

NELSON MANDELA

UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REGULATORY CODE (IRC) (Policies, Procedures, Rules, Annexures)

To be completed by initiator of policy/policy owner:

1. POLICY TITLE:	Reasonable Academic Accommodations
2. FIELD OF APPLICATION: (All persons to whom policy applies)	All students with disabilities at Nelson Mandela University
3. COMPLIANCE OFFICER(S): (Persons responsible for ensuring policy implementation)	Dean: Learning & Teaching Dean of Students Deputy Director: Universal Accessibility & Disability Services
4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: (State the stakeholder group/s consulted during policy formulation/revision)	Student Services Council (SSC) T&L Committee Academic Administration Transformation Committee
5. DESIGNATION OF POLICY OWNER: (Person responsible for maintaining policy)	Dean of Student Life

POLICY HISTORY *(To be completed by policy owner)*

Decision Date (Compulsory)	Status (New/Revised/ No Changes)	Implementation Date (Compulsory if "new" or "revised")	Approving Authority (If "new" or "revised". N/A if no changes)	Resolution Number e.g. 07/11- 10.2 (Minute number. N/A if no changes)	Policy Document Number e.g. D/....../07 (N/A if no changes)	Pending date for next revision (Compulsory)
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NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON REASONABLE ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

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1. PREAMBLE

Nelson Mandela University, as an institution committed to social justice, is dedicated to the creation and constant renewal of an environment conducive to meaningful, effective and transformative learning for all its students from different contexts and socio-economic backgrounds.

The University is committed to the provision of services for students with disabilities and special needs so that they can realise their academic objectives through reasonable accommodations. Reasonable Accommodations (RA) are not intended to change any context of the course content. It is a modification or adjustment that will include the student in the content of the course he/she is registered for. Reasonable accommodations and effective individualised support measures should be provided in environments that maximise the academic development of these students on an equal basis with others. Reasonable accommodations policy serves as an equalising instrument for students with disabilities and thus enhances their chances of succeeding academically.

2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the words listed in the definition section will have the meaning ascribed below, unless the context indicates otherwise.

- 2.1 **Assessment** refers to the process of gathering data to understand each student's progress and learning needs in relation to the curriculum outcomes.
- 2.2 **Concessions** refer to students who experience barriers related to disability/conditions being given permission for additional support that may help them achieve academically.
- 2.3 **Disability** means long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which interact with various barriers and may hinder people with disabilities from having full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, 2011).
- 2.4 **New students** in the context of this policy refers to students who register for the first time at the University.

- 2.5 **Reasonable Accommodations** refers to essential modification of, and adjustments to, the environment and assessment format, as well as to allowing the use of assistive devices and technology.
- 2.6 **Scribe** refers to a person appointed to write on behalf of a student who has a disability and cannot write on their own. The Scribe writes verbatim what the student instructs him/her to write.
- 2.7 **Special Needs** refers to the accommodation and education of students with a wide range of educational needs of a specialised nature.
- 2.8 **Student** means a person registered for learning at the University.
- 2.9 **Temporary disability** means a condition which temporarily affects the functioning of the student subject to the disability definition. The condition should meet the criteria as set out in the disability definition.

3. REFERENCE FRAMEWORKS

- 3.1 Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2014. National Education Policy Act, 1996 Act no 27 of 1996).
- 3.2 DBE, 2014. Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support.
- 3.3 DBE, 2016. Draft procedural manual for the assessment of learners who experience barriers to assessment.
- 3.4 Health Professions Council of South Africa Form 207.
- 3.5 IEB.2017. Policy and procedures: Accommodations.
- 3.6 POPI Act.
- 3.7 The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2008. Special Concession Policies and procedures for SAICA examinations.

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy provides a set of guidelines, procedures and a process of providing academic reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Provisions of reasonable accommodations will apply to students with disabilities who disclose their disabilities/conditions and submit applications for reasonable accommodations with Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) for consideration of their requests for RA.

5. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy seeks to advance the objectives below:

- 5.1 Provide guidelines, procedures and processes for the provision of academic reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities.
- 5.2 Promote the creation of standardised processes for the provision of reasonable accommodations.
- 5.3 Promote collaboration between divisions/faculties for the provision and facilitation of support to students with disabilities.
- 5.4 Maximise the academic development of students with special needs on an equal basis with others.
- 5.5 Address barriers that students may experience during assessments and examination periods.
- 5.6 Enable students with special needs to demonstrate their true ability without changing the construct of the subject content.

