

Policy on
persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational
impairment

The AUAS and UvA

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1. Introduction

The current focus on studying with a disability at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) and the University of Amsterdam (UvA) has not resulted in adequate student satisfaction with study programme feasibility and accessibility. Both the AUAS and UvA have scored poorly in the 'studying with a handicap' module of the National Student Survey (*Nationale Studenten Enquête (NSE)*) for a number of years now. The institutional advisory report audits (AUAS 2013; UvA 2013) advise that the satisfaction of students with a disability could be improved by:

- formulating a clearer policy for this target group (UvA);
- ensuring this policy is implemented properly and that students from this target group and the employees who have contacts with them are familiar with it (AUAS and UvA).

Where employees with a disability or chronic illness are concerned, it is observed that there is a lack of structure in the knowledge of and attention to terms of employment, working conditions and career development.

If the objectives of the Strategic Plan and the Vision on Teaching and Learning are also to be achieved for students and employees with a disability or chronic illness, a policy aimed explicitly at these target groups is essential. The current AUAS and UvA strategic plans (2015-2020) do not include any separate attention for these target groups. The broad outlines of the policy envisaged will be anchored in the update of the vision on studying and teaching (AUAS) and the Vision on Teaching and Learning (UvA).¹

The broad outlines above will be described in detail, at a strategic level, in this policy document.

The AUAS and UvA are committed to ensuring that everyone with a disability or chronic illness is actively facilitated by the institution such that they are able to study or work in a manner similar to persons without a disability or chronic illness in terms of autonomy and recognition of their talents.

The AUAS and UvA want to and are taking steps to achieve a successful inclusive policy. This will involve taking into account the possibilities and limitations of students and employees in every aspect of teaching and research processes on the one hand and management and support processes on the other. Reasonable facilities must be offered in response to specific types of disability or illness, in order to facilitate equal treatment and equal chances of academic success. Legislation provides for a principle of reasonable practicability in situations where the implementation of measures would create a disproportionate burden for an educational institution or employer.

Any adaptations made could be of a tangible or intangible nature. For example, adjusted study materials, adaptations while doing degree programmes (flexible programmes), adjusted working hours or adjusted support and guidance. All adaptations must be effective. In other words, they must be suitable for a person with a disability and necessary in the sense that they enable him/her to do his/her degree programme or work.

A distinction is possible between personal and activity-related facilities or measures, responsibility for which lies with the mandatary (Standard Operational Management Mandate (*Standaardmandaat Bedrijfsvoering*) (UvA) or the Authorisation Regulations (*Procuratieregeling*) (AUAS)) and between building-related facilities, responsibility for which lies with the owner, (primary) users or manager of a building (Space Utilisation Regulations (*Regeling Ruimtegebruik*) (AUAS and UvA)).

¹ Adopted by the Executive Board: Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (AUAS: 2 February 2015; UvA: 16 February 2015); vision on studying and teaching (AUAS; 25 February 2013); Vision on Teaching and Learning (UvA: 28 August 2012).

Employees with an occupational impairment fall under the Participation Act (*Participatiewet*) and the Occupational Impairment (Employment Targets and Quotas) Act (*Wet banenafpraak en quotum arbeidsgehandicapten*), otherwise referred to as the Quota Act (*quotumwet*). The AUAS and UvA are committed to meeting the quota for persons with an occupational impairment in line with the requirements of the Quota Act. The government determines the numbers to be achieved per institution: up to and including 2023, the AUAS is required to offer 65 jobs to persons with an occupational impairment and the UvA 121 jobs.

It is important that everyone with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment is able to interact with colleagues, lecturers and/or fellow students in an open and safe environment.

The following basic policy principles apply:

- Legal equality for students and employees in the various faculties, units and Executive Management Support, regardless of whether they have a disability or chronic illness or not;
- The individual him/herself is responsible for disclosing his/her disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment. When enrolling, students will receive information about studying with a disability or chronic illness and about how to disclose either.
- There is no obligation for an employee or student to disclose a disability or illness to the institution, except where an individual would not be self-reliant in an evacuation situation;
- Each position and degree programme is accessible to everyone, unless – given the disability or illness in question – it will not be possible to create an opportunity to meet the requirements imposed by the position, degree programme or work or study environment in question (the principle of reasonable practicability);²
- Flexibility, because circumstances vary from one student and employee to another;
- When reviewing, updating or producing new vision documents and policy documents and when submitting tenders, purchasing and setting project objectives, explicit consideration will also be given to persons with a disability or chronic illness.³

The Disability, Chronic Illness and Occupational Impairment Committee (*Commissie Functiebeperking, Chronische ziekte en Arbeidsbeperking* (the FCA Committee (*Commissie FCA*)) (see Section 8) is responsible for managing implementation of this policy.

