their course in order to get a clear picture of their requirements and to advise them on various kinds of support they can get from other different sources. The ADSU coordinator liaises with academic, administrative staff and technical to facilitate access to lectures and other academic activities, particularly at the start of the academic year, ensuring that the arrangements approved by the ADSC are in place, especially for examinations.

2.7 Support for additional expenses

Students with disability often incur expenses over and above those of their peers. Some help can be made available through a grant. In the past, students have used the grant money to pay for sign language interpreters, equipment and specialised software to help them access lectures or write notes as well as for other assistance. Some arrangements, such as that of a personal assistant, cannot be provided directly by the UOM but the ADSU provides students with the help they need to apply with the relevant agencies for the particular support that will enable them to follow their chosen course.

2.8 Evidence of need

Students requesting access arrangements need to supply the ADSC with adequate certification and information related to their needs in order to enable it to put the required and possible access arrangements into place. However, it must be kept in mind that these access arrangements are not intended to waive course objectives and examination criteria. Students with disability must show evidence that they are able to follow the course with profit.

Different kinds of evidence may be required from different professionals for different impairments as specified in Table 5.1. Students are advised to consult the relevant sections of this booklet to ensure that they have supplied the required information so that there will be no delay in the processing of their application for access arrangements. Where students still have doubts about the requirements they can consult the ADSU coordinator who will be glad to help clarify possibilities and requirements.

2.9 Overseas students requesting access arrangements

Overseas students requesting access arrangements must not assume that they will get the same access arrangements as they do in their home university. Firstly, it is important that all certification related to the student's impairment or condition is official and written by the appropriate specialist as listed in Figure 5.1. Secondly, certification which is not in English must be accompanied by a translation by a licensed/warranted translator. The reports submitted must explain the functional implications of the impairment or condition with enough details to enable the ADSC to make the necessary access arrangements where these are acceptable.

Students should recognise that some access arrangements which may be acceptable at their home university may not be acceptable at the UOM. Readers, for example, are not made available for students with dyslexia irrespective of the severity of their difficulty. Extra time alone is granted in cases of very severe dyslexia.

2.10 Health and safety

The UOM is very concerned about health and safety on campus. Any student with disability who may pose or face any health and safety risks in the use of any particular equipment or facility at the UOM should raise this concern with the coordinator of the ADSU and the Faculty Officer.

Students with disability are expected to do all they can to become independent learners. They are expected to shed any support which they previously relied on but which at university level is considered unnecessary. They should use any technical and technological aids not just to facilitate their academic work but also for getting about safely and independently at UOM.

Students with mobility impairment can make use of the motorised wheelchairs available at University (refer to 2.3) where their own personal wheelchairs may be unsafe on ramps and particular places on campus. Students with visual impairment should use a white stick to ensure that others around them recognise their difficulty and move in order to let them pass safely particularly up or down stairs.

2.11 Form to be filled in at the beginning of the academic year

Students in need of access arrangements should fill in the form in Appendix 1 by the commencement of the academic year. In case of doubt or difficulty please contact the ADSU coordinator (see 2.12 for contact details).

2.12 ADSU Coordinator

The ADSU coordinator can be contacted by email or phone or by calling in person at the ADSU office facing the Messengers' Lodge on the ground floor of the Old Humanities Building:

ADSU
Room 109, Old Humanities Building
University of Malta
Telephone: 2340 2557
email:adsu@um.edu.mt

2.13 Staff with disability

The UOM also hopes to support staff with disability. Many members of the academic, administrative and technical staff with disability often make their own arrangements in order to carry out their work on campus. However, the university also does its best to support them by either acquiring equipment (such as a motorised wheelchair) for their use on campus or by ensuring that equipment installed works well (e.g. lifts). Members of staff with disability are encouraged to get in touch with the ADSU coordinator to discuss their needs and, where necessary, to make requests for any support they may require.

3. SUPPORT ON CAMPUS

3.1 Introduction

The ADSC considers requests made by students, visitors and staff with disability very seriously and attempts to handle disability issues promptly.

The UOM intends to comply with legal requirements in the area of equal opportunities for persons with disability and will do all in its power to improve the quality of life of students and staff with disability on campus. It strives to extend accessibility both in terms of the physical structures, access to information and communication, access to all aspects of life on campus as well as in other ways. It considers the path to full accessibility to be the way forward and will work towards this vision for the university community. This will allow all those who are otherwise able, to successfully complete their course of studies, to be active participants of life on campus and to do so without hindrance from any avoidable obstacles. Lecturers are encouraged to become aware of any specific needs of students, and to use a variety of approaches in teaching and assessment that can motivate and enhance the understanding and achievement of all students.

3.2 Physical accessibility on campus

The University of Malta is in conformity with the building guidelines for accessibility in all its new building projects. Furthermore, it recognises the need to adapt the older parts of its campuses and allocates resources to extend access to the maximum possible. In fact, for some time now, it has been working towards providing greater physical accessibility on all of its campuses, including the Junior College. It accepts that adaptations need to be made wherever obstacles or barriers exist that make it difficult or impossible for students with disability to follow a course although they are otherwise able to. Priority is given to physical accessibility required by students and staff who are already on campus or who have informed the ADSU about their plan to join the UOM the following academic year. Students who will already be studying at the Junior College or in other post-secondary educational institutions should therefore inform the ADSU about their needs well ahead of the commencement of their course.

Whenever students or staff encounter difficulties related to physical disability, they should immediately contact the ADSU coordinator (refer to 2.12 for contact details) to ensure the most prompt action to reach a satisfactory solution.

The ADSC works closely with the Estates and Works Manager and the Precincts Officer whenever difficulties with physical access arise. Solutions to these difficulties may range from the construction of ramps, leveling of rough ground, removal of obstacles inside and outside of buildings as well as the maintenance of lifts and the supply of motorised wheelchairs for use on campus. It must be appreciated that hundreds of persons use the various buildings and sometimes, because of thoughtlessness, obstacles may be created by individuals such as when corridor furniture is moved or cars are parked in areas restricted for use by persons with disability. The UOM does not tolerate such behaviour and takes action immediately when it is brought to the attention of the Estates and Works Manager or the Precincts Officer and/or the ADSU coordinator (see 2.12 for contact details). Reporting such matters by phone, email (see the details provided below) or verbally is encouraged and appreciated. Prompt action will be taken.

Estates & Works or Precincts Office
University of Malta, Msida
Estates and Works Office Tel: 2340 2228
Precincts Office Tel: 2340 2236
email: precincts@um.edu.mt

3.3 Staff and visitors with disability

Although this booklet focuses mostly on students, the university also intends to provide support to staff and visitors with disability. The UOM recognises the need to remove obstacles or barriers, including attitudinal barriers, that make it difficult or impossible for staff with disability to carry out their duties. Members of staff are encouraged to contact the ADSU when they require support which is not otherwise available to them as well as to make requests or provide information that can help the ADSC to make changes or provide resources to support them.

Feedback from staff on the booklet and on resources or arrangements which are considered lacking at the University is appreciated. A feedback form can be found in Appendix 2.

