



UPICA Student Disability Policy- Turkmenistan

Introduction

University Project in Central Asia (UPICA) positively welcomes applications from disabled students and is committed to ensuring every effort is made to allow all students to fully experience student life. Students with the relevant supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes and/or reports from educational psychologists) are eligible to apply for appropriate support without compromising academic standards. This policy aims to ensure that the UPICA provides equal opportunities for success in studies to all students by supporting and enabling those who require access arrangements.

In Turkmenistan both the 2013 [*Law on Education*](#) and the 2014 [*Law on State Guarantees of the Rights of the Child*](#) establish inclusive education as the right for children with disabilities to attend and participate in regular education institutions. (Art. 4.5 and Art. 36.6 respectively).

This policy aligns with these two major regulations in Turkmenistan, in addition to the current UK legislative requirements, including the UK Equality Act 2010, as well as the policies and processes of the University of London.

Local Student Access and Inclusion Policies¹

As prescribed in the [*Fundamental Law*](#), persons with disabilities and orphans are guaranteed special state support. Providing the legal framework for the social system, the 2007 [*Social Security Code*](#) prohibits discrimination based on disability, understood as any 'distinction, exclusion or preference' that restricts the fulfillment of persons with disabilities' rights and freedoms (Art. 146). Likewise, discrimination on the grounds of disability is prohibited by the 2014 [*Law on State Guarantees of the Rights of the Child*](#), amended in 2016 (Art. 42.1), which also stresses the need to take into consideration the individual abilities and interests of children with disabilities for their full development (Art. 42.3). The law explicitly mentions the state's

¹ [Turkmenistan | INCLUSION | Education Profiles](#)

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commitment to providing children with disabilities with regular education, according to an inclusive approach (Art. 36.6). Yet, it does not clarify how the definition of disability is *binding* upon enterprises, institutions and organizations, especially in the field of employment.

Definition of disability

In alignment with these above-mentioned local and UK regulations, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disability in this context can include a wide range of issues and conditions. Typically, this would be one or a combination of the following categories:

- Specific learning difficulty (SpLD) (e.g. dyslexia)
- Visual impairment - partial sight or blind
- Hearing loss - partial hearing or profoundly deaf
- Mobility difficulties or wheelchair use
- Restricted use of upper limbs (incl. RSI)
- Mental health illnesses
- Condition that is not visible (e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia, HIV)
- Condition not listed above (e.g. back injury)
- HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis

The above list should not be seen as exhaustive. If a student feels that they have a condition affecting their ability to study effectively, the student should contact a designated member of staff (under Student Services) as soon as possible, to enable their requirements to be assessed and support and reasonable adjustments to be implemented.

UPICA is committed to ensuring reasonable adjustments are made where possible to break down any barriers which might prevent disabled students from actively participating in the student experience.

UPICA uses the term 'disabled student' in this and other policies in order to provide guidance as to whom the policy may be relevant. This term has been adopted to reflect the social model of disability, whereby people are disabled by social structures rather than by the nature of their difference. Further, this is the terminology most widely used within the sector currently. However, it is acknowledged that some students with a medical or mental health condition or a learning or neurological difference may not identify with this term or feel that it is an accurate representation of their experience.

Responsibilities

Students are responsible for informing UPICA about any disabilities which may impact on their studies or engagement with the student experience.

Students have the right not to disclose a disability or to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as strictly confidential and therefore not shared with relevant staff across UPICA. Requests for strict confidentiality may mean that a less satisfactory adjustment is provided or that no adjustment can be provided.

When a student informs UPICA that they have a disability, UPICA will offer the opportunity for the student to work with a member of staff to create a Learning Support Plan (LSP) which will set out the support and accommodations to be provided by UPICA and any responsibilities or actions required of the student. UPICA will manage the process of information sharing as set out in the learning support plan and will treat all personal data in accordance with the GDPR; disability-related information will be shared internally only on a need-to-know basis for support and reasonable adjustments to be implemented.

Students are responsible for informing a designated member of staff if the support set out in their learning support plan is found not to be appropriate or sufficient for their needs or if there is a problem or difficulty with the delivery of the agreed support. Students should contact the institution as quickly as possible to ensure any necessary adjustments or improvements are provided in a timely manner.

UPICA cannot be held liable for not implementing individual reasonable adjustments prior to the disclosure of a disability. It is therefore vital that students make UPICA aware of their disability and needs as early as possible.

Disclosure of disability

All students with a diagnosed disability are advised to share this information with UPICA at the earliest opportunity by contacting a member of staff. This may be done by email or by attending a drop-in or scheduled support appointment. Offer holders who indicate a disability on their application for admission will be contacted by a member of UPICA staff prior to the start of their programme.