The organisational units are helped to implement the Participation Act by HR staff (AUAS) and P&O staff (UvA).

The ambition for 2016 is to:

- have the Handbook ready for the most important types of disability and chronic illness (see 5.1); it will then be used as the basis for the identification of issues in respect of the organisation of study and work and the conditions in which work and study take place (see 4.3, 5.1 and 5.2);
- have put together a proposal for a structural and incidental approach to information provision and information, raising awareness and promoting expertise (see 4.4.3);
- have identified issues in buildings and also the financial consequences of rectifying delays (see 4.1);

² The prohibition on discrimination (see under 3 Legislation) does not mean that:

a person must be employed even if he/she is not able to do the actual tasks required in the profession in question (source: Equal Treatment (Disability and Chronic Illness) Act (*Wet Gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap of chronische ziekte*) - Explanatory Memorandum, Page 13).

³ For example, the Strategic Plan, Vision on Teaching and Learning, Students' Charter, Accommodations Plan, work and project groups like the access to the electronic work environment task force (*werkgroep Toegang Elektronische Werkomgeving*).

- have an insight into digital accessibility issues (see 4.2);
- have achieved compliance with the national employment targets formulated for persons with an occupational impairment (Quota Act; see 6).

The FCA Committee will prepare a new annual plan every year after 2016.

Policy will be evaluated and adjusted – where necessary – on the basis of systematic feedback on experiences.

Besides the relevant legislation and regulations, this policy document will also look at the tangible and intangible facilities to be put in place and at the job holder responsible for them at the institution. Attention will also extend to the raising awareness, administrative accountability and financial consequences. Where students are concerned, the frame of reference provided by the standards committee (*commissie Maatstaf*⁴) will be observed.

The AUAS Policy Framework for physically disabled students (*beleidskader Studeren met een functiebeperking*), which was adopted on 25 March 2013, will continue to apply alongside this policy document.

2. Background and scope

The following are understood to be disabilities and chronic illness:

- visual, auditory and motor-impairment disabilities;
- mental disabilities such as phobias or anxiety disorders;
- disabilities resulting from a brain function disorder (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADD/ADHD), autism spectrum disorders);
- disabilities resulting from a chronic illness;
- problems in connection with speech, endurance, memory, concentration, etc.

A disability is an impairment that is typically permanent in nature and is not always visible to others.⁵

A physical, sensory or other disorder above will be relevant for students and employees at the AUAS or UvA if:

- it delays academic progress;
- it places limitations on an employee when doing his/her work, particularly if he/she forms part of the group of employees with an occupational impairment (persons who have difficulty finding or staying in paid work);
- they have problems with the physical and/or digital accessibility of buildings, facilities and information.

Persons with an occupational impairment will:

- be persons who have an occupational impairment, apply to the municipality for employment support, be persons who the Employee Insurance Agency (*Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen* (UWV) deems unable to independently earn the minimum wage and be on the waiting list for sheltered employment (WSW indication);

⁴ *Meer Mogelijk maken. Studeren met een functiebeperking in het Hoger Onderwijs* (Making More Possible: Higher education for students with a disability). Recommendation of the standards committee, The Hague, 2010.

⁵ To qualify for facilities, these disabilities must be demonstrable. A new (digital) Handbook (see 5.1) will describe how to do this.

- be persons who must be admitted to a degree programme and will not be in a position to do it (source: idem, Page 15);
- be receiving benefit under the Disablement Assistance Act for Handicapped Young Persons (*Wet arbeidsongeschiktheidsvoorziening jonggehandicapten (Wajong)*) – these persons will include highly educated handicapped young persons – unless the reassessment identifies a Wajong benefit recipient as completely and permanently unfit for work.

The policy on persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment will apply to employees, students and/or visitors:⁶

- who have a (temporary⁷) disability or chronic illness;
- who have an occupational impairment. This includes persons who are part of a work experience scheme at the AUAS or UvA (just employees);
- who have a functional relationship with persons who have a disability, including tutors;
- who carry out activities at institutions where employees and/or students of the AUAS/UvA are located on a structural basis and over which the AUAS/UvA does not have any control but for which employees, students and/or visitors, the AUAS/UvA is responsible given its duty of care, as the employer or as an educational institution (see 5.3).