3.4 Students' advisory services

In the process of choosing their course of studies, students with disability are advised to use the

Students Advisory Services
Tel. 23402034 or 23402847
email: sas@um.edu.mt

The staff at the Students Advisory Services are equipped to help students with information and advice that will enable them to discuss their choices prior to applying for the course. They are also able to advise students on career paths and other related issues. It is strongly recommended that students with disability contact the ADSU coordinator (see 2.12.) to be present at the meeting. In fact, it may be preferable to ask the ADSU coordinator before making the appointment. Attention needs to be drawn to possible obstacles that may need to be overcome for following particular parts of courses chosen. Students should discuss such issues before starting the course.

The offices of the Students Advisory Services are currently housed in rooms 105 and 107 of the Gateway Building. The Students Advisory Services work closely with the Admissions and Records Office, the Counselling Services and the Office of the Registrar. More information is available on <http://www.um.edu.mt/sas>

3.5 ACCESS-Disability Support Unit (ADSU)

Students are advised to contact the ACCESS-Disability Support Unit coordinator to discuss the kind of support they need to be able to follow the chosen course of studies. The coordinator welcomes all students with disability to visit and to discuss all matters related to their course (Refer to 2.12 for contact details). The ADSU office is currently found in room 109 of the Old Humanities building. It is best accessed from Car Park 5.

The ADSU coordinator is able to support students in various ways. Prior to the start of the course, he/she discusses with the student the particular access arrangements required. At times it is helpful for the student to talk to the coordinator even a year or more ahead of applying for a university course.

3.6 Supporting students with mobility difficulties

When students have a physical disability, the coordinator supports them at the beginning of the course to find ways of negotiating their way around the campus. S/he also supports them by ensuring physical accessibility. Where it is not possible to make the physical alterations to the building, the ADSU coordinator advises the Faculty Officer to make arrangements for accessible venues for all lectures and other meetings. Wherever possible, the distance between lecture halls, particularly when

two lectures follow each other on the timetable, is kept to a minimum. However, this may not always be possible where large student numbers are involved and appropriate halls are not available.

Students with a mobility impairment can make use of motorised wheelchairs which are available for students who do not have their own. These are particularly important since students with disability benefit from being able to move around on campus with minimal assistance.

3.7 Supporting students with severe physical disability

Students with severe physical disability may consider following a university course as being the ultimate challenge. They should not be discouraged by the difficulties they may meet and should seek to find a working solution. Students with severe physical impairments should be aware that it is possible to plan their course of studies over a longer time span. This needs to be done with the recommendation of the ADSC and also the Faculty Board of Studies for the course they follow and subsequent approval by university authorities. It is sometimes possible to spread each of the years of study over two years rather than one to enable them to make up for the inevitable extra time taken to do the work required or because of tiredness resulting from the extra effort needed.

Students who require personal assistance will be advised to apply for this with the relevant support agencies. The ADSU coordinator can advise students on how to apply with these agencies as well as on the amount of support that they may require. S/he also ensures that every avenue of support is tapped to ensure that students will be able to follow their course without unnecessary difficulty. Often, fellow students are willing to provide students with help to enable them to get from one lecture hall to another.

Students should not hesitate to ask for support to attend non-curricular events that make their university education a more holistic one. They are strongly encouraged to do this and, wherever possible, to participate fully in such activities rather than simply attend as part of the silent audience.

3.8 Supporting students with sensory impairment

The UOM is proud to have had students with visual impairment, as well as students with hearing impairment, complete their courses successfully.

There are several issues that need to be discussed before the start of the academic year in order to ensure that the student has access to the various elements of the course programme as well as to other activities and facilities on campus. Students with visual impairment often require access to 'soft' copies of readings and lecture notes to enable them to work on the subjects they are following with the help of text-to-speech and other software that are constantly improving. The ADSU coordinator provides them with the necessary information to obtain software to enable them to access the texts recommended by the various lecturers. Most publishers are usually willing (on certain conditions) to provide soft copies to enable the text to be read by the computer software. Lecturers may provide the student with soft copies of the lecture material.

3.9 Examination arrangements

The UOM recognises the fact that there are students who have coped with the learning demands of a course but for whom the standard arrangements for the assessment of their attainment may present a barrier which could be removed without affecting the validity of the assessment. This applies both in the case of students with known and long-standing disabilities as well as in the case of those who are affected at or near the time of assessment.

These assessment barriers can usually be removed through some modification of the regular arrangements. These resulting arrangements will be referred to in this document as 'access arrangements'. The ADSC will study each instance brought to its attention in order to make recommendations along the guidelines set out in this document.

The provision of examination access arrangements is made so that the students can be assessed validly and reliably. Such provision is not intended to alter the assessment demands of the qualifications. Therefore, they cannot change or limit the objectives of the examinations in any way. In certain cases where exceptional arrangements need to be made for students who cannot otherwise be assessed, the certificate will be endorsed.

It is the responsibility of the student at UOM or Junior College to ensure that any request is based on firm evidence which proves that a serious barrier to assessment of attainment exists. More detailed information on examination access arrangements can be found in part 5 of this booklet.

Part 5 of this document describes both the principles and procedures that must be taken into account when making requests for examination access arrangements and for special consideration as these are the principles and procedures on which the ADSC makes its decisions to put access arrangements in place for university students who require them.

Students at Junior College have to apply to the ADSC through the Senior Administrative Officer at the:

Junior College
Telephone: 2590 7204
email: studentservices.jc@um.edu.mt

for access arrangements to be made for in-college examinations prior to the MATSEC examinations.

Students applying for MATSEC examinations need to apply to the ADSC by filling in the application forms found at the back of the *University of Malta - Guidelines to MATSEC Examinations Access Arrangements (2011)* also available online at: http://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/136446/disabilitybooklet2011.pdf

Students at university apply for access arrangement to the ADSC through the ADSU as explained in part 5 of this booklet.

4. RANGE OF ARRANGEMENTS AVAILABLE TO ACCESS THE COURSE PROGRAMME

4.1 ADSU as the starting point

The ADSU was created to support students, staff and visitors on campus. This includes the students and staff/visitors at Junior College as well as those in the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Medical School at the Mater Dei Hospital as well as on the Valletta Campus and the Gozo Campus.

Though access arrangements are often associated with arrangements made for examination purposes, it is also necessary to ensure that students have access to full university life, comprising both the academic and the extra-curricular aspects of life on campus. For this purpose, the coordinator of the ADSU liaises both with academic, administrative staff and technical staff within the Faculty/Institute/Centre as well as with the administrative and technical staff within the administrative buildings or lecture halls as well as beyond.

Students may require various kinds of support depending on the functional implications of their impairment(s). Some support (such as Learning Support Assistance) is not considered appropriate at UOM. Other kinds of support (such as personal assistance) cannot be provided directly by the UOM. However, the ADSU coordinator can inform the student about the services available in the community or help the student directly to access the needed support from other agencies.

4.2 Different ways of support

Students with different impairments require different kinds of support. Although the support currently provided reflects the needs of students who have already completed their course or who are currently at UOM, it may be possible to provide other kinds of support especially if sufficient notice is given beforehand to the ADSU. It is very important to contact the ADSU coordinator to discuss ideas that may be of support to the student.

4.3 Lectures – access and note-taking

Students with hearing or visual impairment or severe physical disability may need to make arrangements to record lectures to process them for note-taking since they may not be able to cope with note-taking during the lecture. Deaf students may make arrangements for a Sign Language Interpreter to enable them to access the lecture.

