

**Policy name: Disability Support Service and Reasonable Accommodations Policy**

**Approved: 25th November 2016**

**Revision 1 approved 10th March 2017**

**Revision 2 approved**

**Revision 3 approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020**

## **1. Context**

- 1.1 The Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in music education and to ensuring that students with a disability have as complete and equitable access to all facets of Academy life as can reasonably be provided. This is in accordance with the Disability Act 2005, the Equal Status Acts 2000 (as amended) and the Universities Act 1997.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the provision of Reasonable Accommodations for students with disabilities studying at RIAM, and defines RIAM's rights and responsibilities to students with disabilities, and the RIAM community.
- 2.2 Within this framework RIAM has established a Disability Support Service, through which students with disabilities are provided with high standards of service as it seeks to provide them with Reasonable Accommodations to ensure that they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled student. Such Reasonable Accommodations will be put in place only after a student has registered with the Disability Support Service. Further details of this Service are available on the RIAM website.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all students, both undergraduate and postgraduate with permanent or long term disabilities, and who are registered with the RIAM Disability Support Service.
- 3.2 Pursuant to 3.1 above, a student also presenting with a mental impairment which may impact adversely on his/her behaviour will, in respect of this condition, be covered by the terms of RIAM's Mental Wellness and Health Standard Operating Procedures, in addition to any relevant terms of this policy.

## **4. Benefits**

- 4.1 RIAM provides an environment where students with disabilities are able to participate fully in student life.
- 4.2 The policy demonstrates RIAM's compliance with relevant national legislation and policies.

## 5. Principles

- 5.1 RIAM will seek to create an environment where students are comfortable in disclosing a disability and are provided with opportunities to do so at various stages throughout their time at RIAM.
- 5.2 RIAM endorses the principles of inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment.

## 6. Definitions.

- 6.1 **Disability:** The Equal Status Acts 2000-4 (as amended) and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004 (as amended) define disability as follows:
- (i) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;
  - (ii) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;
  - (iii) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;
  - (iv) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction; or
  - (v) a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behavior.
- 6.2 **Reasonable Accommodation:** A Reasonable Accommodation is any action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage due to a disability and/or a significant ongoing illness. Factors influencing the determination of what is reasonable will include: the effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the student to overcome the relevant disadvantage; whether the steps would significantly compromise the academic standards or professional practices associated with the course of study; health and safety issues; the effect on other students; and the financial and other cost to the institution.
- 6.3 **Fitness to Study** means being able to participate, with reasonable accommodations where necessary, in the programmes of study and/or research that the Academy provides and having the skills, knowledge, health and character necessary to undertake and complete a programme safely and effectively without negatively impacting the safety or well-being of themselves or others. Fitness to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student, in relation to life generally at the Academy. It does not solely relate to academic studies, it also relates to the ability to live independently and safely whilst at the Academy.

## 7. Policy

- 7.1 Basic Policy and Procedure for Students with a Disability
- 7.1.1 Students with a disability are encouraged to register with RIAM's Disability Support Service to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

7.1.2 For the purposes of all RIAM policies relating to disabled students and subject to 2.2 above, Reasonable Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis for each such student through a needs assessment process carried out by a suitably qualified staff member in the Disability Support Service. This takes into account the nature of the student's certified disability or specific learning difficulty, course requirements and individual differences.

7.1.3 However, where relevant and appropriate, if the operation of this policy and its associated procedures fail to resolve issues a student has that impacts on his/her capacity to fulfil the requirements of the programme of study concerned in an acceptable manner, it may be necessary to consider the case as a matter of 'Fitness to Study' (defined at 6.5 above). In such instances, the procedure to be followed is set out in section 8 of RIAM's Mental Wellness and Health Standard Operating Procedures.

### 7.2 Rights and Responsibilities

7.2.1 A student with a disability has the right to:

- (i) Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and/or additional services determined by a needs assessment and in accord with the individual's certified disability/specific learning difficulty.
- (ii) Request a review of their Reasonable Accommodations.
- (iii) Appropriate confidentiality of disability records (files) and that disclosure of information will only happen with the student's written consent.
- (iv) Information being reasonably made available in accessible formats (see 7.2.5 (ii) below).
- (v) Be treated with dignity and respect.

7.2.2 A student with a disability has the responsibility to:

- (i) Identify themselves in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation.
- (ii) Provide disability documentation from an acceptable professional source that verifies the nature of the disability.
- (iii) Register with the Disability Support Service and follow Disability Support Service and RIAM procedures if they wish to obtain reasonable and appropriate accommodations. This includes accepting the provisions of this policy and consenting to information being released.
- (iv) Treat staff of the institution with dignity and respect.