The scope of this policy document will not extend to the work to be carried out outside a person's own institution and outside institutions with which partnerships exist. A separate policy will be drafted for (study) activities that fall under internships, trips and fieldwork or for study or work abroad and will expressly consider persons with a disability or chronic illness.

3. Legislation and regulations, the collective labour agreement and AUAS and UvA regulations

The Equal Treatment (Disability and Chronic Illness) Act (2003) will help define this AUAS/UvA policy on persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment most.⁸ This Act prohibits any direct or indirect discrimination, including intimidation, on the basis of a person's actual or perceived physical, intellectual and psychological impairments. As educational institutions and employers⁹, the AUAS and UvA are obliged to make effective adaptations, unless the adaptations in question would create a disproportionate burden for the AUAS and UvA¹⁰ (Sections 1, 2, 3.1 and 4).

The Participation Act and the Occupational Impairment (Employment Targets and Quotas) Act apply to employees with an occupational impairment.

Appendix 1 sets out the provisions of legislation, the collective labour agreement and UvA and/or AUAS regulations that apply to persons with a disability, chronic illness or an occupational impairment.

⁶ Also for international employees and students who work or study at the institution.

⁷ The principle of reasonable practicability will also apply when putting measures in place for someone with a temporary disability.

⁸ This legislation is currently limited to the following two social areas: labour (from recruitment and selection up to terms of employment and dismissal) and professional education (from vocational education up to and including university education).

⁹ In the legislation in question, the term "employer" is defined as the provider of labour and professional education.

¹⁰ The question of whether a disproportionate burden is the case will only arise once it has correctly been established whether an adaptation is effective in the case in question (see 4). This describes an open standard, to which a test of reasonableness is applied. This test involves a weighing up of the interests a disabled person or a person with a chronic illness has in the adaptation as opposed to the interests of the other party. The adaptation must be proportional. Certain adaptations, to buildings in particular, may be of a clearly generic nature. If so, the assessment that takes place when weighing up interests, may also include the interests of future users (source: the Equal treatment (disability and chronic illness) Act - Explanatory Memorandum, Pages 27 - 28).

4. General aspects

This section will look at the aspects – largely – applicable to employees, students *and* third parties. Section 5 will comment on the aspects applicable to each individual group.

Where general aspects are concerned, equal treatment will be achieved by ensuring: the equal accessibility of buildings, office space, lecture rooms and general facilities; the digital accessibility of information and course materials, etc.; a safe and suitable study environment or workplace; including a rest area and aspects of Company Emergency Response; expertise, support and guidance, the raising of awareness and recognition.

The aspects above will be elaborated on in Subsections 4.1 up to and including 4.4.

4.1 Accessibility of buildings, office space, lecture rooms and general facilities

In the role of owner, Real Estate (Executive Staff (UvA) and Facility Services (FS) (AUAS)) are responsible for the physical accessibility of buildings and the rooms and facilities in them. Facilities include lifts, toilets, escape routes and parking spaces. Actual realisation of the above has been placed with Real Estate Development/the Development Office and FS and forms an integral part of service provision.

The designs underlying renovation and new-build activities, including site development, are provided by Real Estate Development/the Development Office or FS in accordance with:

- the facilities Schedule of Requirements (SoR), for which accessibility is one of the basic principles;
- the action plan for the virtual Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) that is carried out by the (future) user.

The relevant subsection in the facilities SoR will be in compliance with or refer to the most recent version of the accessibility handbook (*Handboek voor Toegankelijkheid*¹¹) and the Buildings Decree (Bouwbesluit) and also include subjects relevant to specific facilities at the AUAS and UvA, such as lecture rooms and laboratories. The FCE Committee will add to or assess the content of this subsection (see under 8). In the event of new-build or renovation activities, this subsection will be added to the Schedule of Requirements and the handover and acceptance report (*Proces Verbaal van Overdracht en Acceptatie*) as a separate subsection.

In the case of large-scale renovation and new-build activities, the aim is to meet the requirements necessary to obtain the ITS¹² quality mark. The consequences of this aim must be identified for projects that have been completed recently and/or that are still in progress. It will be possible to deviate from the above, stating the reasons for doing so, if a building is listed or if the costs involved would create a disproportionate burden. To this end, the FCA Committee must develop an assessment framework on which the Executive Board can base its decision-making. If it is found that compliance with the ITS quality mark is not being achieved due to some basic features but that one or two of the basic features are compliant, a partial certification will be requested. Real Estate Development/the Development Office or FS will be responsible for requesting (partial) certification.