Arrangements may be made for lecturers' presentations (overhead projector transparencies/powerpoint presentations) to be sent to the student. Students will be bound by copyright regulations¹ in such cases. Most lecturers now use the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to post all kinds of information, including soft copies of reading material wherever possible to support all students.

4.4 Getting to the teaching venue

Some students with mobility and visual impairment may require some assistance in getting to and from lecture halls as well as other places (e.g. the library, the canteen). The coordinator may assist students before the start of their course until they familiarise themselves with the campus. Students are expected to learn to make their own way around campus once they have settled in. Where help is still needed, other students on the same course are often more than willing to help out. The ADSU coordinator often arranges meetings with such students as early as possible.

¹ Student will be required to sign a document to ensure that the copyright to such material remains that of the lecturer and that it is not given out to others.

Where students have been in touch with the ADSU coordinator well before the start of the academic year, it may be possible to arrange for venues to be kept close to each other.

It is recommended that blind students are assisted in a more permanent manner, using strategies that can extend beyond the campus, e.g. by having a specially trained dog or undertaking training in the use of the white stick. Other students with a severe mobility impairment may require a personal assistant some of the time (though fellow students may be very willing to help out when it is necessary to move from one venue to another).

4.5 Coping with workload

Some types of impairment may compromise a student's ability to cope with a regular course workload. For this reason, many opt to follow the same course over a longer period of time. It may be possible to follow all or only part of the course on a part-time basis or to extend the course in other ways. This possibility needs to be discussed with the course coordinator and the relevant Board of Studies and/or the Head of Department, Dean or Director especially since some study-units may not run every year and hence attention must be given to ensure that the student is not caught out and disadvantaged. However, this option is one that may enable the course to become truly accessible and to avoid putting too much pressure on the student to catch up with peers. A request must be made to the ADSC through the ADSU by filling in the appropriate application form in Appendix 1.

Occasionally, students with disability may find that assignments that are part of the course they have chosen are more taxing on them and they find it difficult or impossible to meet deadlines. Requests can be made to extend assignment deadlines. However, this must be done within a plan of work to prevent an accumulation of work that will be difficult to cope with.

4.6 Access to practical components

Where field-work, laboratory work or some other practical component is a compulsory part of the course, it is important for the student to work out whether it is possible to access the activities involved in the course component. This must be done before registering for the degree, diploma or certificate course. It is important for the student to take responsibility for finding out all details about the course since it may not be possible to be exempted from a practical component and the successful completion of the course may be jeopardised. It may also be necessary for the student to take out personal insurance where there is some risk involved as in the case of carrying out fieldwork on rough terrain or going abroad on student exchange trips.

As far as possible, students should not be exempted from practical sessions. Instead, means should be found to enable them to take these sessions. It is of course important for students to take responsibility but the onus of finding ways of carrying out sessions does not rest solely with them. The ADSC will try to find solutions wherever possible.

4.7 Other possible arrangements

Students may require other kinds of support that may not be listed in this document. The experience of the ADSC has confirmed the need to have guidelines but to be flexible in order to respond to the needs of individual students. In fact, experience has shown that it is not helpful to generalise regarding persons with disability. It is necessary to look at individuals and listen to what they have to say regarding the support needed. Students often do not realise that at University they are embarking on a new path that is very different from the previous one that led them to qualify to follow a university course. Hence, it is very important for individual students to discuss their plans and ideas with the ADSU coordinator.

Electronic devices and other resources are often easily available to help students follow their course independently and ask for direct help only when there are no other ways of reaching set targets. Nevertheless, devices that help the student access learning may not be acceptable for assessment. This should be clarified at the start of the course. Students are advised to read part 5 of this booklet with care.

The ADSU recognises that students will need much more support in the first few months until they settle into life on campus. However, the ADSU coordinator will discuss a way forward that will enable students to make full use of the opportunity to study at university and enjoy the time spent on campus. Students are encouraged to make friends with their peers and to participate in all events organised for them, both academic and extra-curricular, including those intended as mere enjoyment.

5. GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATIONS

5.1 Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help students with disability understand both the thinking behind the way arrangements are made to enable them to access examinations, as well as the range of arrangements that can be made to enable access to their university examinations. The examination access arrangements mentioned in this document are by no means to be considered as an attempt to exclude students who may have other impairments not listed in Table 5.1. or who may require different arrangements not specifically mentioned. They simply reflect the arrangements approved by the ADSC in response to requests made by students so far. Each application is considered on its own merits.

Moreover, students may have more than one impairment and, hence, access may require less straightforward arrangements. On the other hand, it must also be noted that a student with a particular disability does not necessarily qualify for all arrangements listed as possible arrangements for students with that particular disability.

5.2 Relevant certification

Relevant certification by the appropriate professional is important. The functional implications of the impairment must be spelt out by the professional concerned. Evidence beyond that of the professional may also be necessary where the history of the impairment may be pertinent. Students are advised to check Table 5.1. to ensure that appropriate certification is supplied to the ADSU when an application for access arrangements is made.

5.3 Fair access to examinations without changing the objectives of assessment

Though students may have had various other arrangements that enabled them to sit for SEC or MATSEC examinations, not all of these are acceptable at university level. The help of scribes, for example, is only approved in very exceptional cases where students have other means of showing that they can read and write but are physically unable to do so. Thus word processors such as laptops are normally accepted as a writing tool where students have a severe disability (e.g. blindness, cerebral palsy, severe dyspraxia). The purpose of arrangements made is to enable access and not to bypass the use of skills that students are assumed to have mastered.

It should be remembered that reading for a degree, diploma or certificate at university opens up several doors in the world of employment. Awards make claims about achievement and competence some of which are implied in the entry qualifications. For this reason, access arrangements cannot be made to compensate for a student's lack of competence in basic skills that may not be specifically listed in the particular course descriptions. Hence, students need to have the entry qualifications required by the UOM. At university, students may use technical and electronic aids that are approved by the ADSC in order to complete their assessments and participate in assessments.

Arrangements must not result in the student gaining an unfair advantage over other students. They are intended to enable students to access the examinations or other assessments without changing the examination objectives.

5.4 Eligibility for access arrangements

Whilst the ADSC considers that it has an important role in providing students with the arrangements that best suit them, it considers it necessary to ensure that students who do not qualify for particular arrangements do not get them. Students and certifying professionals must take the requests for access arrangements very seriously. All requests for arrangements must be fully justified and reflect the need resulting from the student's impairment(s).

Whilst the ADSC considers equal access to examinations and courses of study as a right (see *Act 2000 (CAP. 413) and University Assessment Regulations, 2009 in Education Act (CAP 327)*), examination access arrangements increase the organisational and financial implications on the university and must not be taken lightly. Access arrangements must only be requested when they are really needed. Moreover, in fairness to all students, the ADSC considers it its responsibility to sift out requests based on real need for equal access from others that are based on the desire to gain advantage. The ADSC takes these requests very seriously and will not concede to requests that are not fully justified.

Submitting a false claim for access arrangements could be regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage, which would be an academic offence that would be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Procedures of the University of Malta.