6. PROCESS

Students with permanent disabilities, for which reasonable accommodations are granted because of their disabilities, shall apply for reasonable accommodations at the beginning of the academic year at the University. Each student will be evaluated according to their own specific needs and depending on the programme for which they are registered, and in accordance with accommodations provided for in Annexure A of this policy.

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS COMMITTEE (RAC)

7.1. The Reasonable Accommodations Committee will be established to perform the following functions:

- Process the applications of reasonable accommodations submitted by students.
- Advise on further academic reasonable accommodations if deemed necessary.
- Approve the reasonable accommodations during RAC meetings or via Round Robin when required.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of reasonable accommodations support.

7.2. The composition of the committee will be as follows:

- Head: Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (Chair)
- Student Access Coordinators (SAC)
- Counselling Psychologist
- Educational Psychologist/Psychometrist
- Deputy Director Assessment & Graduation
- Representatives from all Faculties
- Adaptive Technologist
- Student Representative Council
- Faculty Academic Representative

8. ASSESSMENT SESSIONS

The diagnosis of a learning difficulty should be evidenced by a psychological educational evaluation performed by a qualified and registered professional such as a counselling, clinical or educational psychologist, psychometrist, neuropsychologist, medical doctor or medical specialist, or a qualified professional in a related field. In this case, students can use external or internal professionals.

9. EMERGENCY REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

9.1 Students with temporal disabilities due to accident or any other illnesses shall apply for reasonable accommodations immediately when they encounter such incidents and are expected to submit medical documentation to UADS office.

9.2 For such cases, UADS Head will use discretion in granting accommodations needed.

9.3 For emergency cases, such as accidents or temporary illnesses, the closing date for reasonable accommodation applications is not applicable.

10. NEWLY REGISTERED STUDENTS

10.1 New students shall apply immediately after they are registered with the university, attaching all necessary documents.

10.2 Application forms will be obtained from UADS or website.

10.3 Referral for assessment, if needed, will be done when students apply for reasonable accommodations.

10.4 Reasonable Accommodation Committee (RAC) will assess all applications and approve the accommodations.

10.5 When a student refuses to apply for reasonable accommodations, a Refusal form (Annexure G) must be completed.

11. STUDENT LECTURES OFF CAMPUS

11.1 Students who have block release lectures must apply for reasonable accommodations.

11.2 Application forms will be obtained from UADS or online.

11.3 The respective school will inform UADS of the suitable dates for the closing dates for applications, as the dates for block release students may differ from those of full-time students.

11.4 Distance learning students will qualify for accommodations specified in Annexure A.

11.5 The venues for tests/examinations will be arranged by the respective school or examination section.

12. CONDITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

12.1 All physical disabilities (permanent/temporal).

12.2 Certain medical and cognitive impairments that impact on writing skills, such as epilepsy or SLD (dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism spectrum, ADD, ADHD).

12.3 Visual and hearing impairments.

12.4 Psychosocial disorders such as severe depression.

13. CONDITIONS NOT CONSIDERED FOR REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

13.1 Any condition that responds well to medication and/or remediation.

13.2 Poor handwriting which does not present with a diagnosed graphic or neurological disorder.

14. ROLE PLAYERS

All parties involved in the implementation of the policy (lecturers, students and RAC) are expected to take collective and individual responsibility with a view to ensuring adherence to the objectives, procedures and measures set out in this policy by executing roles in Annexure C.

15. APPEAL PROCESS

If RAC does not approve the student's application, a student may raise appeal with the HoD: UADS. The process as reflected in the Flow Chart in Annexure D will be applied.

16. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any person's personal information must be kept confidential, and the person has a right to be notified when their information will be accessed by an unauthorised party (POPI Act No 4 of 2013).

17. EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY

This policy will be implemented with immediate effect and will be reviewed annually.