¹¹ The accessibility handbook is produced in collaboration with the Dutch Council of the Chronically Ill and the Disabled (*Chronische Zieken en Gehandicapten Raad Nederland*).

¹² ISA = International Symbol of Access, the ITS quality mark can be requested via the Project Bureau Accessibility (*Projectbureau Toegankelijkheid*). Criteria include doors, stairs, furniture, toilets and parking spaces.

When completing renovation and refurbishment projects, users and building managers assess whether the building and facilities in question are in compliance with the agreements made to this end in advance, including accessibility aspects. Just as with safety, the primary user – which plays a steering role – assesses the cohesion between buildings and the sites on which they are located in the interests of accessibility.

Where existing buildings and the campus environment are concerned, FS and the (primary) user's occupational health and safety coordinator assess whether they meet the requirements of the faculty SoR via a structural inventory. In individual situations – raised with FS via Student Affairs/Student Services or HR/P&O – specific measures may be taken.

In both cases, the (additional) measures necessary will be included in and funded as part of normal maintenance or via Functional Modifications (a multi-year programme). Where small-scale adaptations are concerned, pre-funding will be an option and ensure that a start can be made on the adaptations in question within a reasonable period of time.

When leasing external buildings or rooms for structural workspace use or for educational activities, Real Estate and FS must assess their compliance with accessibility requirements in advance.

Assistance dogs¹³ are permitted in buildings¹⁴ via the mediation of a faculty's student counsellor (AUAS) or study adviser (UvA) or a faculty's manager/Director of Operational Management (employees). Where visitors from or employees of external companies are to carry out work in AUAS and UvA buildings, a security guard for the building or campus in question will decide whether or not to allow entry to an assistance dog in accordance with the appropriate protocol.

In the event of a conflict of interests – for example, a visually impaired person with an assistance dog and students/employees with an allergy to dogs would be using the same (lecture) room, the person in charge will need to find a practical solution that is acceptable to everyone concerned.

4.2 Digital accessibility

Digital accessibility is accessibility:

- at the 'front end':
 - 1) At a general, AUAS or UvA-wide level: this is both the intranet (the employee and student site) and the part accessible to the public (extranet);
 - 2) at faculty level: the intranet;
 - 3) the digital learning and work environment. This includes the DLWO (AUAS), blackboard (UvA) and SIS, via which course and academic progress information, teaching material, web lectures and test applications, timetables, registration modules and grades are accessed, amongst other things. Differences may exist here between the AUAS and UvA.¹⁵

The intention is to add other systems – from the UB/HB, for example – in time.

¹³ The term "assistance dog" is defined as: any dog that has been trained to support persons with a disability or chronic illness.

¹⁴ Also see the UvA-wide house rules and rules of conduct concerning buildings, facilities and grounds of the UvA (*UvA-breed kader voor huis- en gedragsregels met betrekking tot gebouwen, voorzieningen en terreinen van de UvA*) (adopted on 30 September 2015).

¹⁵ Due to a difference in the (general) vision on teaching and learning at both institutions, there may be a difference in approach between them – when administering tests digitally, for example.

- at the 'back end':
 - 4) Buying, building and maintaining the systems and software above. To enable persons to use systems for professional purposes, this must be taken into consideration when buying them.

Specific training must be given to persons who are responsible for making websites and study programmes digitally accessible. Responsibility for this has been placed with ICT Services (ICTS).

To ensure the accessibility of websites for users, the aim when building (buying) and organising websites is to meet the requirements of the 'drempelvrij.nl' national quality standard (AA label)¹⁶ and gain the 'drempelvrij.nl' national quality standard.¹⁷ In 2015, Student Affairs and Student Services submitted a project proposal – on the subject of accessible information provision for students (*Drempelvrije informatievoorziening voor studenten*) – to the ICT Steering Committee (*regiegroep ICT*) for the current system landscape.

It will only be permitted to deviate from the accessibility principles and from the criteria of the 'drempelvrij.nl' national quality standard in new projects under the ICT Steering Committee if to do otherwise would require an unreasonable amount of effort.

Digital accessibility for ICT employees currently falls outside the scope of the project proposal above. Given the complexity of the content management system, it is not possible to make this system accessible to persons with a visual impairment.

The (digital) Handbook (see 5.1) will set out the guidelines applicable for digital accessibility per type of disability.

In principle, both general sites (1 and 2) must be accessible to all persons with a disability. Broad accessibility must be achieved for the specific sites (3) too if possible. In certain situations, individual arrangements may apply instead. The need for individual arrangements will depend on a number of factors, including the number of students enrolled who have a certain type of disability.