5.5 Access arrangements cannot bypass the requirement for literacy competence

Access arrangements are intended to provide students with the necessary assistance to access the assessment, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment or that students are assumed to possess prior to entry to university. These include advanced literacy skills. While some students may have specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia) that cause them to take longer to read or write, such difficulties must not imply that the student cannot read or write. While extra time to make up for difficulty in dealing with written information may be allowed, readers and scribes are not allowed at university level on the basis of specific learning difficulties.

Currently, students who are Maltese citizens are expected to have advanced literacy skills in English and Maltese. These requirements are stated in the entry requirements which include SEC passes in both languages. Moreover, students are supposed to have followed advanced and intermediate level subjects through the medium of English (apart from other language subjects). Thus, the university assumes that students with a Matriculation Certificate are competent in reading and writing English (as well as Maltese in the case of Maltese citizens or another language in the case of non-Maltese students).

This means that the assessment criteria cannot be compromised, that is, the student must be able to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills that form part of the assessment criteria for that particular examination. In all cases, UOM requires that all students have acquired the skills of reading and writing.

The method of assessment is laid down in the study-unit descriptions for degrees, diplomas and certificates. These descriptions, available on eSIMS, must be read carefully before registering for a course and the various requirements (specified directly as well as those assumed but not specified) are assumed to be within the student's reach.

5.6 Extra time

Extra time is necessary for many students with disabilities. At UOM, the extra time given will depend on the type of impairment as well as on the requirements of the study-unit being assessed.

5.7 Arrangements other than extra time

Different arrangements may be required by students sitting for examinations. Some AAs are related to the venue itself. Others are related to the use of a PC or other equipment. Arrangements for students with particular impairments can be found in the relevant section in part 6 of this booklet.

5.8 Obligations of the student

As part of the student's first campus visit, students with disability should schedule a meeting with the coordinator of the ADSU. Students with disability should complete the Course Access Arrangements Form in Appendix A and submit it together with all the relevant and appropriate documentation to the coordinator of the ADSU. Students must also review the guidelines for the documentation of disability and assume full responsibility for all medications which have been prescribed for their needs.

5.9 Certification

Table 5.1. shows a list of disabilities and the main professionals required to provide certification for each disability involved who may be able to clarify and/or support the request for access arrangements made by the student.

5.10 Choice of the appropriate course

It is important for students to be fully aware of the extent to which it is advisable to read for a particular course. The course content should be studied carefully to ensure that all study-units can be followed and that access to the examinations can be made. It is not always possible to arrange equal access for students whose impairments affect a skill, knowledge, understanding or competence which is being tested in a particular assessment and who will be unable to satisfy the assessment criteria required by the specification. It is important to ensure that students will be able to access all compulsory practical components and fieldwork with approved arrangements.

5.11 Processing of confidential information

As has already been stated in part 1.3, in order to process a student's application for a course and particularly for examination arrangements, it may be necessary for relevant, personal information to be either

- (a) passed on to relevant third parties or
- (b) for the ADSC to request further relevant personal information from third parties.

In either case, the ADSC undertakes to safeguard all the students' rights under the 2002 Data Protection Act (CAP 440).

Table 5.1. A list of the appropriate professional/s required to write a report/s for access arrangements at University.

Type of Impairment	Main Professional
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Psychiatrist
Autism Spectrum Disorder/Asperger Syndrome	Educational Psychologist, Clinical Psychologist
Developmental Coordination Disorder/ Dyspraxia	Occupational Therapist
Hearing impairment	Audiologist
Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE Or Lupus)	Rheumatologist
ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	Neurologist, Endocrinologist
Mental Health Difficulties	Psychiatrist and/or Clinical Psychologist
Mobility impairment	Relevant Consultant
Neurological Disorders	Neurologist
Specific learning difficulties: (a) Dyslexia; (b) Dyscalculia (c) Dysgraphia	(a) and (b) Educational Psychologist (or Psychologist working in psycho-educational assessment) (c) Neurologist or Occupational Therapist
Speech impairment	Speech Language Pathologist
Visual impairment	Ophthalmologist and/or optometrist

5.12 Applications for access arrangements and examination access arrangements

Students should fill in and submit the relevant application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ACCESS-Disability Support Unit,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building, University of Malta
Telephone: 23402557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

Application form 1- for AAs to follow the course - is to be submitted before or at the beginning of the course.

Application form 2 -for AAs for examinations - is to be filled in every semester. It will be indicated whether the student needs to submit reports every time the request is made.

6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH PARTICULAR IMPAIRMENTS

Introduction

Students should read the information in the section that is relevant to them depending on their impairment(s). However, it should be noted that the preceding parts of this document are also relevant.

The list of impairments presented in this part is by no means exhaustive and does not exclude candidates who may have other impairments not specifically mentioned. Students may be experiencing other difficulties both of a temporary or longstanding nature related to a medical condition. In the past, access arrangements were given to students who suffered from conditions like Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Diabetes and those of a more temporary nature like injuries to the hands and arms that affected their ability to write. In such cases, students are encouraged to contact the ADSU before applying for arrangements. Each application is considered on its own merits.

This part is intended to help students with particular impairments in that it lists and explains what is available to them depending on the nature and severity of the impairment. It is intended to prepare them for filling in their application form for access arrangements for both their course and their assessments (assignments, practical work and examinations). Should students have an impairment that is not listed in this document, they are advised to write to the ADSC giving details and full certification following the guidelines given in this document. Students should ask the ADSC for advice as early as possible. Impairments are listed alphabetically for the sake of convenience.

It must be appreciated that developments in the field of disability may render some details mentioned in the booklet outdated. The ADSC intends to update the booklet biennially. However, there may be times where it follows more updated procedures ahead of their publication particularly if there is available evidence for the need to do so.

Possible access arrangements

The nature and type of access arrangements will vary from student to student and will be dependent upon the nature of individual academic requirements. Access arrangements include but are not limited to:

- Access to laptop and smart keyboard for note taking;
- Use of volunteer note takers;
- Permission to record lectures;
- Copies of lecture note or overheads, or powerpoint presentations, if available;
- Priority seating at the front of the class;
- Permission to utilize personal equipment;
- Extra time for examinations,
- Examinations to be written in a quiet room;
- Permission to use a computer for examinations,
- Permission to negotiate rescheduling of exams if two or more are scheduled closely together;
- Examinations papers to be provided in enlarged font (A4 to A3)
- Permission to use a scribe for examinations.
- Library arrangements
- Use of lockers
- Extension of Course duration

6.1 Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

Definition

Students with Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD) have difficulty in allocating and maintaining attention, regulating motor activity, and managing behavioural impulses.

Certification and justification

Requests for access arrangements need to be linked to the students' specific history and current functional impairment that supports their use. The psychiatrist must describe the type and degree of impact that the ADD/ADHD has on the student's functioning at university and particularly in examinations. The psychiatrist's report must include specific recommendations for access arrangements that result from the history and current functional impairment. A detailed explanation must be provided as to why the access arrangement is being recommended and must be correlated to specific identified functional limitations. If the student is on medication, the psychiatrist's report will be required to indicate the effects of the medication.

Documentation should include a recent update not older than three years before the closing date for applications for the course or examination.