Annexure A

Types of academic reasonable accommodations and concessions

1. Extra time

- 1.1 A student is granted extra time when he/she has a barrier to learning which prevents the completion of tasks/ examinations within the standard time allocated.
- 1.2 An additional five, ten or fifteen minutes per hour of task/examination may be granted. The health professional can recommend the duration of extra time based on the condition of the student.
- 1.3 Writing of assignment is not included for extra time.
- 1.4 Extra time is granted to all modules for which the student is registered.
- 1.5 Maximum extra time granted is 20 minutes per hour.
- 1.6 Faculty representatives in the Reasonable Accommodations Committee may motivate for students who may need extra time that is more than 20 minutes.
- 1.7 When a lecturer grants extra time to the whole class, students with time reasonable accommodations as per their disabilities/conditions should still get their reasonable accommodations.

2. Scribe/Reader

- 2.1 A student is granted the use of a scribe if his/her writing speed is very low due to physical disability.
- 2.2 When the use of the computer is not an option, the use of a scribe is granted.
- 2.3 A scribe is appointed to write the student's answers verbatim.
- 2.4 UADS is responsible for arranging scribes during term tests.
- 2.5 Examination section is responsible for arranging scribes during final and supplementary examinations.
- 2.6 Booking of scribes for tests should be done 5 days prior to the test date.
- 2.7 Students are responsible for submitting requests for scribes to UADS office.

2.8 If the student booked the scribe and does not appear for 2 consecutive times in a test situation, without any valid reason, the student will forfeit the accommodation.

2.9 The entire test/examination must be recorded, and a copy of the recording submitted with the script.

2.10 A script written by a scribe must have the words 'use of scribe' clearly written at the top of the first page.

2.11 During tests, the student is responsible for pasting on the sticker, as indicated, and during examinations, the invigilator is responsible for pasting on the sticker.

3. Laptop/Computer

3.1 A student is granted the use of a computer/laptop when his/her writing is illegible and serves to promote student independence.

3.2 The student must not use his/her own laptop.

3.3 Booking of laptop should be done 5 days before the test date.

3.4 Access to a printer is essential for this accommodation.

4. Braille conversion

4.1 Only students who are educated in using Braille may be granted this reasonable accommodation.

4.2 During tests, lecturers send question papers to the Information & Access Officer (IAO) for conversion and enlargement.

4.3 During examinations, lecturers and external examiners send question papers for conversion to the Examination section through a confidential drive.

4.4 Blind students are eligible for extra time.

5. Handwriting

5.1 This accommodation is granted to students whose handwriting is difficult to read when the student presents with a diagnosed graphic or neurological disorder impacting on his/her handwriting, and for whom the use of a computer is not appropriate.

5.2 A sticker for handwriting accommodation must be placed on each of the student's scripts.

5.3 This indicates to the marker that untidy writing must be accommodated.

5.4 During tests, the student is responsible for pasting the sticker, as stated in 5.2, and during examinations, this will be an invigilator's responsibility.

6. Spelling

6.1 A spelling accommodation is granted to students experiencing Specific Learning Difficulties, including dyslexia, and when the significant deficit is indicated in the standardised scores.

6.2 A spelling accommodation is not granted where the primary area of difficulty is with language of learning, teaching and assessment.

6.3 A spelling sticker must be placed on each of the student's scripts.

6.4 This indicates to the marker that spelling errors must be ignored, as long as the content is correct.

6.5 During tests, the student is responsible for pasting in the sticker, as stated in 6.3, and during examinations, this will be an invigilator's responsibility.

7. Enlarged printer

7.1 This accommodation is granted to students who are partially sighted (process is the same as in article 4).

8. Specific equipment

8.1 Type of equipment needed for test/examination must be specified in the RA application.

8.2 Examinations department must be notified of the specific equipment required.

8.3 If the equipment is for the student, an ICT official must provide assurance that there is no risk of creating an unfair advantage for the student.

9. Oral assessment

9.1 This accommodation is granted to students who can express themselves verbally but find it difficult to put the information in writing.

9.2 A recorder must be used for this accommodation.

9.3 The student is responsible for booking the recorder from UADS.

9.4 The designated Health Professional may recommend the mode of assessment that will suit the student, based on their condition.

10. Rest breaks

10.1 A rest break is a period when the student is not required to be at the desk, but must remain in the examination/test venue.

10.2 Rest break time does not count as extra writing time.

10.3 The rest break time used will be added to the examination session.

10.4 A maximum of 5 minutes may be used as a rest break.

11. C-Pen reader

11.1 This accommodation is suitable for students who have reading difficulties.

11.2 It reads text out loud.

11.3 The student will be able to write in the main exam/test room while wearing earphones.

Annexure B

Procedure followed to process requested accommodations

The procedure will be reviewed and updated from time to time by the Reasonable Accommodations Committee.

