Applying Learning Support Requirements in Practice Settings

Guidance for Academic Staff and Students

October 2012

Introduction

This process/pathway outlines the steps which should be taken to ensure that the appropriate agreed information about a student's learning support requirements is passed on to the relevant people, so that reasonable adjustments can me made prior to Practice Learning. The development of this process/pathway has been developed collaboratively by the School of Nursing, Disability Services and Equality and Diversity Services within the University of Ulster.

This process should only be engaged in where it has been identified by Disability Services or Occupational Health that a student requires reasonable adjustments to be made for practice learning settings. The relevant form should be completed by the Course Director and Student, and, where necessary, in consultation with Disability Services, Occupational Health and the Academic Coordinator for Practice Learning. This is to ensure that agreed information can be shared between the School of Nursing and Practice Learning Partners in order to ensure reasonable adjustments can be achieved. These guidelines aim to support Course Directors and Students through this process, both of whom should refer to the Pathway for Applying Learning Support Requirements in Practice Settings.

Before engaging in this process, Students should be provided with a copy of these guidelines by the Course Director.

Academic Staff and Students should be aware of the following resources, which should be consulted, where necessary, prior to undertaking this process:

NMC Guidance: See Appendix 2

RCN Guidance:

- Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia - a toolkit for nursing staff
- Dyspraxia, dyslexia and dyscalculia
- Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia - a guide for managers

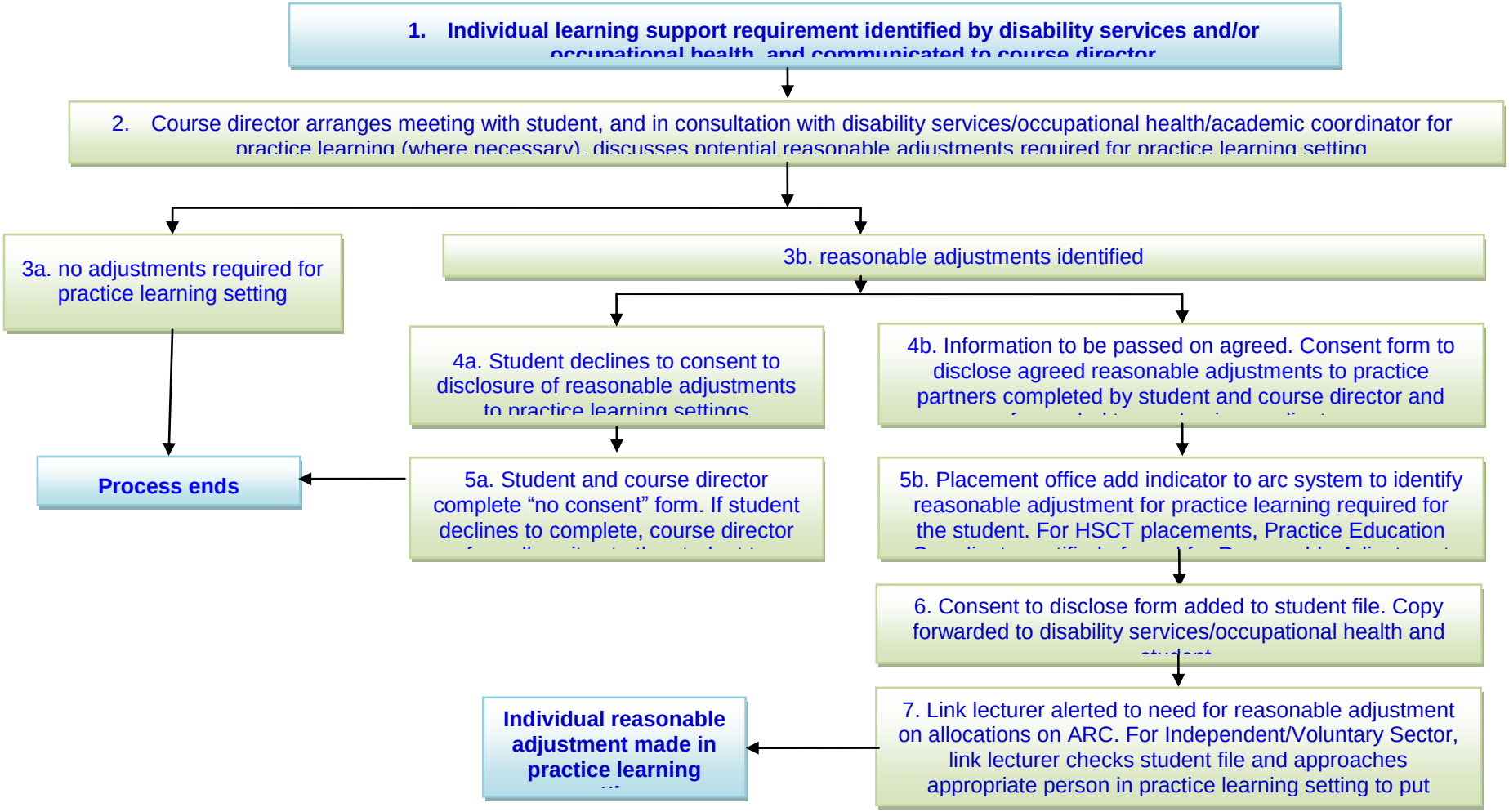
University of Ulster Policies/Procedures/Guidelines