Responsibility for implementation of the above-mentioned aspects of digital accessibility (points 1 to 4) and compliance with the requirements of the 'drempelvrij' national quality standard lies with the system owner.

Decision-making about the above will occur in line with IV Governance.

4.3 A safe and suitable study or work environment

A safe and suitable study and work environment is not limited to the study work station and workspace but also includes facilities like a rest area and aspects of Company Emergency Response.

4.3.1 Study environment

At the AUAS, the faculties are responsible for providing accessible and safe lecture rooms for students and lecturers with a disability or chronic illness. At the UvA, this responsibility lies with the Teaching Logistics Office (Teaching Logistics Office – FS).

¹⁶ www.drempelvrij.nl, based on international WCAG criteria (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).

¹⁷ Steps will be taken to ascertain how realistic the aim of obtaining certification is and, if not, how to safeguard digital accessibility as much as possible and make sure that everyone concerned is aware of the digital accessibility possible. The point is for students to know what they can access digitally and how they can actually use the various programs and websites. When certain programs or texts are not accessible, it must be possible to communicate this easily, with a view to improvements or – if necessary – individual arrangements.

The accessibility to be created includes loop systems, disabled parking spaces, door controls and suitable escape routes. The requirements applicable have been set out in the appendix on lecture rooms in the facilities SoR.

Study places are assessed by either the UB/HB, or the (primary) users of a building in collaboration with the FCA Committee.

4.3.2 *Work environment*

The occupational health and safety coordinator helps the unit (supervisor or study adviser/student counsellor) to ascertain whether there is a safe and suitable workspace or study environment for employees and students with a disability or chronic illness. This support includes:

an assessment – in the context of the hazard identification and risk assessment (HI&RA) – of whether the unit is meeting the requirements applicable in respect of the accessibility of buildings, facilities and sites for employees, students and visitors (in collaboration with FS).

Where refurbishment, new-builds and relocations are concerned, this aspect will be included in the virtual HI&RA carried out prior to a relocation.

A reassessment in the event of a new employee or a new student with a disability. The object of the reassessment will be adequately facilitate the employee or student in respect of the nature of his/her work and its organisation and the accessibility, reachability and organisation of the workspace/study space if obstacles are present. The (digital) Handbook per type of disability will be decisive here (see 5.1).

Steps to ensure that the measures considered necessary are put in place as soon as possible.

Where there are hot desks, an employee will be entitled to a permanent workspace if necessary because of the nature of his/her disability (to be set out in detail in the Handbook; see under 5.1 Students and 5.2 Employees).

4.3.3 *Rest area*

If students or employees have a disability or chronic illness, there may be a need or necessity to schedule some rest time for them during the course of the learning or working day. With this in mind, the rest area/first aid room, or another room, will be furnished with a lounge to ensure that students or employees with a disability or chronic illness are able to avail themselves of this option. The faculty/central service unit/other unit will organise and communicate the availability and means of access to the rest area – within a building or at campus level.

4.3.4 *Aspects of Company Emergency Response*

To ensure that first aiders¹⁸ are able to respond effectively in the acute phase of an illness (an epileptic attack or diabetic hypo, for example), it will be important for the Company Emergency Response organisation to be familiarised with illnesses of this nature.

If it is necessary to transport an employee or student to a hospital, out-of-hours GP service or an accident and emergency unit in a taxi or private transport in the situation above, the first aider (or someone else present) will arrange for a colleague or fellow student to accompany the person in question until assistance is taken over by the professional care provider.

¹⁸ The number of essential first aiders required is established in the Company Emergency Response HI&RA, whether per building or campus.

To make sure that non-self-reliant persons (both employees and students) are able to leave a building safely in the event of an emergency, the Head of the Company Emergency Response team will prepare a Personal Evacuation Plan with them, in accordance with the Company Emergency Response Policy at the UvA and AUAS.¹⁹ The 'non-self-reliant-person' group will also include employees or students with a temporary disability and women in the third trimester of pregnancy, amongst others. A person with whom a plan of this nature is to be prepared will be put forward by the employee him/herself, his/her supervisor and/or the HR adviser/P&O adviser, a student counsellor (AUAS)/a study adviser (UvA) or Student Affairs/Student Services. Persons who are non-self-reliant (whether or not temporarily) will be responsible for making their non-self-reliance known to one of the persons above or a receptionist/porter (primarily visitors).

Personal evacuation plans will be added to the Evacuation Plan. The Company Emergency Response HI&RA will be used to check whether this procedure is actually being implemented.

