

## **Applying for adjustments for disability: process for research students and staff**

Students with a disability may apply for reasonable adjustments to study at any point from offer of a place to submission of thesis. Colleges and departments / faculties should encourage students to disclose disabilities as early as possible to facilitate the provision of appropriate support and adjustments. A wide range of individual adjustments and support is available for research students to remove barriers that have an impact on their studies.

Research students who have a physical or mental impairment may additionally apply for alternative arrangements to research degree assessments, which include interviews, presentations and oral examinations for Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, and the final viva voce examination for the degrees of M.Litt., M.Sc. by Research, and D.Phil as detailed in the *General Regulations Governing Research Degrees* (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rgoveresedegr/> § 6 – Students with Disabilities).

### **Process for applying for adjustments to research degree assessments**

1. Students applying for assessment (transfer of status, confirmation of status or final viva / appointment of examiners) should be prompted to consider whether they need any adjustments to the assessment due to a disability by means of the standard entry form or discussion with relevant staff within their department or college.
2. Students must request adjustment to their assessment on the 'Application for Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements' GSO.19 form. The form must be seen and signed by the DGS but, unlike most GSO forms, it does not need to be seen or signed by the student's supervisor or college as the student may have good reason for wishing to keep their information confidential to those involved in the assessment process. The people with whom the student's information is likely to be shared is detailed on the form.
3. Students are not expected to complete a new application for adjustment for assessment for each of their research degree assessments should their requirements and condition not have changed. If the required adjustments have been approved previously (process below), the DGS / departmental GSA / departmental administrator will be responsible for tracking these and ensuring that they are in place for all future assessments<sup>1</sup>. They will be aided in this process through the prompt box included on standard entry forms for transfer of status, confirmation of status and final viva / appointment of examiners.
4. Completed applications will be considered by the DGS who will determine whether the requested adjustments are ones that he or she can approve or if the application needs to be forwarded to the Proctors for approval. Guidance for DGS' on making adjustments to the assessment arrangements for disabled students is available to help the DGS determine the limits of their discretion. Proctors' approval is required for requests to split a viva over more than one day to accommodate the impact of fatigue. The DGS may refer other requests to the Proctors and can liaise with the relevant disability coordinator or DAS for further guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> Work is in progress to assess if the alternative arrangement functionality currently used for taught degree students could be adapted to record the required adjustments to research degree assessments.

5. If the application has been considered by the Proctors, the Proctors' Office will communicate their decision to the DGS / departmental GSA / departmental administrator<sup>2</sup>.
6. The departmental GSA / departmental administrator will be responsible for putting any approved adjustments in place for all assessments, including notifying the assessors for Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status assessments and advising the Research Degrees Team that a request for adjustment has been approved. They should not provide to the Research Degrees Team any supporting medical evidence or any details of the student's disability.
7. Following notification, the Research Degrees Team will be responsible for recording on the GSO database that a GSO.19 form for adjustments has been submitted and approved for a student.
8. The Research Degrees Team will be responsible for notifying the examiners of the final viva of any approved individual adjustments to the viva examination.
9. Where an application for adjustments has not been approved, students should be notified of the outcome by the departmental GSA / departmental administrator and advised that they have the right to appeal the decision.

### **Appeals**

When an application for adjustments to assessment arrangements has been turned down by the DGS, the student will be able to appeal to the Proctors' Office through their department, or college should the student prefer. Where a student has confirmed that they wish to appeal the decision of the DGS, the departmental GSA / departmental administrator should forward the GSO.19 application form and supporting evidence to the Proctors.

There will additionally be provision for appeals to Education Committee on decisions by the Proctors regarding adjustments to assessments.

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<sup>2</sup> In the case of the final viva, communication with the examiners will take place via the Research Degrees Team.