Other Publications:

- SENDO
- Revised SENDO Staff Guidance Booklet 2008
- Disclosure Guidelines for Academic and Faculty Support Staff
- Disability Disclosure Form for Academic and Faculty Support Staff
- Disclosure Guidelines for all Line Managers

Useful resources:
http://www.equality.ulster.ac.uk/usefulresources.html

PATHWAY FOR APPLYING LEARNING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS IN PRACTICE SETTINGS



Pathway for Applying Learning Support Requirements in Practice Settings - Guidelines

1. Individual learning support requirement identified by disability services and/or occupational health. and communicated to course director

This process only applies where a Course Director receives communication from Disability Services and/or Occupational Health that indicates a reasonable adjustment may be required for a particular student. If a student informs a Course Director that they require a reasonable adjustment, the Course Director should follow the advice given in the University's 'Disability Disclosure Guidelines for Academic and Faculty Support Staff (Students)'.

2. Course director arranges meeting with student, and in consultation with student support services/occupational health/academic coordinator for practice learning (where necessary), discusses potential reasonable adjustments required for practice learning setting

The Course Director should liaise with Disability Services/Occupational Health/Academic Coordinator to explore potential reasonable adjustments for individual students prior to meeting the student to discuss these. The student should also be advised that they can also liaise with Services/Occupational Health/Academic Coordinator prior to meeting with the Course Director, should they so wish. The aim of this meeting is to identify together if reasonable adjustments are needed for practice learning and to agree, where consent is obtained, which information should be passed on, to whom it should be passed on to, and how it will be passed on. There are three potential outcomes to this meeting:

1. There are no adjustments required (3a). In this case, the Course Director should note in the Student's file that a meeting took place and no adjustments were identified as being required.

2. Reasonable adjustment is required (3b).
    a. If the student declines to consent to this adjustment being communicated to Practice Learning Partners (4a), he Course Director should ask the Student to complete the '*Notice to Decline Consent to Disclose Learning Support Requirements to Practice Learning Partners'* form with them (5a) (appendix 5). The original of this will then be placed in the Student's file, a copy provided to the Student and a copy sent to Disability Services and/or Occupational Health. Should the Student decline to complete this form, the Course Director should send a recorded delivery letter (appendix 1) to the student to notify them that the School will be unable to arrange for reasonable adjustment to be made in practice settings without their consent. **The student should be notified that they can request to meet with the Course Director again to review their decision in relation to any stage of this process at any time.**

    b. The student consents to the disclosure of agreed information to Practice Learning partners (4b). The Course Director should ask the Student to complete the '*Consent to Disclose Learning Support Requirements to Practice Learning Partners'* form with them (Appendix 4). The aim is not to document the nature/type of disability, but to identify and document what reasonable adjustment is needed to enable the student to learn in practice. However, should the student wish for the disability/reason for the reasonable adjustment to be documented, this should be facilitated. Documenting the disability should not be routine. The Course Director should list **only** what is to be communicated to practice learning settings. **The student should be informed that they may request, in writing to the Course Director, to amend these details or withdraw consent at any time. Otherwise the consent lasts for the duration of the course.**

    If amendments are required, a new form should be completed and the process followed through again.

