

Guidelines on Special Arrangements for Students with Disabilities and Students with Special Needs

General

The goal of special arrangements for students with disabilities and students with special needs is to diminish the problems caused by disabilities and chronic illnesses, thus promoting equality during admission and studying (Non-discrimination Act §5).

When coordinating arrangements for teaching and studying, accessibility and attainability need special attention; for example in issues of space and other teaching arrangements. Overall attainability will not necessarily reduce the need for special arrangements, but in many ways it supports the equality of persons with disabilities or special needs in the academic community.

The disability or chronic illness of the student/applicant can be physical or mental; for example he/she may have a movement, sensory or cognitive disability. A special needs student may have difficulty in reading, writing or other acquisition skill. Students or applicants may have more than one disability or chronic illness, which may have an effect on the student selection and coping with studies.

Special arrangements can also be realized when the disability is short-term, e.g. an injury due to an accident.

The Disability Coordinator and the Heads of Academic and Student Affairs at the faculties will advise students on special arrangements.

Special Arrangements

The content and implementation of special arrangements are defined by the student's needs and the circumstances. For the first account of special arrangements, the student must present a medical certificate or another certified explanation that sufficiently illustrates the disadvantage caused for the student by his/her disability or illness.

Special arrangements can be applied to entrance exams, aptitude tests, other exams and other teaching situations, such as academic guidance and student services. The arrangements can pertain to the following circumstances:

- arrangements of exam situations (possibility for extra time, extra lighting and space arrangements / possibility for alternative methods of study)
- assistive devices (e.g. the possibility to use a computer for writing, or other devices such as a Braille display or induction loop)
- materials (e.g. the possibility to have exam questions in Braille or in larger font)
- services (e.g. the possibility to use an interpreter or personal assistant)

A student who needs special arrangements is subject to the same surveillance during entrance examinations and other exams. If the student ends up using his/her own devices (e.g. a computer) during an exam, the university has the right to check the files and programs of the device before the exam.

The student/applicant is responsible for reporting changes in his/her condition on which the special arrangements are based.

Special Arrangements for Entrance Exams

If an applicant needs special arrangements for an entrance exam, he/she must send an application concerning the arrangements to the Disability Coordinator before the application deadline at the faculty in question. The applicant must attach a medical certificate or another certified explanation of the nature of his/her disability or illness. The application, including the attachments, may also be sent electronically. In that case, it must be noted that sending information on personal health issues always includes a data protection risk. The sender of the message is responsible of the risks.

The applicant will be informed in writing (if possible, email should be avoided) on the special arrangements admitted in good time before the exam. This procedure is not applied to teacher training, for which special arrangements are agreed upon directly with the Faculty of Education.

As a main rule, extra time of 1-2 hours may be admitted for an entrance examination. The individual needs of the student and the differences between subjects are taken into consideration when the amount of extra time is determined.

Visually impaired applicants may order electronic, Braille and sound versions of the entrance examination books via Celia (www.celia.fi).

The availability of the entrance exam books may differ by faculty due to the selection processes. The applicant is asked to contact the Disability Coordinator or the Head of the Student Affairs of the faculty in good time before the application. The books from Celia are available at best at the same time than the printed versions.

The documents concerning special arrangements for entrance exams are stored for one year since the exam day. During that time, a recommendation of special arrangements for teaching may be compiled without a separate application. The applicants who used special arrangements in the entrance exam, however, need to inform the Disability Coordinator of their needs concerning teaching. The Disability Coordinator will compile the recommendation for the faculty. As for the exams and other teaching situations, the student needs to contact the responsible teacher at the start of the course or during the registration for the exam at the latest. For the student's request, a negotiation between the student, teacher(s), study advisors and the Disability Coordinator may be arranged.

Special Arrangements for Exams and Other Forms of Teaching

The goal is to improve the accessibility and attainability of exams and other forms of teaching.

Academic advising and educational services are a fundamental part of education. Students with disabilities or special needs are entitled to equal services than other students.

The same special arrangements as in entrance exams are mainly applied to other exams and other forms of teaching. Students need to inform the Disability Coordinator of their needs with an application in good time before the exam or other teaching situation.

In all forms of teaching, the aim is to note the needs of students with disabilities or special needs in the attainability of information and study materials.

Study-related information, e.g. the exam results, should be easily available for visually impaired and special needs students as well; e.g. given in an electronic form or large print. Announcing up-to-date and accurate information, e.g. schedule changes, is important especially to those students whose studies require e.g. the use of interpretation or transportation services.

As for the availability of teaching material, the difficulties caused by a disability or chronic illness in e.g. writing notes and group projects should be taken into account.

The recommendation for special arrangements in exams and other teaching situations is valid for 5 years maximum. If the need for special arrangements continues beyond that, the student needs to contact the Disability Coordinator in order to update the recommendation.

Implementation and Follow-up of Special Arrangements

Special arrangements are implemented in cooperation with the faculties, other units in charge of studies and the Disability Coordinator. If the applicant/student needs special arrangements, he/she must submit a written application concerning the arrangements to the Disability Coordinator. The Coordinator compiles a recommendation about the special arrangements to be granted. After that, the faculty or other unit in charge of studies makes the decision and takes care of the implementation. Separate units such as The Language Centre need not make a separate decision if the faculty has already granted special arrangements. The Disability Coordinator is informed if the decision differs from her/his recommendation.

The Disability Coordinator monitors the implementation of the special arrangements and reports about it annually.

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