- A. After applying for reasonable accommodations at UADS, the student is required to fill in the application form (Annexure E) for academic reasonable accommodations. The form must include all the valid medical documents.
- B. The Student Access Coordinator (SAC) must verify the documents and evaluate if they match the RA the student has applied for.
- C. Documentation types to be submitted include (but are not limited to):
 - Medical reports, i.e., hospital discharge summaries (not older than 1 year)
 - Reports from physicians (not older than 1 year)
 - Psychological reports (not older than 2 years)
 - Detailed report from previous school which reflects the special needs support that the student was receiving
 - Neuropsychological assessments (not older than 2 years)
 - Reports from Audiologist/ENT Specialists (not older than 1 year)
 - Reports from Ophthalmologist/Optometrists (not older than 2 years)
 - Comprehensive Psychiatrist report (not older than 2 years)
 - Any declaration from relevant professional field.
- D. The professional who conducted the assessment only recommends the reasonable accommodation for the student.
- E. Reasonable Accommodations Committee (RAC) sits to assess all applications and make approvals and/or additional recommendations that may include extra time, academic support or further assessment by Educational Psychologist/ Psychometrist.
- F. When the committee has made recommendations and approved the applications, the UADS Head signs the reasonable accommodation letters (Annexure F).
- G. The committee meets once a month, in the months of February, March, April, July, August, September and October. These dates are set up by the committee at the beginning of the year and may differ from year to year.
- H. Reasonable Accommodation letters will be emailed to students, or they can collect them from the UADS office and submit to their lecturers.

- I. The Student Access Coordinator also distributes the RA letters to HoDs of faculties or schools.
- J. Students are responsible for presenting their letters at the test venues so that the lecturers can identify them.
- K. RA letters are valid for 1 academic year; therefore, applications are renewed annually.
- L. Closing dates for applications of reasonable accommodations should be the same as the deadlines for late registration as per the academic year.
- M. Applications done after these dates, excluding applications for emergency cases, will not be considered.
- N. When the student discloses his/her disability or condition, but does not need any reasonable accommodation or concession, the student must sign the Refusal form (Annexure G) and this must be filed in the student file at UADS.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF ROLE PLAYERS

The following responsibilities are only to be executed by the role players to ensure adherence to the objectives, procedures and measures set out in this policy.

1. Student Access Coordinators (UADS)

- 1.1 Receive the reasonable accommodations applications.
- 1.2 Verify medical documentation attached.
- 1.3 Refer students for assessment to the Psychometrist.
- 1.4 Establish summary sheets of each applicant's requests for reasonable accommodations.
- 1.5 Divide applications according to the faculties with which the students are registered.
- 1.6 Distribute electronically students' requests to the committee members 5 days prior to the meeting, for individual input.
- 1.7 Present requests to the committee for approval.
- 1.8 Issue reasonable accommodation letters to students by hand or emails.
- 1.9 Distribute the list of names for approved academic reasonable accommodations to relevant faculties/schools for the attention of Deputy Deans or HoDs.
- 1.10 Keep consistent communication with both students and lecturers regarding reasonable academic accommodations. Submit the data of students with specified reasonable academic accommodations granted to Examinations a month before the start of examinations.

2. Psychometrist

- 2.1 Receives referrals from the Student Access Coordinator.
- 2.2 Administers and scores psychometric assessment to determine if the student qualifies for reasonable accommodations.
- 2.3 Recommends and provides guidance regarding reasonable accommodations.
- 2.4 Refers to Student Wellness or other relevant Health professionals for further intervention should there be need.
- 2.5 Hands in detailed report to the Student Access Coordinator 7 days before the RAC seats.
- 2.6 Seat on Reasonable Accommodation Committee (RAC).