Access arrangements

The access arrangements usually considered as appropriate for students with ADD/ADHD is that of supervised rest breaks or supervised movement breaks. Prompters are not considered appropriate at University.

The Dean, Head of the Department and Faculty Officer will be informed of the condition when access arrangements are granted.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.2 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome (AS)

Definition

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Asperger Syndrome (AS) may have difficulties with university coursework and examinations because of one or more of the following factors: they feel anxious, they have difficulties with communication and social interaction and may misinterpret instructions, they have unusual sensory reactions and may not cope well with, for instance, strip lighting, noise, strong smells, lecturer or invigilator walking about or a large exam hall, and they have difficulty staying 'on task'.

Certification and justification

Requests for access arrangements need to be linked to the students' specific history and current functional impairment that supports their use. The psychologist must describe the type and degree of impact that the ASD/AS has on the student's life at university and particularly during examinations. The assessment report must include specific recommendations for access arrangements that result from the history and current functional impairment. A detailed explanation must be provided as to why each access arrangement is being recommended and must be correlated to specific identified functional limitations.

Documentation should include a recent update not older than three years before the closing date for applications for the course or examination.

Access arrangements

The access arrangements usually considered as appropriate for students with ASD/AS are clear instructions on course/examination requirements, consideration of potential difficulties related to collaboration requirements for group assignments, avoidance of unnecessary distracting stimuli during lectures or examinations, extra time and a quiet room during examinations. Other access arrangements may be considered on the basis of appropriate supportive evidence.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.3 Developmental Coordination Disorder (DSD)/Dypraxia

Definition

Students with dyspraxia have difficulty with thinking out, planning and carrying out sensorimotor tasks despite adequate teaching, a stimulating environment and with a generally within average cognitive ability. Students with dyspraxia may also have other difficulties to varying degrees.

Certification and justification

Students requesting access arrangements on the basis of dyspraxia need to provide a detailed report by a suitably qualified and registered occupational therapist.

The occupational therapist's report must contain supporting evidence of motor coordination difficulties in areas of: visual motor integration, visual perception, fine and gross motor coordination, sensory processing abilities as well as a detailed assessment of speed and quality of handwriting. These have to be supported by results of performance on a standardised assessment and include the functional limitations in familiar settings such as the home and/ or school environment.

Documentation should include a history of difficulty with a recent update using age appropriate assessments and must be not older than three years before the closing date for applications for the course or examinations.

Access arrangements

Students who have severe difficulties in skills primarily related to legibility, speed of writing and speed and quality of motor performance may benefit from access arrangements such as:

- Supervised rest breaks or movement breaks for students who fatigue easily as a result of low tone related to sensory processing difficulties
- Use of PC
- Extra time

Access arrangements are granted on the basis of documentation that provides evidence on the severity and extent of the difficulties.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.4 Hearing Impairment

Definition

Students are considered deaf or hearing-impaired if their impairment is congenital or if it occurred early in life and preceded the acquisition of their spoken language(s) or if it severely affects their use of language. For the purposes of these guidelines, Deaf students are those who make use of sign language. Hearing impaired or deaf students are those whose hearing loss affects their language processing. They usually wear hearing-aids or use cochlear implants. Deafened or hard of hearing students are those whose hearing-impairment occurred much later in life and normally make use of hearing-aids which can enable them to access spoken communication. Deafened students do not have any difficulty with processing language but may have difficulty with accessing spoken language.

Certification and justification

Students with hearing-impairment need to submit an audiologist's report indicating the age of onset of the impairment. The functional implications in terms of access to spoken communication should also be submitted.

Access arrangements

The needs of most congenitally hearing-impaired students will be met by extra time allowance of up to 25%. Deaf students will need a Sign Language Interpreter for access to lectures and other activities involving spoken communication but not during examinations. However, invigilators will need to be informed and asked to draw the student's attention to any notices being given during the examination, particularly when pointing out errors in examination papers. These will need to be given to the student on a hard copy. This also applies to time announcements.

In examinations administered orally, a live-speaker may be requested to present the recorded material. They will also need to be seated close to the speaker. Some students may use a radio-aid and so the examiner/speaker will be requested to wear a microphone. Students may need additional time in an assessment administered orally which requires written answers because they will not be able to lip-read or receive communication in sign language (if allowed in the case of examinations not testing the language itself) and write at the same time.

Deafened students may need particular arrangements for examinations administered orally. This will depend both on their degree of hearing loss and the kind of amplification they use, if any.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.5 Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE or Lupus)

Definition

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE or Lupus) is a systemic autoimmune disease that can affect any part of the body, particularly the heart, joints, skin, lungs, blood vessels, liver, kidneys and nervous system and has the effect of intense debilitating fatigue. Depression can often result from the physical effects of this chronic illness or from the prescribed medication.

Certification and rationale

Students with Lupus need to present a rheumatologist's report. The report should include the history and severity of the condition and outline the functional implications with regards to the individual student's functioning including under examination conditions. A psychiatrist's report will be required if the student suffers from depression resulting from the illness.

Access arrangements appropriate for students with SLE / Lupus

Students may need to follow the course on a part-time basis. This arrangement may not be possible for all courses. The particular Faculty Board, Dean, Head(s) of Department and Faculty Officer need to be consulted to ensure that the student will be able to register for study-units at the right time, particularly if these do not run every year. Also, some study-units may be prerequisites to others. This applies also to practical components, laboratory work and field work. Different arrangements may be needed for individual students.

Access arrangements for examinations may include allocation of particular venues, supervised rest breaks and extra time. However, these will depend on the individual and hence full details should be included in the application. Arrangements for extensions of deadlines for assignments may also be made. However, students should note that extensions of deadlines may not be very helpful to them.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.6 Myalgic Encephalopathy (ME)/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) / Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome

Definition

Myalgic Encephalopathy/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) is a severe systemic, acquired illness that can be debilitating. It manifests symptoms predominantly based on neurological, immunological and endocrinological dysfunction. Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome has similar symptoms to ME and CFS.

Certification and justification

Students with ME/CFS/Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome need to present a report by a neurologist or endocrinologist who has treated them. The report should include the history and severity of the condition and should outline the functional implications with regards to the individual student. The documentation will form the basis on which the ADSC will determine how to enable the student to access the course and the examinations.

Access Arrangements

Students may need to follow the course on a part-time basis. This arrangement may not be possible for all courses. The approval of the Dean/Director and the relevant Faculty Board need to be obtained and the Faculty Officer must be consulted and informed to ensure that the student will be able to register for study-units at the right time, particularly if these do not run every year. Also, some study-units may be prerequisites to others. This applies also to practical components, laboratory work and field work. Different arrangements may be needed for individual students.

Access arrangements for examinations could include allocation of particular venues, supervised rest breaks and extra time. However, these will depend on the individual and hence full details should be included in the application. Arrangements for extensions of deadlines for assignments may also be made. However, students should note that extensions of deadlines may not be very helpful to them.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.7 Mental Health Difficulties

Definition

Mental health difficulties comprise a broad range of problems with different symptoms. They are generally characterised by disorders of one or more of the following: thought processes, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. These may be of sufficient severity to affect the student's functioning.

Certification and justification

Students are required to submit a psychiatrist's (and/or clinical psychologist's) report detailing the difficulties and their effect on the student. If medication is taken which affects the student's normal functioning, then it should be specified and the effects explained. Enough details should be included to guide the ADSC's recommendations for access arrangements to both the course itself and to the examinations.