4.4 Information provision, promotion of expertise and awareness campaigns

4.4.1 Introduction

It is important that persons with a disability or chronic illness receive information that gives them an insight into aspects that are important for study programme feasibility or possibilities in terms of work-related facilities and accessibility, both physical and digital. It is also important for these persons to be prepared for the dilemmas they will experience because of their disability or illness and for the persons around them to be able to assess the impact of this properly.

Attention to the provision of adequate tangible and intangible facilities and good accessibility alone will not be sufficient. Information provision, the promotion of expertise and awareness campaigns will be necessary for the various target groups.

A student or employee with a disability or chronic illness may experience psychosocial strain if colleagues, his/her supervisor, lecturers and/or fellow students:

- are insufficiently aware of or make insufficient allowance for his/her (disability);
- wrongly lighten his/her load or overprotect him/her;
- bully him/her or treat him/her unfairly because of his/her disability;
- have unrealistically-high expectations and requirements in respect of his/her deployability (colleague) or ability to study (a student). A student or employee with a disability or chronic illness is not always able to assess this properly him/herself either.

Communication and attitude are crucial and may not be adequate due to ignorance or a lack of empathy.

Another important factor is the situation that arises when an employee or student does not want other persons to know about his/her disability. This makes it impossible to make (sufficient) allowance for his/her disability.

A person may sometimes have a negative self-image, a sense of powerlessness due to previous experiences in which he/she has failed, or be unable to accept his/her condition or disability. Research among students shows that they often find it difficult to seek help at an early stage.²⁰

¹⁹ Adopted by the Executive Board on 30 September 2015.

²⁰ UvA General Practitioners Practice: www.ik-student.nl.

Subsections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 look respectively at individual support and guidance and the institution-wide approach to information provision and information, the raising of awareness and the promotion of expertise.

4.4.2 *Individual support and guidance*

Individual support and guidance for students is provided by a student counsellor (in the faculty - AUAS), the study adviser (in the faculty - UvA) and/or by Student Affairs/Student Services. For employees, this role is played by the HR adviser/P&O adviser, possibly with support from the staff welfare officer from the 4al health and safety service.

Contact information for the job holders above is prepared and presented such that it can be accessed via a number of channels, taking into consideration the needs and diversity of the target group.

4.4.3 *Institution-wide approach to information provision and information, raising awareness and the promotion of expertise*

The FCA Committee (see under 8) is working with Student Affairs/Student Services and the Communication Department (AUAS)/Communications Office (UvA) on a proposal about structural or incidental activities in respect of information provision, awareness raising and the promotion of expertise. The finished proposal will consider the target groups, the knowledge level required (and to be kept up-to-date), where alignment will be sought with the primary and secondary process²¹, the organisation and allocation of tasks, planning, periodicity, the content and method of information provision and funding.

The proposal will be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

A distinction will be made between activities in respects of information provision and information, awareness raising and promoting expertise.

- Information provision and information

Information provision and information will focus on (prospective) students, (new) colleagues and other (visiting) persons with a (temporary) disability or persons with an occupational impairment. Information will focus on what a (prospective) student or employee needs to know – where his/her disability or chronic illness is concerned – about informing others of his/her disability or chronic illness, the nature of the degree programme, the requirements to be met by him/hers, the tangible or intangible facilities available and how they can be requested (procedures) and the support and supervision offered by the AUAS/UvA.

The digital Handbook will enable lecturers, student support and guidance employees and supervisors to access information about the different types of disability and (how to request) the facilities available. The HR Department and P&O Department will be responsible for the content and circulation of information provision and information to persons with an occupational impairment.

Information provision and information will be made available via various channels, for which accessibility and an open-door policy are important preconditions. These channels include:

- digital information provision via the website of the institution and the units and social media, etc.;
- written information material (*brochures, etc.*);

²¹ For example, via (maintenance of) the University Teaching Qualification (*Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (BKO)*) and training courses for specific target groups, including examinations boards.

- information days, introductory sessions and open days;
- for students: the study check, matching interviews and enrolment. Students will also be given the opportunity to make a disability or chronic illness known at these times;
- for employees: before and when employment commences. Employees will be given the opportunity to make their disability or chronic illness known at these times.

- Awareness raising

When raising awareness among (new) colleagues, supervisors, lecturers or fellow students who will have contacts with persons with a disability or chronic illness, efforts will focus on a knowledge of and attitude to persons with a disability or chronic illness and possibilities to support or guide them. The aim will be to gain acceptance for persons with a disability or chronic illness, to create a work and study environment in which this group feels comfortable, to identify specific issues and possibly refer members of this group to experts in the institution.

