

INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY CARLOW

Student Disability Policy for IT Carlow

This policy relates to equal access and participation for students with “*an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment*” (*Disability Bill, 2004, Section 2*)

1. Definition of Disability -

1.1 "Disability" is understood to mean:

- (a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,
- (b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, disease or illness,
- (c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,
- (d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- (e) a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.

1.2 Included in this policy are procedures in the following areas which assist the Institute in dealing with students who have disabilities:

1. Access and Admissions
2. Disclosure of Disability
3. Financial Support
4. Academic Support
5. Examinations
6. Physical Access
7. Health and Safety
8. General Disability Awareness in the Institute.

2. Access and Admissions:

- 2.1 IT Carlow is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all of its students. It therefore welcomes all applications from students with disabilities and will endeavour to ensure that every possible effort is made to facilitate and encourage their access to, participation and success in their course of study.
- 2.2 The Institute currently treats all CAO applications from students with disabilities on the same academic merits as others. It plans to review its present Direct Entry Policy to consider including applicants with disabilities. The concepts of human rights and human dignity are borne in mind in all processes involving all students with disabilities. Accordingly, appropriate levels of confidentiality are to be upheld at all times.

3. Disclosure of Disability:

- 3.1 Students with a disability may indicate this fact by completing the relevant section on the CAO application form. Students who avail of this facility are then requested to provide further information and documentation to the CAO which then can be accessed by the relevant third level institutes.
- 3.2 All students are encouraged to disclose their disabilities, as non-disclosure has the obvious effect of severely limiting the provision of appropriate procedures, supports and facilities. It is the responsibility of the individual student to make contact with the Access Officer as early in the academic year as possible. It is also the students' responsibility to provide adequate and relevant documentation of their disability from a relevant qualified professional.
- 3.3 If a student with a disability does not make him/herself known to the Access Officer until the beginning of the academic year or during the academic year, the Access Officer will endeavour to ensure that suitable arrangements are made for that student. However, it must be remembered that it is in the interests of the student/applicant that preferable to make arrangements are made during the summer months

4 Financial Support -

- 4.1 The Special Fund for Students with Disabilities as administered by the Department of Education and Science is the main source of finance available in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The Access Office is responsible for disseminating information on this Fund. Students with disabilities who may have specific needs for assistive technology and/or academic support must ensure that they contact the Access Officer as early as possible in the academic year in order to apply to this Fund.

5. **Academic Support:**

The following procedures will only be enacted with the student's consent:

- 5.1 On recommendation of the Access Officer, in consultation with the relevant academic staff (or other evidence-based criteria) a full time student may be entitled to an assessment by a qualified professional, if there is reason to believe that s/he may have a specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia). The cost of the assessment is borne by IT Carlow within the constraints of the available funding.
- 5.2 Depending on the recommendations of their assessment report, a student with specific learning disabilities is given the option of one-to-one sessions with a learning support specialist. The Access Officer makes the arrangements for these sessions and payment to the support specialists is made through the Access Office following appropriate authorization.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the Access Officer to inform the relevant Heads of Departments of students with disabilities who register with the Access Office (with the students consent). A copy of the relevant section of the assessment report outlining the diagnosis of the disability, how it impacts on the student's performance and recommendations for academic support will be forwarded to the Head of Department.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to inform, in confidence, the relevant course board and academic staff of all reports regarding student's with disability. Subject to the recommendations made in the appropriate report, there may be flexibility with regard to course input demands (depending on the nature and degree of disability). The course board will endeavour to inform the student of the decision reached at the earliest possible opportunity. At all times the focus of the Course Board's deliberations will be on facilitating student learning so that the programme learning outcomes can be achieved.
- 5.5 In so far as possible, academic staff will endeavour to assist students with disabilities in meeting their full academic potential.
- 5.6 If by virtue of his/her disability, a student is finding it difficult to maintain academic progress, a limited amount of funding may be available through the Access Office in order to pay for extra tutorials. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Comment [CS1]: Add in

Comment [CS2]: Add in paragraph

6. Examinations:

- 6.1 Where a student's disability may adversely affect their performance in exams, the following arrangements, where appropriate, may be put in place in consultation with the Head of Department, Access Officer, Examinations Officer and Academic Administration and Student Affairs Manager :
- Extension of exam time (10 minutes per hour).
 - Separate room and invigilator.
 - Scribe or use of tape recorder.
 - Use of equipment and assistive technology.
 - Enlarged text on examination paper.
 - Spelling/grammar exemption.
 - Other individualised arrangements.
- 6.2 These special examinations are not designed to give students with disabilities an advantage over other candidates, rather they are intended to ensure that these candidates perform to the best of their ability.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the individual student to discuss their examination requirements well in advance of any examinations with the Access Officer, and provide documentary evidence of same, preferably at the beginning of the academic year.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Access Officer to liaise with the relevant Head of Department/School and the Examinations Officer in regards to the examination requirements of all students registered with the Access Office.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to inform, in confidence, the relevant course board and academic staff of the student's disability and to request that this be taken into account when preparing and marking examinations.
- 6.6 It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to arrange separate invigilation for students requiring this facility.
- 6.7 In the case of students requiring separate invigilation, it is the responsibility of Heads of Department to inform the Examinations Officer if such students are repeat students or are exempt from certain subjects.

7. Physical Access –

- 7.1 IT Carlow is committed to ensuring that all students with disabilities can access all buildings on campus. It is recognised that the present condition of some buildings may present difficulties to those with disabilities. Adaptations will be made with a view of producing an accessible environment within the limit of financial resources available.
- 7.2 The Institute is committed to liaising with the National Rehabilitation Board and other related organisations with regard to best practice in the area of physical access.

8. Health & Safety

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of individual students to be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and to inform the Access Officer if the measures in place do not accommodate their needs.
- 8.2 Copies of all the Institute's Health and Safety documentation are to be made available online through the Institute's Quality Assurance & Improvement Policies & Procedures.

9. Disability Awareness

- 9.1 Disability Awareness Training is made available through the Access Officer on an annual basis. Specialised training will be made available to individual staff members if necessary.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of each Head of Department to nominate relevant academic members to attend this training to ensure that each department is in a position to link with current information provision in this area.