Once the form is completed and signed, the Course Director should forward the form to the Academic Coordinator for Practice Learning, who will in turn review the form for any potential issues, sign the form and forward it to the Placement Office. The Placement Office will note that a reasonable adjustment is required by ticking the relevant indicator within the Student's Details on ARC (5b). A copy of the form will be sent to Disability Services/Occupational Health and the Student by Placement Office. The original will be placed in the Student's file (6). For placements within Health and Social Care Trusts, the Placement Office will alert the Practice Education Coordinator that a student needs reasonable adjustment through the placement report. Details of the reasonable adjustment will be provided through liaison with either the Academic Coordinator for Practice Learning or Placement Office.

Link Lecturers will be made aware that a Student requires a reasonable adjustment when they check their individual student allocations (7). It will not state on ARC what the reasonable adjustment or disability is. The Link Lecturer will be notified on ARC that they should check the Student's file to determine what the reasonable adjustment is and liaise with the relevant person/people within the practice learning setting to ensure this adjustment is made. For placements in Health and Social Care Trusts, this communication will already have taken place. However, for the Independent/Voluntary Sector Link Lecturers should make arrangements with the manager of the allocated placement to put reasonable adjustments into place in advance of the student commencing placement (See Appendix 3). Link Lecturers should note that:

- the Student's consent to disclose is not consent to a blanket disclosure of information, but to the relevant agreed individuals only;
- the relevant individuals are the people who will ensure the adjustments are put in place (for example, Mentor, or Ward Manager);
- this information is about the reasonably adjustment/support needed rather than the nature/type of the disability;
- only the appropriate information should be communicated to the practice setting. The information should be provided on a need to know basis to relevant individuals only;
- the recipients of the information should be made aware of the confidential and sensitive nature of the information, and that they should not disclose it further without the Student's consent. Information should be stored in a secure place and disposed of safely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Note: Certain exceptional circumstances may allow for the release of personal data. For more information about this, please refer to the University's 'Disability Disclosure Guidelines for Academic and Faculty Support Staff (Students)'. In order to determine whether exceptional circumstances apply, you should contact the University's Data Protection Officer before releasing any personal data/disability information. Each case of exceptional disclosure should be considered individually.

Appendix 1 – Template Letter for Course Directors when Student Declines to Complete Notice to Decline Consent to Disclose Learning Support Requirements to Practice Learning Partners.

Dear STUDENT NAME

Subsequent to our meeting on DATE AND LOCATION, when we met to discuss potential reasonable adjustments for your practice learning, I wish to follow up on the outcome of this meeting on a formal basis.

At this meeting we identified that reasonable adjustments are required to be made in the practice learning setting as per requirements under the Special Educational Requirements and Disability (SENDO) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (as amended). At this meeting you chose not to consent to the School of Nursing to disclose these needs to our practice learning partners. As a result, the School of Nursing are unable to arrange for reasonable adjustment to be made in the practice learning setting under such legislation. Disability Services/Occupational Health will be made aware of your decision to not consent.

Should you wish to review your decision at any stage, I would be very happy to meet with you again. I would like to draw your attention to the availability of myself, Disability Services and/or Occupational Health should you feel the need for additional support/information regarding this process

Yours sincerely

Click here to enter text.

Appendix 2 – NMC Guidance for Supporting Students with Diverse Needs

Taken from:

NMC (2010) *Advice and Supporting Information for Implementing NMC Standards for Pre-Registration Nursing Education*. London: NMC. Pages 10-11

Supporting students with diverse needs

The standards require nursing students with diverse needs to be supported appropriately in both practice and academic environments. This means that their needs are assessed and responded to in a timely and appropriate manner. It is important to stress that, although programme providers need to support nursing students and meet their diverse needs, it may not be possible to meet all their needs. The standards stress the importance of recognising where support would be inappropriate, or where a diversity issue might interfere with the delivery of safe, competent nursing care. It is also important to remember that, by law, reasonable adjustments need only be applied to people with disabilities and not to people with other diverse needs. Programme providers will want to support all students with a wide range of learning needs, but they should remember that it is against the law to treat one student more favourably than another unless the reason relates to a disability.