- Promoting expertise

Employees who are directly or indirectly involved with students, employees or visitors are given the knowledge and skills necessary about the various types of disability or chronic illness (on the basis of the Handbook, etc.), the procedures applicable when studying or working with a disability and the responsibilities applicable to employees in this respect. The knowledge and skills in question are determined per employee group (supervisors, lecturers, study advisers and student counsellors, faculty employees, building managers/concierges, HR advisers/P&O advisers, policy makers and others whose roles require them to provide facilities). Expertise is promoted on a regular basis, so that knowledge stays up-to-date.

The employees above will be given the opportunity to take part in awareness-raising and expertise-promotion efforts.

5. Specific aspects

The nature of the study or work done by persons with a disability or chronic illness may make the provision of specific facilities necessary - in respect of study programme feasibility for students and the organisation of work and terms of employment for employees.

Each person with a disability or chronic illness will have a contact person, being an employee within the faculty and the units/Executive Staff Department, who will also be responsible for providing proper help and support. These experts may be approached if there is a need to obtain specific expertise (clinical-psychological and/or medical).

Agreements will also be necessary in the event of secondment or if work is to be carried out at affiliated institutions.

This will be elaborated on in Subsections 5.1 to 5.3.

5.1 Students

It is important to facilitate students who have a specific disability or chronic illness and provide them with information about equal study programme feasibility and career prospects in every phase of and before attending education (information provision at secondary schools, study check, matching, student intake, attending education – including practicals, internships, testing, assessment and graduation). To

this end, the institution actively approaches them and/or gives them the opportunity to receive this information when enrolling.

The faculty/unit has primary responsibility for ensuring that students with a disability or chronic illness are able to avail themselves of the education on offer. This includes:

- offering individual meetings that focus on the choice of study programme. In these meetings, students can indicate whether they need (individual) guidance, support or advice. The student counsellor (AUAS)/study adviser (UvA) has an adequate background knowledge of (individual) disabilities and be familiar with the procedure applicable when requesting, making decisions about and funding tangible and intangible facilities. Agreements will be set out in writing and include the rights and obligations of the faculty and the student. The faculty will promote the allocation of a fixed contact person to students with a disability or chronic illness.
- offering flexible programmes, other education-related adaptations and/or aids/facilities²² in consultation with the student counsellor (AUAS)/study adviser (UvA).²³
- In accordance with the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act, the faculty sets out how students with a disability or chronic illness are given the opportunity to sit examinations or do practicals (see Appendix 2) in the general part of the TER. The examinations boards are responsible for awarding the specific facilities provided for by the TER;
- the prompt provision of user-friendly study materials.²⁴
- The procedures for requesting tangible and intangible facilities. For example, requests for adapted furniture, hardware or software, study programmes, adjusted assessment and examination and decision-making in this respect will be prepared under the direction of the FCA Committee. They are described clearly, as are the corresponding tasks, powers and responsibilities.
- Decisions are made on the basis of a sufficient knowledge of the disability or chronic illness in question. Decisions are explained and agreements are met and implemented properly.
- (A format for) the procedures is being produced by Student Affairs/Student Services. Central procedures are submitted to the CFA Committee and adopted by the Executive Board. Local-level procedures are worked out in greater detail and adopted by the faculty.

Student Affairs/Student Services will help faculties facilitate students with a disability or chronic illness by:

- developing a (digital) Handbook that sets out the different disabilities and illnesses and also the facilities or measures possible to remove any obstacles. Besides students, the (digital) Handbook will turn its attention to employees and visitors (see under 2. Scope). Students and/or employees with each type of disability will be involved in the preparation of the (digital) Handbook.²⁵ The sub-aspects of the frame of reference of the standards committee will be elaborated on systematically in the Handbook.²⁶ The Handbook will also indicate whether an expert's certificate will be requested before a particular facility is awarded.²⁷

²² In line with the principles of 'universal design for learning' (<http://www.udlcenter.org/> and <http://siho.pxl.be/>) when designing education.

²³ Also, frameworks will be added to the Standard Model TER that will serve as the basis for alternative learning pathways and options and the appeals procedures possible.

²⁴ The terms 'prompt' and user-friendly will be elaborated on in the Handbook.

²⁵ Up-to-date information about disabilities, regulations, aids and facilities can be obtained from Handicap + Studie, a national knowledge and expertise centre.

²⁶ The Handbook texts will be submitted to the representative advisory bodies.