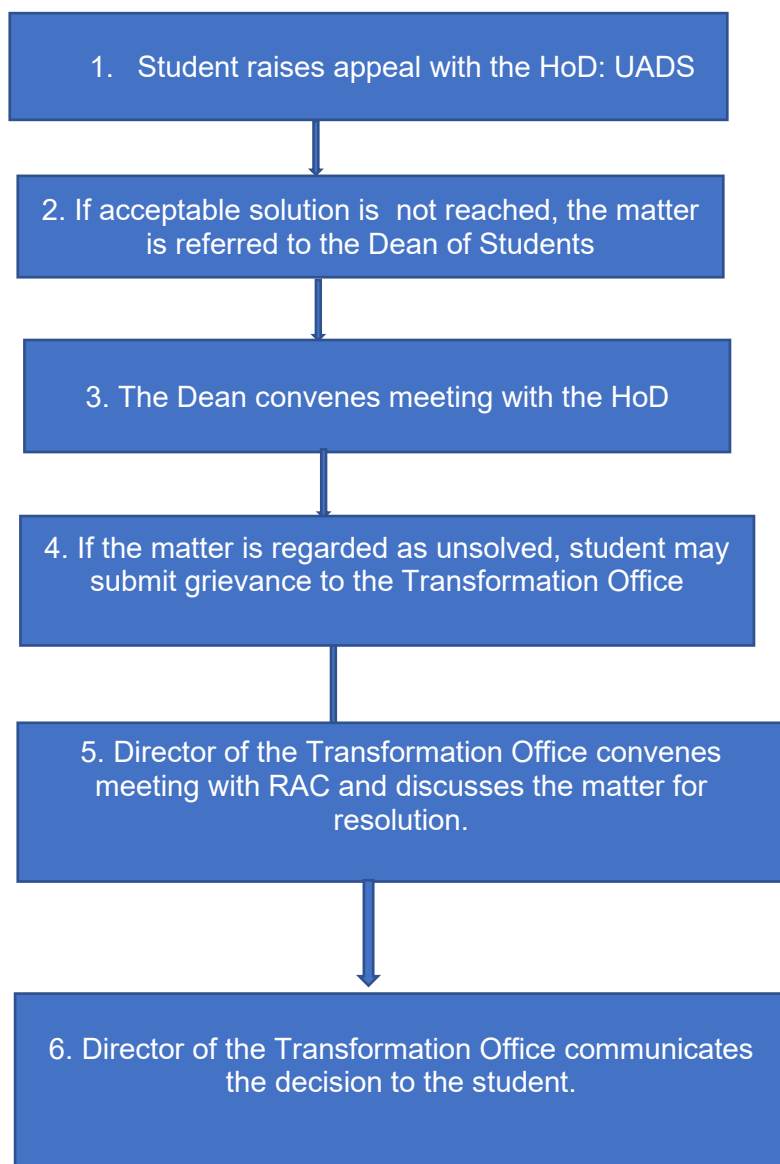
3. Students

- 3.1 Submit academic reasonable accommodation application to UADS, immediately after registration at the University.
- 3.2 Attach all necessary documents needed for provision of reasonable accommodations.
- 3.3 Collect a reasonable accommodation letter from UADS once they are informed by the Student Access Coordinator.
- 3.4 Submit the reasonable accommodation letter to lecturers immediately after receipt from the Student Access Coordinator and each time they are writing tests or examinations.
- 3.5 Always communicate with the lecturer for reasonable accommodations indicated to the letter.
- 3.6 Book the scribe for test 5 days before the scheduled test.
- 3.7 Ensure the stickers for handwriting or spelling accommodations are pasted to their scripts during tests or examinations.
- 3.8 Renew reasonable accommodation letters annually.

4. Lecturers

- 4.1 Implement all reasonable accommodations granted to students.
- 4.2 Book a scrubbed laptop at UADS when the students will write tests.
- 4.3 Take responsibility for the laptop and its return to UADS.
- 4.4 Liaise with the Information Access Officer (IAO) for braille and enlargement of notes and study material.
- 4.5 Arrange a separate venue for tests, when necessary.
- 4.6 Refer students with disabilities to UADS only for RA-related matters.

FLOW CHART: STUDENT APPEAL



CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY & DISABILITY SERVICES (UADS)
STUDENT REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS APPLICATION FORM

Please ensure that your application is completed in full. Failure to submit all requested documentation may result in delays and declines. All applications are valid for ONE academic year and must therefore be renewed annually.

Hand in your application form, with all valid documentation (not older than 3 years) attached, to the Student Access Coordinator at UADS Office, South Campus.