Students may develop a disability, or begin to suspect that they have a disability, after their studies have begun. In these circumstances, students are advised to meet with a member of staff as soon as possible to discuss their next steps.

Students are advised to share information about a disability even if they do not believe that additional support is required. This will enable a discussion about their disability and their studies to help ensure that any possible barriers to study are identified and solutions agreed in good time.

A student's learning support plan will be shared only with the faculty and professional staff members necessary to ensure that agreed support and accommodations are

delivered. This will be discussed and agreed with students as a part of the preparation of the learning support plan. Information will not be shared without the student's permission, but where permission is not granted this may mean that the support and adjustments outlined in the learning support plan cannot be provided.

Learning Support Plans

Learning support plans set out all the support and accommodations that UPICA agrees to put into place for a student in order to remove barriers to their learning and enable them to perform to their full ability. Learning support plans will be individual to each student to reflect their medical or mental health condition and/or learning or neurological difference, their programme of study and their wishes. However, there are some common elements which are set out below.

Additional support or adjustments in examinations

Disabled students who feel they need extra support in their examinations (e.g. extra time, rest breaks, large text scripts, use of a computer) can have this included within their learning support plan.

It is possible for students to request a scribe and/or reader for their examinations. A scribe will write the student's dictated answer to the questions on their paper(s). A scribe can also act as a reader in some cases, in which they must read the questions aloud to the student. Please see [ANNEX A](#) Scribe and Reader Guidelines for full details.

It is possible for disabled students to request additional time to complete an examination where their disability impairs their ability to concentrate, read, write, or formulate responses. UPICA will not normally agree more than 50% additional time, and with students with a SpLD normally receiving 25% extra time.

To ensure sufficient time to deliver special examination arrangements a student would normally need to have a learning support plan in place a minimum of four weeks prior to their first examination for examinations held in the first semester and by the end of the tenth week of the first semester, for examinations held in second semester. In circumstances where students are diagnosed with a disability after these dates, efforts will still be made to put in place a learning support plan to agree adjustments, however examination adjustments cannot be guaranteed.

Recording lectures

Many students with a SpLD, hearing impairment or fine motor control impairment can have difficulty writing by hand or writing and listening at the same time. As such, recording lectures is considered a reasonable adjustment and can be included within a learning support plan.

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Any such recording is for private use only and shall remain the property of the lecturer. The recording must be used for the purposes of the students' own personal study and should not be replayed to others or reproduced.

Where technologically possible, UPICA will automatically centrally record teaching sessions listed as lectures, where they involve sustained dissemination, and make the recording available to students on the course virtual learning environment page.

Some teaching sessions with other labels (e.g. large group teaching) may be recorded too. Students with disabilities which may impair their ability to notetake may be permitted to record seminars and tutorials. This facility will need to be recorded with the student's LSP and they will need to request permission from the member of faculty to record. In order to protect the privacy of other students, the member of faculty may decline permission or put restrictions on which portions of the seminar or tutorial may be recorded. Students will need to make any permitted recording themselves on their own device.

Any recording may be stored for the duration of the student's programme of study, and all recordings should be destroyed on completion of their programme. For these purposes, completion of the student's programme will be no later than their expected end date.

Extended Deadlines

Students are expected to make full use of UPICA's academic support, and any specialist disability support provided under the Student Services department to meet assessment deadlines. However, it is recognized that some students with SpLDs, mental health or medical conditions may occasionally find it difficult to meet deadlines for written assessments, even when accessing support. Students whose LSP's explicitly state that they have a condition in which they find it difficult to meet deadlines for written assessments may request a maximum of two weeks extension for both formative and summative assessments. Where this is a facility included in a student's Learning Support Plan, students will need to have an extension confirmed by Student Services for each assessment where an extension is desired to ensure that the extended deadline would still fall within the regular assessment period. Students will need to email a designated Student Services staff at least two working days in advance of the normal deadline to request the extension. The extension will be agreed except where an extension would go beyond the end of the regular course assessment period. If this were to be the case the student would be provided with an extended deadline to the maximum possible to still fall within the normal assessment period. Students failing to request the extension in advance of the original deadline as set out above, will be held to the original deadline and any relevant late penalties will be applied. In general, the postponement of formative deadlines and tutorials is not encouraged, since these are intended to help students manage their time and to play a developmental, supportive, role in relation to summative assessments.

Attendance and Absences

UPICA requires that students attend all scheduled teaching sessions. UPICA will inform students of the mode of delivery of courses and course elements.

It is understood that some disabled students may on occasion be unable to attend taught sessions due to the nature of their disability and some adjustments can be made to the sessions counted for attendance monitoring purposes. There is a minimum attendance level for undergraduate students as set out in the institution's attendance policy and disabled undergraduate students are expected to comply with this policy.