7.2.3 Students must also follow specific procedures for obtaining Reasonable Accommodations, such as:

- (i) Examination arrangements;

- (ii) Academic adjustments;

7.2.4 RIAM has the right to:

- (i) Maintain the institution's academic standards.
- (ii) Request disability documentation from an acceptable professional source that verifies the nature of the disability or an 'Evidence of Disability Form' completed by an acceptable professional source to verify the need for Reasonable Accommodations and/or auxiliary aids. The 'Evidence of Disability Form' can be found on the website at [www.riam.ie](http://www.riam.ie);
- (iii) Discuss a student's need for Reasonable Accommodations with the professional source of his/her documentation, having obtained the student's signed consent authorising such disclosure and discussion.
- (iv) Deny a request for accommodation and/or auxiliary aid if the documentation does not identify a specific disability and/or functional limitation, if it fails to verify the need for the requested services or if it is not provided in a timely manner.
- (v) Select from equally effective and appropriate accommodations and/or auxiliary aids in consultation with students with disabilities.
- (vi) Refuse to provide an accommodation and/or auxiliary aid that is inappropriate or unreasonable, including any that pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, or constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course or programme, or pose undue financial or administrative hardship on the Academy.

7.2.5 RIAM has the responsibility to:

- (i) Ensure that RIAM's courses, programmes, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are delivered in the most integrated and accessible settings possible.
- (ii) Provide to students with disabilities, information regarding RIAM's policies and procedures and ensure that it is available in accessible formats. With reference to Disability legislation, as well as good practice guidelines, RIAM has a responsibility to provide Reasonable Accommodations in information provision for both current and prospective students. In order to ensure that RIAM's information is equally accessible to all, and where a need has been requested and identified, RIAM will endeavour to produce any new publications in a range of formats. These include internet/email, computer disc (CD or USB flash drive), large print, audio tape, braille. When requested, publications should be of equivalent quality and made available within a reasonable timescale.
- (iii) Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities upon a timely request by a student.
- (iv) Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where the disclosure is authorised by the student.

7.2.6 RIAM staff have the responsibility to:

- (i) Assist students with disabilities to self-identify and meet RIAM's criteria for eligibility to receive Reasonable Accommodations determined on a case-by-case basis.
- (ii) Assure confidentiality (subject to the student signing the disclosure of information form) of all information pertaining to a student's disability.
- (iii) Identify students who may require RIAM's Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan [PEEP].
- (iv) Request feedback from students about the effectiveness of the supports provided in order to monitor and evaluate the quality of the service provided.

### 7.3 Confidentiality Policy for Students with Disabilities

7.3.1 RIAM encourages students with disabilities to disclose information on their disability/specific learning difficulty to RIAM Disability Support Service before they apply to college or at any point during their studies.

7.3.2 Such disclosure is encouraged so that RIAM can work with the student in ensuring that any Reasonable Accommodation required is identified and facilitated in conjunction with the student.

7.3.3 A record of a student's contact with RIAM is held securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and information provided to the Disability Support Service is regarded as 'sensitive personal data'. The information may also be used for statistical and monitoring purposes without the student's identity being revealed.

7.3.4 Any documentation or information presented in disclosing a disability is held by the Disability Support Service and specific medical or other documentation will not be disclosed to any third party except where necessary to provide Reasonable Accommodations.

7.3.5 Where a student requests and is granted any form of Reasonable Accommodation, such as extra time in examinations, or permission to record lectures, RIAM will, in consultation with the student, disclose relevant information to the individuals in those Faculties responsible for providing or facilitating students in accessing such accommodations.

7.3.6 In such instances, only information relevant to the particular situation will be disclosed. Where academic staff contact the Disability Support Service for advice regarding individual students, staff will be informed that it is necessary to obtain the permission of the student before doing so.

## 8. Responsibility

8.1 The Chair of Board of Studies is responsible for overseeing this policy. The Head of the Administrative Office (Registry) is also Head of Disability Support Service and is responsible for its operating procedures in relation to all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

## 9. Legislation and Regulation

- 9.1 [Disability Act 2005.](#)
- 9.2 [Equal Status Acts 2000 \(as amended\).](#)
- 9.3 [Universities Act 1997.](#)
- 9.4 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012.](#)
- 9.5 [Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area \(2005\).](#)
- 9.6 [Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners \(2015\).](#)
- 9.7 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\).](#)

## 10. Related Documents

- 10.1 Evidence of Disability Form.
- 10.2 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.
- 10.3 RIAM's Learning and Educational Needs Support form (LENS).
- 10.4 Mental Wellness and Health Standard Operating Procedures.

## 11. Document Control

Approved by Board of Studies 25th November 2016.

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