

## Support for Disabled Students

### The Individual Requirement Form (IRF)

#### 1. Context

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the grounds of disability and requires that higher education institutions make reasonable adjustments to provision, criteria and practice where this places a person at a substantial disadvantage as a result of their disability.
- 1.2 In addition to making reasonable adjustments for individuals, higher education institutions have a duty to anticipate the requirements of people who use their services and to therefore take steps to ensure that these are designed and delivered in ways that are accessible and inclusive to all.
- 1.3 GSA recognises that disabled people are not a homogenous group and there is a continued requirement for individual adjustments.

#### 2. IRF Purpose

- 2.1 The IRF is the means by which a disabled student's learning needs are formally communicated to their programme leader. The IRF specifies the 'reasonable adjustments' that are required in order to ensure that the individual student receives appropriate disability related support and is not disadvantaged in the learning environment as a consequence of their disability.
- 2.2 A person has a disability 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long term (more than 12 months) adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. Whether a person is disabled is generally determined by the effect the physical or mental impairment has on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

#### 3. IRF Process

- 3.1 The content of the IRF is based on a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA).
- 3.2 GSA is validated to undertake LNA through the Scottish Government's Quality Indicators scheme. Assessments are conducted by a Learning Support and Development Tutor or Disability Support Adviser in partnership with the applicant or student concerned. Where appropriate the input of relevant academic or other staff is sought.
- 3.3 Applicants to GSA are offered the opportunity to disclose disability related needs during the application process. Students may disclose a disability related need at any point during their studies to the Learning Support and Development Service (LSDS) or to any member of GSA staff. Where disclosure is to a member of academic or other staff the student will be referred to LSDS.

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3.4 IRFs are issued only when clear evidence of disability has been made available to the LSDS and with the student's explicit written permission.

3.5 Where evidence of disability is not immediately available, the student will be offered appropriate support by the LSDS in conjunction with the relevant academic department whilst evidence of disability is being obtained by the student.

3.6 Evidence provided by the student will be used to inform the preparation of the IRF. All information will be retained by the LSDS and will not be made available beyond the LSDS without the student's explicit permission.

3.7 On completion and with the student's permission IRFs are emailed by the LSDS to Academic Support Managers (or equivalent).

3.8 Academic Support Managers are asked to confirm with LSDS by email that the IRF has been received and forwarded by them to the relevant programme leader. Where this confirmation is not received within five working days LSDS will issue an e-mail reminder.

## **4. Responsibilities of the Programme Leader**

4.1 On receipt of the IRF the programme leader is responsible for:

- ensuring that reasonable adjustments are in place
- ensuring that all staff working with the student are aware of the student's individual requirements
- nominating an appropriate member of academic staff to be the student's contact tutor
- ensuring that the contact tutor emails the student to:
  - acknowledge receipt of the IRF
  - let the student know that they will be taking up the role of contact tutor and how to get in touch
  - arrange a meeting to discuss the content of the IRF and outline how the programme team will meet their requirements through existing programme delivery mechanisms and, where necessary, individual adjustments
  - confirm the outcomes of this meeting.

4.2 The Programme Leader has an ongoing responsibility to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place and that the effectiveness of these measures is reviewed in conjunction with the student each term. This responsibility includes responding to disability related needs as these emerge or shift as the student

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progresses through each stage of the the programme and ensuring that reasonable adjustments are considered and put in place for programme related activities, such as field or study trips.

4.3 The Programme Leader is also responsible for ensuring, with the explicit permission of the student, that any external agencies, placement providers, exchange or partner institutions involved with the programme of study are informed about, and are able to put in place, the reasonable adjustments necessary to support the student's learning experience.

### **5. Student responsibility**

5.1 The student is responsible for alerting their contact tutor or the LSDS of any emerging issues as these arise and for utilising the services made available to them.

### **6. Role of the Student Support and Development Service**

6.1 The Student Support and Development Service is available to students and staff to support their respective responsibilities and to offer specialist advice where this is requested.

### **7. Timescale**

7.1 The timescale for preparation of the IRF will depend on the particular circumstances, availability and engagement of the student or applicant. Where evidence has been provided and a Learning Needs Assessment has taken place an IRF will be emailed to the department within a period of not more than 20 working days.