Access arrangements

The access arrangements depend very much on the type of mental health difficulty and the way it impacts the particular student's life. Arrangements may be made to allow the student to do all or part of the course on a part-time basis (ref to 2.6) . However, this needs to be discussed in detail with the Dean/Head of Department and Faculty Officer since not all study-units may run every year and some study-units may be prerequisites to others.

Examination Access Arrangements include the possibility of accommodating the student in a different venue and/or in a separate room. The student may be allowed time to settle down before starting the examination. Extra time or supervised rest breaks and/or movement breaks may be considered. Different arrangements may be granted to meet the needs of the individual student. However, not all students with mental health difficulties will be eligible for all of these arrangements. Hence the need for the specialist's report to be detailed in order to guide the ADSC's recommendations.

Applications forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.8 Physical and/or Mobility Impairment

Definition

Students with a physical and/or mobility impairment include those who have difficulty using one or more of their limbs, or lack the strength to walk or manipulate objects. The use of a wheelchair, crutches, walker or other aids may be utilised to enhance mobility.

Certification and justification

A report from the specialist with whom the student has been in touch in relation to the impairment should be submitted. This should explain the functional implications of the impairment in order to guide the ADSC's recommendation for arrangements required for the student to follow the course as well as to sit for examinations.

Access arrangements

i. Physical access to venues

The ADSC would like to ensure access to all venues for students, staff and visitors with a mobility impairment, whilst preserving their dignity. In cases where lecture rooms or offices do not provide such access, arrangements will be made to give the student with mobility impairment equal opportunity to use all services made available to other students.

The ADSU coordinator is in close contact with Faculty Officers and with the scheduling officer to ensure that accessible venues as well as venues that are in close proximity to facilitate moving from one lecture to another are used whenever possible. Whilst lecture halls are normally accessible, some difficulties occasionally arise. Where students have provided the ADSC with details of the requirements, the ADSU coordinator moves fast to secure all requirements in lecture halls by passing on the information to Faculty Officers and to the scheduling officer.

ii. Parking

Students may be given permission to be dropped off as close as possible to the lecture or examination venue. Reserved parking close to the lecture or examination hall may be requested if students are over 18, have a severe mobility impairment and drive their own car. Use can be made of one of the various reserved parking spaces for persons with disability, provided the blue sticker is used.

iii. Ergonomic or environmental adaptations

Students should also indicate any other ergonomic or environmental adaptations required to enable them to attend lectures and other teaching and learning activities and also to sit for examinations.

iv. Personal assistant

It is best for students who require a personal assistant to get in touch with the ADSU coordinator in order to apply for assistance from agencies outside the university. Usually, arrangements for personal assistance depend on the timetable followed and the time spent on campus. Different students will have different needs and so the personal assistance requested should reflect those needs.

A personal assistant may be necessary where students have difficulty turning pages or manipulating other objects during an examination. Students may request that the personal assistant (or a relative) be on call outside the examination hall to assist them when necessary. This will need to be requested in the application for examination arrangements.

v. Word processor

Where students have difficulty with hand movements, they should use a word processor or other technological aids. However, where students are unable to make use of a word processor, it is best to make arrangements to record lectures and then make arrangements for the recordings to be transcribed. A scribe may be requested for examination purposes. In this case the examination is recorded and the student will be requested to show evidence that s/he is able to read and write at an advanced level.

It is to be noted that PC spell check, thesauri or similar electronic aids will be disabled.

Students who make use of small adaptive equipment (such as typing sticks, writing splints, arm supports) may bring their own equipment to the examination, subject to approval by the ADSC.

vi. Time allowance

During examinations, extra time and/or supervised rest breaks can be requested where students have difficulty writing or word-processing or where they tire easily. The ADSC recommends that students should apply for extra time wherever mobility difficulties slow down the student's production of written or word-processed material and for supervised rest breaks where they tire or where muscular spasms occur or increase with time or where pain results.

In the majority of instances, the needs of most students will be met by a time allowance of up to 25% of the total examination time. Students may apply for additional extra time if they consider it necessary. The use of extra time is monitored closely.

vii. Other Equipment

If students are unable to use standard equipment, a request may be made to use alternative equipment. Once again this should be requested as early as possible. Larger equipment such as adapted tables and chairs could be supplied, provided they have been requested and specifications given beforehand.

viii. Practical work (including lab work and field work)

The guiding principle in practical work and assessments is to observe safety measures at all times. Students must neither endanger themselves nor endanger other students or staff.

Applications forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.9 Neurological Disorders (including Epilepsy)

Definition

Neurological disorders affect the central and peripheral nervous system, i.e. the brain, spinal cord, cranial nerves, peripheral nerves, nerve roots, autonomic nervous system and neuromuscular junctions. These include epilepsy, cerebrovascular conditions including stroke, chronic migraine, multiple sclerosis, neural infections, brain tumours, trauma to the nervous system and congenital conditions affecting the nervous system.

Certification and justification

Students with a neurological disorder will need to submit a neurologist's report showing the history and severity of the condition as well as the functional implications with respect to the candidate's studies and sitting for examinations.

Access arrangements

The student will need to manage studying time carefully and to consider the possibility of spreading the course over a longer period. This arrangement would need to be discussed in detail with the Head of Department, Dean and Faculty Board since not all study-units may be available every year and some study-units may be prerequisite to others.

The student may be granted supervised rest breaks and/or supervised movement breaks and/or up to 25% extra time as well as accommodation in a quiet room for examinations.

In the case of poorly controlled epilepsy, it is recommended that a relative or significant other be on call during the examination. Where other arrangements are requested, relevant documentation must be submitted.

Applications forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.10 Specific Learning Disabilities (e.g. dyslexia)

Definition

It is useful to distinguish between four types of specific learning difficulties though a student may have more than one type.

(i) The first, **dyslexia**, is recognised as a condition resulting in “difficulties in reading written text fast and fluently”² (Adler 2001:25). It is recognised as a disability that affects many students to varying degrees.

(ii) Another condition, **dyscalculia**, “refers to difficulties with handling and carrying out specific mathematical tasks”² (Adler 2001:25).

(iii) **Dysgraphia** is “a neurological disorder characterised by writing disabilities... inappropriately sized and spaced letters ...wrong or misspelled words... In addition to poor handwriting, dysgraphia (in adults) is characterised by wrong or odd spelling, and production of words that are not correct (i.e., using “boy” for “child”)... The cause of the disorder is unknown, but in adults, it is usually associated with damage to the parietal lobe of the brain.”³

(iv) **Dyspraxia** is defined and dealt with separately in part 6. 4.

Certification and justification

It is best to read the whole of this section before applying for access arrangements for specific learning difficulties. Reading and writing at an advanced level are necessary for all University courses.

Students who intend to apply for access arrangements on the basis of dyslexia or dyscalculia should present a detailed report from a psychologist that indicates the presence and severity of the condition in the student’s educational history and that their performance in literacy tests are well below the average.

To qualify for examination access arrangements students with dyslexia should present evidence of having below average performance in literacy skills. For this reason, literacy tests used should be age appropriate. These tests should not be older than 6 months prior to the commencement of the student’s university course. This evidence will remain valid for the duration of the course undertaken unless the ADSC requires additional information.