PERSONAL INFORMATION									
SURNAME									
NAME									
STUDENT NUMBER									
ID NUMBER OR PASSPORT NUMBER									
SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZEN		INTERNATIONAL STUDENT							
GENDER									
POPULATION GROUP (AS REQUIRED BY DHET)	AFRICAN		COLOURED		INDIAN		WHITE		OTHER
1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION									
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS									
CELL NUMBER						ALTERNATIVE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS									

1.2 TYPE OF REGISTRATION									
FULL-TIME		PAR T- TIME		OCCASIONAL (for non-degree purposes)		STUDY ABROAD EXCHANGE			
1.3 PROGRAMME OF STUDY		e.g. BCom (Financial Planning) ----- -----							
1.4 FACULTY	HUMANITIES					BUSINESS & ECONOMIC SCIENCES			
	ENGINEERING, BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					EDUCATION			
	HEALTH SCIENCES					LAW			
	SCIENCE								
1.5 CAMPUS	2 ND AVENUE		GEORGE		OCEAN SCIENCES				
	NORTH		SOUTH						
1.6 DISABILITY	BLIND (no functional vision)		PARTIALLY SIGHTED (functional vision with limitations)						
	HEARING IMPAIRED (None, little or some hearing)		HARD OF HEARING (persons with different degrees of hearing loss)			DEAF (makes use of SASL)			
	Deaf (does not make use of SASL)			PHYSICAL		PSYCHOSOCIAL			
	DEAF-BLIND			NEURODEVELOPMENTAL		CHRONIC			
	MULTIPLE								

1.7 Any accommodation granted at the previous school?	☐ Yes ☐ No	1.7.1 If Yes, mention which accommodation granted

3. INDICATE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS REQUIRED: (specific software)

Reasonable Accommodation	Tick where applicable
1. Extra time	
2. Use of a scribe	
3. Use of personal assistant	
4. Use of computer/laptop	
5. Braille and large print material	
6. Use of equipment	
7. Handwriting Accommodation	
8. Spelling Accommodation	
9. Medication and food intake	
10. Rest breaks	
11. Sign Language Interpretation	
12. Use of specified software (ZoomText, JAWS)	

4. INDICATE MODULES REGISTERED FOR:

MODULE	Module code	LECTURER NAME

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a) Required supporting documents attached	
b) Validity of documents	
c) Any previous accommodation granted	

DISCLOSURE

I, the applicant, hereby:

- (a) Declare that all information in this document is true and correct.
- (b) Declare that I have read the application process and understand that if I do not adhere to the application process it may have a negative impact on my application.
- (c) Grant permission to the UADS to enquire about and verify my medical documents or any other information needed on this application form.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is central to trust between UADS and the student and, as a student, you have the right to expect that your personal information will be held in confidence and effectively protected against improper disclosure. No personal information will be disclosed to any other party except the Reasonable Accommodations Committee that is responsible for reviewing the application.

Do you give permission for this information to be shared? Yes / No

Signature Date:

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION LETTER

Dear Student

Thank you for applying for reasonable accommodations with the Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS). I have pleasure in advising you that your application has been **APPROVED**, based on the specific medical documents you provided, as well as the recommendations of the Reasonable Accommodations Committee.

Below, you will find information about your approved reasonable accommodations for the current academic year (....).

-
-

Please note:

1. It is your responsibility to inform your lecturers timeously of your test and exam accommodations. Should a change in a course be made during the current academic year or a subsequent year, it is also your responsibility to notify the new faculty of your required accommodations.
2. You must utilise the reasonable accommodations during your term assessments before examinations. For formal examinations, please report to the Heinz Betz extra time venue (00023) at North Campus. For class tests, please report to the relevant department.
3. It is your responsibility to book a scribe 5 working days in advance. Please call 041 504231 or email Tinita.vanAardt@mandela.ac.za or Disability@mandela.ac.za or come to our offices at South Campus, Embizweni Building, next to the cashiers, to book a scribe.

Best wishes for a successful academic year.

Sincerely

Annexure G

REFUSAL OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FORM

This form will be filled in and signed during the period in which the student provided the documentation of disability but does not wish to receive any reasonable accommodation.

I.....Student no.....

Have met with the Disability Coordinator to discuss my reasonable accommodation needs.

☐

Does not wish to receive any reasonable accommodations

I was informed that I may request reasonable accommodations during my studies at Nelson Mandela University

☐

Yes

☐

No

Signed at..... on this.....day of.....2021

Student signature.....