Where a disabled student has missed a taught session, they are responsible to make up any missed learning. They will be able to access relevant learning materials on the course's virtual learning environment page.

Marking of written work

UPICA does not mark or flag assessments or examination scripts of students with learning differences or other disabilities for special consideration or adapted marking. It is the view of UPICA that it is most appropriate for all marking to be undertaken only based on the demonstration of learning outcomes and the assessment criteria.

Disabled students are able to make use of learning support throughout the year to support them in building techniques to perform well in assessments. Students may also request special examination arrangements as detailed above to ensure they are able to perform to their full ability.

Temporary Disability

Students may sometimes experience an accident or illness which temporarily impacts on their ability to undertake key aspects of their studies, for example a broken arm may make it difficult or impossible for a student to hand write or type for a period. While these temporary conditions fall outside of the Equality Act 2010, UPICA nonetheless will endeavor to put into place reasonable support and accommodations to enable the student to continue with their studies. Students who experience a temporary disability should contact a designated member of staff in Student Services as soon as possible. UPICA will normally require medical documentation detailing the nature of the injury/illness and the anticipated length of recovery. UPICA will work with the student to prepare a temporary learning support plan and, once this is agreed, will liaise with relevant staff in order to provide any required support or adjustments.

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Version Control

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1.0	1/20/2023	1/27/2023	Chief Academic Officer	London, UK	5/25/2023
Referenced documents					
External Reference Point(s)					

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ANNEX A

SCRIBE AND READER GUIDELINES

PURPOSE OF SCRIBE

1. A scribe may be arranged to transcribe the answers on behalf of a student who has difficulty producing handwritten or typed script. The scribe's role is to produce from dictation a handwritten or typed answer. It is most commonly required for students who are unable to write due to a physical difficulty and some visually impaired students,
2. Where a student requires both a reader and a scribe, same individual may act in both capacities.
3. Every effort will be made to enable disabled students to write their own assessment through the use of enabling technology. Where a student is judged by UPICA to require the use of a scribe, UPICA will identify an appropriate person to provide this service. Scribe services cannot be provided by a friend, relative, student of UPICA or a member of faculty for summative assessments.
4. For formative assessments there is more flexibility and other students can be used. If another student is used, they should normally be in a different cohort and faculty (major and minor subjects) to the student sitting the assessment.

PURPOSE OF A READER

5. A reader may be arranged to read out questions for a student whose condition affects their reading ability. The purpose of using a reader is to remove barriers that are imposed by the student's disability or SpLD. Generally this service will be provided for students who are blind or have a learning difficulty which affects their ability to process information.

SUITABILITY

6. Scribes should have legible handwriting and be able to write at a speed that will allow them to keep pace with a student's dictation. Where a scribe is working electronically they should be able to type at a reasonable speed and to maintain this pace throughout the exam. The use of a spellchecker is not permitted. All attempts should be made to spell the words correctly or at least phonetically in order to allow the script to make sense for the marker.
7. Ideally the student would have the same scribe for each exam in the same assessment period.

PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE EXAM – STUDENT GUIDELINES

8. Preparation for the use of a scribe/reader prior to an exam is the responsibility of the student. It is strongly recommended to have a preparation/practice session with the scribe/reader in advance of the exam period as this is **not grounds for appeal** should anything go wrong with the scribe/reader. A preparation/practice session will be essential if the scribe is expected to produce graphs or diagrams on your behalf and will ensure that you can work together effectively and efficiently.

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9. Students are asked to provide the scribe/reader with some practice material to review prior to the exam so that they can familiarise themselves with any subject specific words and terminology.
10. Before the exam it will be necessary to agree the following with the scribe/reader and make a note of the outcome:

Scribe/Reader & Student: Where will you both sit in the exam in relation to each other?
Note:
Scribe/Reader & Student: Establish a pace with which you are both comfortable.
Note:
Scribe: How are notes, on the questions and essay plans, to be made? Will you make these?
Note:
Student: Will you dictate all punctuation and spelling or do you want to give only the main punctuation and leave the rest to the scribe's discretion? The scribe may not be able to spell complex subject-specific words.
Note:
Student: What should the scribe do if they are unsure of a word while you are in mid flow? Should the scribe ask you to repeat it there and then or would you prefer to come back to it at the end of the sentence or paragraph?
Note:
Student: How will the scribe indicate to you when they have finished writing what you have just dictated?
Note:
Student: Do you want the scribe to read out the script for you for checking?
Note:
Student: Find out where the examination is taking place and arrange to meet the scribe in good time before the exam.

The above questions are meant as a guide only and are available in a Word document upon request. You may have other questions that will need to be addressed before the exam; your one-hour practice session will enable you to do this.