Students applying on the basis of dysgraphia will need to present a neurologist’s or an occupational therapist’s report. Students applying on the basis of dyspraxia should refer to part 6.4.

Students should also provide the ADSC with copies of the letter sent detailing arrangements made for SEC and Matriculation or equivalent examinations.

² “What is dyscalculia?” by B Adler, 2001- rev 2008 www.dyscalculiainfo.org retrieved 09 August 2011 at 10.46 a.m.

³ <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dysgraphia/dysgraphia.htm> retrieved 09 August 2012 at 10.48 a.m.

Access arrangements

To help them follow the course and carry out the reading required for the study units chosen, students with dyslexia are advised to use the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) where lecturers post information, reading lists, hand-outs, assignment guidelines and other resources relevant to the study-units where applicable. Moreover, students with dyslexia should use soft copies of books and articles wherever possible along with the text-to-speech software. However, they are also advised to continue to develop strategies for continuing to advance their academic reading and writing skills.

Students with severe dyslexia may be eligible for extra time (of up to 15%) during examinations at University. They may also be allowed to use a word processor from which spelling and grammar and other literacy checkers are disabled.

Students are normally requested to present assignments that have been produced on a word processor. They should pay particular attention to proof-reading their assignments before submission. This means they need to manage their time very carefully to meet the deadlines set.

Students with severe dyscalculia or dysgraphia may also be eligible for extra time (of up to 15%) for some examinations.

The ADSC will consider each application in relation to the assessment objectives of the study-units which the student will be registering for. No access arrangements are given where the condition is not severe.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.11 Speech Impairment

Definition

A speech impairment refers to an impaired ability to produce flowing, fluent speech and may range from mild to severe. It may include an articulation disorder, characterised by omissions or distortions of speech sounds, a fluency disorder, characterised by atypical flow, rhythm, and/or repetitions of sounds, or a voice disorder, characterised by abnormal pitch, volume, resonance, vocal quality, or duration.

Certification and justification

The student will need to submit a speech-language pathologist's report giving full details on the impairment and how it should be managed where students are required to give a presentation and/or where the student is sitting for an oral examination.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements for students who have a speech impairment are only required for presentations and for oral components of examinations. Normally these will follow the recommendations of the speech and language pathologist provided that they do not go against the guidelines in this booklet. This means that students cannot be exempted from giving a presentation that forms part of the course of study or assignment/assessment or for an oral examination or examination component. However, examiners can be asked to make the environment as stress-free as possible while trying to put the student at ease. During the assessment of the one-to-one oral conversation, the examiner will allow ample time for the student to express himself or herself without giving unnecessary prompts.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

6.11 Visual Impairment

Definition

Students are considered visually-impaired when they have significant limitations of functional visual capability that cannot be adequately corrected by conventional means, such as spectacles, refractive correction or medication.

Certification and justification

Students need to submit an ophthalmologist's and/or optometrist's report with details of the functional implications of the visual impairment.

Access arrangements

i. Mobility

Students are encouraged to become independent in all ways. Getting around the campus is no mean feat and this must be organised before the beginning of the academic year. The visually-impaired student needs to know the campus well in order to get from one lecture to the next and from one activity or service to another. Whilst it is possible for the ADSU coordinator to help out at the beginning of the semester, and many peers may be very willing to help out, students must do all possible to ensure a smooth progress towards independence. Visually-impaired students should consider using a white stick or getting a guide-dog or using any other system to make life on campus safe and not to be restricted mobility-wise.

ii. Course duration

Many visually-impaired students work slower than their fully sighted peers both in accessing written information and in writing. This will depend on the severity of their sight loss, their level of skill in managing it, and the nature of the work being done. For this reason, it may be necessary for visually-impaired students to follow a chosen course (ref: 2.6) on a part-time basis. In order to do this, the Dean, Head of Department and Faculty Officer need to be contacted to discuss the possibility since not all study-units may run every year and some study units may be prerequisites for others.

One must keep in mind that reading is a major element in a university course. Visually-impaired students may need to access their reading through text-to-speech software and this may take a substantially longer time than it would otherwise.

iii. Coursework

The possible limitations to access material needed for coursework must be brought to the attention of the ADSU coordinator well in advance of the examination. Access to soft copies of course materials and readings will facilitate the student's progress throughout the course.

All technological aids should be considered to enable access to course material and reading. Students should have/acquire competence (or be competent) in word-processing skills both for their assignments, for note-taking wherever possible and for examinations.

iv. Examinations

For written examinations, the needs of most visually-impaired students will be met by an extra time allowance of up to 50%. Additional extra time may be necessary. Details to justify this request will be required when applying.

Rest breaks might be necessary in the event where a student has two examinations with extra time occurring on the same day. In exceptional circumstances, students may be allowed to start the first paper earlier and the second paper later provided they will not be allowed to leave the examination room until the lapse of 30 minutes from the official commencement of the examination.

A request may be made for access to practical tasks wherever possible, instead of or in addition to using a practical assistant. The granting of such a request will depend on the assessment objective(s) being tested. It is important for students to find out what practical tasks (including laboratory work and field work) will be expected of students before registering for a course. In some cases, it may not be possible for a visually-impaired student to complete the compulsory course components and thus be unable to successfully complete the course.

v. Other access arrangements

Any other access arrangements that may facilitate the student's progress in the course or the examination should be identified. The ADSC will consider any suggestion provided it is justified and does not change the examination objectives.

Application forms

Students should fill in the application forms found in Appendix 1. All specific queries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

ADSU,
Room 109, Old Humanities Building,
University of Malta, Msida, MSD2080
Telephone: 2340 2557
email: adsu@um.edu.mt

APPENDIX 1

APPLICATION FORMS

FOR

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS



Application Form 1 – Course Access Arrangements

Request for Access Arrangements

Students must complete and submit this application form at the commencement of or before each academic year.

Name of Student:
I.D. Number:
Course Start and End Year/Date:
Course : F/T P/T
Faculty:
Faculty Officer: (name & surname)
Ext:

Student's Address:
Email address:
Special I.D. Card number: (if applicable)
Impairment on the basis of which AAs are being requested:
Tel. No.
Mob. No.
Have you ever requested AAs before? If yes, what AAs did you qualify for?

Reasonable adjustment required	Please select	Evidence of needs (Briefly explain why are you requesting this arrangement) Where applicable, please indicate how many hours per day, you need AAs
Copies of lecture notes/slides (preferably in advance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recording of lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Flexibility with deadlines for coursework and assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of computer and related equipment during lectures (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Permission to move around/stand during lectures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Permission to leave the room	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accessible venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Temporary loan of equipment (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recommendation for external (non- University) support	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Library access	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Library orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Application for Supplementary Maintenance Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Other, please specify.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Information		

Will you also be applying for examination access arrangements? Yes _____ No _____

Confidentiality

During the processing of the students' requests for access arrangements, it might be necessary for relevant personal information to be either:

- (a) passed on to relevant third parties or
- (b) for the ADSC to request further relevant personal information from third parties.

In either case the ADSC will safeguard all of the student's rights under the 2002 Data Protection Act (CAP 440).