Everyone involved in the selection, teaching, learning, supervision and assessment of students needs to be prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities and to support people who have specific learning needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, and dyscalculia. We suggest that attention is given to the preparation and ongoing development of mentors and others who support students in practice, so that they can make the most of practice learning opportunities. This could include support from the AEI and also people such as practice education facilitators, who are employed specifically to provide support in practice.

Programme providers may also wish to establish peer support groups for students with diverse needs. Initially, these could be run by special needs support officers in the AEI. However, once established, they could be led by the students themselves. Disability, reasonable adjustments and good health

The Equality Act 2010 states that students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable adjustments. Guidance for this explains that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is triggered when a person with a disability is put at a disadvantage. Failure to comply with this duty cannot be justified. Disadvantage in this case will not be defined as ‘minor or trivial’.

There are three aspects to be considered in relation to the ‘duty’ to make reasonable adjustments. These include: changing a provision, criterion or practice; avoiding the disadvantage caused by a physical feature or obstacle (such as removing, altering or avoiding the item); and providing an auxiliary aid or service. More information is available at www.skill.org.uk/

How to decide what is reasonable?

Programme providers are not expected to make adjustments which are unreasonable. To decide whether an adjustment is reasonable or not, the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggest that the following are considered:

- the cost of the adjustment
- its effectiveness
- the practicality of making it
- the appropriateness of making the adjustments
- its effect on others, whether colleagues or patients, as well as the person with disabilities
- health and safety concerns.

There is flexibility to apply reasonable adjustments to our standards and guidance but public safety, the health and safety of patients and colleagues, and the rights of the patient or service user to receive competent quality care must always come first when considering if an adjustment is

reasonable. Programme providers are encouraged to work closely with disability services and to be creative in the ways in which programmes can be delivered and competencies met.

Students with disabilities are entitled to have reasonable adjustments considered in relation to their academic work and their practice learning. However, while reasonable adjustments may be made to the way that a student meets a competency or standard, the competency or standard itself cannot be adjusted.

An example of reasonable adjustment is shown in table one below:
Table one: Example of reasonable adjustment

Requirement R6.5.3 in the standards states that "Programme providers must ensure that the practice learning throughout the programme provides students with experience of 24 hour and 7 day care." The requirement does not stipulate how experience and understanding should be gained. Although a provider would normally require students to experience a certain number of night shifts, this may be adjusted, when reasonable, for a student with a disability. If a student with a disability was unable to work nights over a prolonged period because of their disability, they could meet the standard in a different way, perhaps by working nights over a shorter period of time or by working different shifts that still meet the requirements but without the need to work a full night shift.

Programme providers, educators and students need to realise that there will be occasions when an adjustment is not reasonable and that this could result in the student not being able to meet the requirements to qualify and register as a nurse. For this reason, we advise that the student's needs are considered as soon as possible; that this involves the student and draws upon the expertise of disability service teams and advisers to look at different types of adjustments and how they might best be applied. If a solution cannot be found, then the disability services team, or other support services, might help the student find other options, including looking at alternative careers.

We are required by the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 to ensure that all nurses are fit to practise on grounds of good health. The details of this requirement are set out in our publication Good health and good character: Guidance for educational institutions (NMC 2008), which emphasises the importance of a nurse having self awareness and insight about their health and how it affects them and others. This guidance deals with health in its broadest sense, from common health conditions to serious illness and disability. In the case of disability, the guidance refers to UK disability legislation and the need to make reasonable adjustments. Nursing students may need help to appreciate how their own health condition or disability might affect their ability to practise safely and competently and also their learning experience. They also need to be aware of the action they need to take to remain safe and effective. The NMC good health and good character guidance is being updated and will be reissued shortly.