Name & Surname: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use:



Application Form 2 Examination Access Arrangements

To be completed and submitted by University Students every semester

Name of Student:		
Examination Session (month):	Year:	Semester:
Course:	F/T	P/T
Faculty:		
Faculty Officer: (Name & Surname):		Ext:

Student's Address:	
Email address:	
I.D. Number:	
Special I.D. Card number (if applicable):	
Tel. No.	Mob. No.
Impairment on the basis of which AAs are being requested:	

Examination for which application is made

Faculty/Dept	Date of exam	Code	Title of Study Unit	Opt / Comp/ Elect	ECTS	Time of Examination

Reason For Application:

Please tick attached evidence :

Psychologist's Report
Dated

Psychiatrist's Report
Dated

Medical Certificate
Dated

Ophthalmologist's Report
Dated

Audiologist's Report
Dated

Occupational Therapist's Report
Dated

Other Professional's Report (Specify)
Dated

Past scripts/MATSEC letter
Dated

Other

Access Arrangement	Required (Please tick)	Access Arrangements already given previously	Approved by ADSC
Extra Time			
Extra Time above 25%			
Alternative accommodation/ venue away from campus			
Enlarged Question Paper A4 to A3			
Practical Assistant			
Scribe / Amanuensis			
Voice activated computer			
Word Processor			
Supervised rest periods			
Relative on call			
Scripts and exam papers to be taken apart			
Permission to use toilet frequently			
Permission to eat/drink			
Permission to keep hand towel			
Other (Please specify)			

Confidentiality

During the processing of the students' requests for access arrangements, it might be necessary for relevant personal information to be either:

- (a) passed on to relevant third parties or
- (b) for the ADSC to request further relevant personal information from third parties.

I, the undersigned, have no objection to the above statement as long as the ADSC will safeguard my student's rights under the 2002 Data Protection Act (CAP 440)

Name..... Signature.....

Date

Declaration (To be signed by the candidate)

I, the undersigned, am satisfied that the information provided on this form is accurate. I am aware that, according to the University Assessments Regulations 2008 of the Education Act (CAP.327):

When Senate considers it appropriate, the access arrangements shall be subject to the students' transcript of their academic record being endorsed as follows:

"Access arrangements were made to enable the student to be assessed. Details may be obtained from the Registrar."

Name.....Signature.....

Date.....

For office use only

Application No.	Date received:
Comments/Remarks	

APPENDIX 2

FEEDBACK FORMS



Feedback form – Students

It would be appreciated if you would take the time to fill in this form in order to provide the ADSC with feedback on the way you view the booklet, how useful you found it and how you consider it should be improved. Please be as honest as you can. You do not need to sign it or tell us who you are. You are not obliged to answer all of the questions below.

1. What year are you currently in?

2. Which faculty/ies/institute/s are involved in the course you are following?

3. Have you read this booklet because:

- (a) You are disabled
- (b) You know someone who is disabled
- (c) You know a fellow student who has a disability or you know someone who may be interested in joining a university course and you want to pass on information about accessibility on campus
- (d) You are facing difficulty and would like to know if the information applies to you

4. What difficulties do you find getting around on campus:

(a) Accessing buildings (specify which buildings and what the obstacles are)

(b) Accessing facilities (specify which facilities e.g the library, the IT Services, the canteen, the Chaplaincy and specify what the obstacles are)

(c) Making contact with lecturers (specify the difficulties)

(d) Making contact with administrative staff (please specify the difficulties)

(e) Making contact with other personnel (please specify the difficulties)

(f) Accessing events (specify what events and why)

5. Do you think you have more difficulty than other students?

6. What other difficulties do you meet?

7. What would you like to be done about any of 1-6 above?

8. List improvements you would like to see on campus:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

9. Do you think that your disability prevents you from living a full student life? If so, specify how and/or why you think this could be overcome.

10. Did you read the booklet in its entirety?

Yes

No

11. If you have read the booklet, how useful/helpful have you found it?

Very useful/helpful

Fairly useful/helpful

Not very useful

because _____

12. Can you suggest what else should be included in it? Please specify:

13. Any other suggestions or comments:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

Please return the completed questionnaire to:

ACCESS-Disability Support Unit

OH Room 109

University of Malta

Msida, MSD 2080



Feedback form – Staff/Visitors

It would be appreciated if you would take the time to fill in this form in order to provide the ADSC with feedback on the way you view the booklet, how useful you found it and how you consider it should be improved. Please be as honest as you can. You do not need to sign it or tell us who you are. You are not obliged to answer all of the questions below.

1. What is your role at the University:

Member of the Academic Staff

Faculty Officer

Member of the Administrative Staff

Member of the Technical Staff

Visitor

Other (please specify): _____

2. Have you read this booklet because:

(a) You are disabled

(b) You know a colleague who is disabled

(c) You know a student who is disabled

(d) You know someone who may be interested in joining a university course or apply for a job and you want to pass on information about accessibility on campus

(e) You are facing difficulty and would like to know if the information applies to you

3. What difficulties do you find getting around on campus:

(a) Accessing buildings (specify which buildings and what the obstacles are)

(b) Accessing facilities (specify which facilities e.g. the library, the IT Services, the canteen, the Chaplaincy and specify what the obstacles are)

(c) Meeting colleagues (please specify the difficulties)

(d) Making contact with academic/administrative/technical staff (specify the difficulties)

(e) Making contact with students (please specify the difficulties)

(f) Accessing events (specify what events and why)

4. Do you think you have more difficulty than other colleagues?

5. What other difficulties (not mentioned above) do you meet?

6. What would you like to be done about any of 1-5 above?

7. List improvements you would like to see on campus:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

8. Do you think that your disability (where applicable) makes your job more difficult? If so, specify how and/or why you think this could be overcome.

9. Did you read the booklet in its entirety?

Yes

No

10. If you have read the booklet, how useful/helpful have you found it?

Very useful/helpful

Fairly useful/helpful

Not very useful

because _____

11. Can you suggest what else should be included in it? Please specify:

12. Any other suggestions or comments:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

ACCESS-Disability Support Unit

OH Room 109

University of Malta

Msida, MSD 2080



Feedback form – Other Stakeholders (e.g. parents)

It would be appreciated if you would take the time to fill in this form in order to provide the ADSC with feedback on the way you view the booklet, how useful you found it and how you consider it should be improved. Please be as honest as you can. You do not need to sign it or tell us who you are. You are not obliged to answer all of the questions below.

1. What is your interest in the booklet:
- You are a person with disability
 - You are the parent of a current student
 - You are the parent of a member of staff
 - You are the friend of a current student
 - You are the friend of a member of staff
 - You are an interested member of the general public
 - Other (please specify): _____

2. Did you read the booklet in its entirety?

Yes

No

3. If you have read the booklet, how useful/helpful have you found it?

Very useful/helpful

Fairly useful/helpful

Not very useful

because _____

4. How useful is the information you read about:

(a) Accessing buildings

(b) Accessing facilities

(c) Accessing events (specify what events and why)

5. What information did you find most useful?

6. List the information you think should be included in the booklet

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

7. Any other suggestions or comments:

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

ACCESS-Disability Support Unit

OH Room 109

University of Malta

Msida, MSD 2080