Appendix 3

SUMMARY OF ROLE OF LINK LECTURER IN MANAGING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT FOR PRACTICE LEARNING

Link Lecturer checks practice learning allocations on ARC web

Students who require reasonable adjustment will have this indicated

For allocation within Health and Social Care Trust:

- Reasonable adjustment will have been communicated to the Practice Education Coordinator, who will liaise with the appropriate person/people to arrange reasonable adjustment to be put in place

For allocations within Independent/Voluntary Sector:

- Link Lecturer liaises with the appropriate person/people to arrange reasonable adjustment to be put in place

(Appendix 4)

SCHOOL OF NURSING
CONSENT TO DISCLOSE LEARNING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS TO PRACTICE LEARNING PARTNERS

Please refer to the guidance and pathway documents prior to completing this form. A student may at any time, and in writing to the Course Director, withdraw this consent or request a review to amend the information on this form. Otherwise, the consent lasts the duration of the course.

Student Name (Print)	Click here to enter text.	Student ID	Click here to enter text.
Course	Click here to enter text.	Course Director	Click here to enter text.

I (above named student, confirm that I consent to the information recorded within this form being passed on to Disability Services/Occupational Health and to relevant staff within practice learning settings. I understand this process will include:

- Link Lecturers being made aware of such requirements through the ARC system (by use of an indicator that is visible only to School Staff); and
- Link Lecturers communicating the reasonable adjustments only to those necessary in the practice learning setting (eg Mentor, Ward Manager).
- Placement Office communicating the reasonable adjustments to the Practice Education Coordinator within Health and Social Care Trusts, who will liaise only with the appropriate person/people to put reasonable adjustments into place.

Please refer to guidelines and record (below) the reasonable adjustments which are required in the practice learning setting to meet the student's learning support requirements:

Click here to enter text.			
Student Signature		Course Director Signature	
Date	Click here to enter text.	Date	Click here to enter text.

Academic Coordinator Use Only

Date Received	Click here to enter text.	Signature	
Date Forwarded to Placement Office	Click here to enter text.	Signature	
Comments (if required)	Click here to enter text.		

Placement Office Use Only

Date received	Click here to enter text.	Date entered on arc	Click here to enter text.
Received by:	Click here to enter text.	Entered by	Click here to enter text.
Date Copy of Form Sent to: Disability Services ☐ Occupational Health:☐	Click here to enter text.	Copy Sent to Disability Services/Occupational Health by:	Click here to enter text.
Date Copy of Form Sent to Student	Click here to enter text.	Copy Sent to Student by:	Click here to enter text.
Placement Office: Please place original form in student's file and send a copy to Disability Services and/or Occupational Health and the Student.			

(Appendix 5)

SCHOOL OF NURSING
NOTICE TO DECLINE CONSENT TO DISCLOSE LEARNING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS TO PRACTICE LEARNING PARTNERS

Please refer to the guidance and pathway documents prior to completing this form. A student may at any time, and in writing to the Course Director, request a review to amend the information on this form, or revoke (withdraw) this form (in which case they should complete a consent to disclose form). Otherwise, the notice lasts the duration of the course.

Student Name (Print)	Click here to enter text.	Student ID	Click here to enter text.
Course	Click here to enter text.	Course Director	Click here to enter text.

I (above named student) confirm that I do not consent to the School of Nursing communicating my learning support requirements to practice learning partners. I understand that this will result in the School of Nursing being unable to arrange for any reasonable adjustment to be made in the practice learning setting as per the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SENDO) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (as amended). I understand that Disability Services/Occupational Health will be made aware of my decision.

Notes from the Course Director *(if required)*

Click here to enter text.

Student Signature		Course Director Signature	
Date	Click here to enter text.	Date	Click here to enter text.
Date Copy of Form Sent to: Disability Services ☐ Occupational Health:☐	Click here to enter text.	Copy Sent to Disability Services/Occupational Health by:	Click here to enter text.
Date Copy of Form Sent to Student	Click here to enter text.	Copy Sent to Student by:	Click here to enter text.
Course Director: Please place original form in student's file and send a copy to Disability Services and/or Occupational Health.			

Should a student decline to sign this form, the course director should complete this form alone and note this in the notes section. The Course Director should then write to the student formally as set out in the guidance notes.