²⁷ The AUAS and UvA reserve the right to consult a doctor themselves.

- paying attention in the student intake process (involving the provision of information to secondary schools, the study check/matching and the submission of enrolment applications) to the way in which this group of students is guided, supported and facilitated; the facilities possible to provide (both tangible and intangible) will be assessed on an individual basis;
- making available the tangible facilities in question (and to be determined at a later date) to students or faculties on time;
- providing students with appropriate information about studying with a disability, the support and facilities available when doing so and how to request these facilities;
- guiding and/or supporting students with a disability or chronic illness individually or in groups;
- contributing to information provision, the promotion of expertise and awareness campaigns; by providing (academic) careers advice: from choice of study programme to labour market;
- participating in the FCA Committee (see under 8).

5.2 Employees

The unit (faculty/unit/staff services office) has primary responsibility for providing support that will help an employee with a disability or chronic illness do his/her work or arrange the organisation of his/her workspace if the employee in question has made his/her disability or chronic illness known (the Authorisation Regulations (*Procuratieregeling*) (AUAS)/Standard Operational Management Mandate (*Standaardmandaat bedrijfsvoering (UvA)*)).

Responsibility

- for the implementation of aspects relating to working conditions and accommodation/route in the building/campus layout is placed with the occupational health and safety coordinator (see under 4.4).
- Responsibility for the implementation of aspects concerning the terms of employment or the organisation of work is placed with the HR Department/P&O Department. One example where terms of employment are concerned is a situation where a shorter working week will be necessary for a PhD candidate, because of which the doctoral programme period will need to be extended. The organisation of work will involve arranging an adapted hot desk/workspace for someone who needs a quiet environment to be able to concentrate or an adaptation to reduce the work pressure created by the combination of work with a disability or chronic illness.

Where the use of specific facilities is concerned, the 'pool' being created for students and employees and to be managed by Student Affairs/Student Services may be approached.

The (digital) Handbook (see 5.1) will also specifically consider employees with a disability or chronic illness.

The supervisors of (new) employees will make agreements in consultation with the HR Department/P&O Department and organise information provision to (new) employees.

5.3 Secondment and institutions with which the AUAS and UvA collaborate

Agreements are made about any extra facilities necessary with institutions at which AUAS and/or UvA employees and/or students are located on a structural basis and over which the AUAS and/or UvA do(es) not have any control (but for which employees and/or students the AUAS and/or UvA is/are responsible given its/their duty of care, as (an) employer(s) or as (an) educational institutions).²⁸

²⁸ For example, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Dentistry, IXA AUAS and IXA UvA, AUAS and UvA-Holdings and their private limited companies (*besloten vennootschappen*).

Responsibility for AUAS/UvA-wide agreement lies with the Executive Staff (HR Department/P&O Department and Legal Affairs). Where partnerships are concerned, agreements are set out in the agreement itself or in a separate schedule to it.

The unit in question is responsible for individual agreements (for employees on secondment, for example). If employees are seconded to the AUAS/UvA, similar agreements are set out in the secondment agreement.

6 Persons with an occupational impairment: the Participation Act and the employment targets quota

The object of the Participation Act is to encourage everyone with the ability to work to obtain employment, including persons with an occupational impairment. Persons who fall under the Participation Act include Wajong benefit recipients and persons with an WSW indication but also persons on income support.

The target group for employment targets and the quota are persons with an occupational impairment who are not able to earn the statutory minimum wage independently and fall under the Participation Act, are receiving a Wajong benefit, are on the WSW waiting list with a WSW indication or who have a WIW or ID job.

The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (VNG)*) and the social partners have agreed to give Wajong benefit recipients and persons on the WSW waiting list priority for the first few years in which persons are to be guided towards the extra jobs being created with regular employers.

The AUAS and UvA have said that they will commit themselves to the creation of jobs for persons with an occupational impairment, even if the potential candidates do not fall in the target group for the occupational-impairment employment targets – because they are able to earn more than minimum pay, for example. With this in mind, the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (Cao-akkoord Nederlandse Universiteiten) includes the agreement that the universities will create jobs for Wajong benefit recipients even if they do not meet the definition in the Participation Act. Agreements in respect of the Participation Act have also been made in the Collective Labour Agreement for Universities of Applied Sciences (Cao Vereniging Hogescholen).

When employing someone with an occupational impairment, the AUAS and UvA can claim a number of public benefits, including a wage cost subsidy. In other words, the difference between the contractual pay and the wage value determined for the person in question in the form of a wage cost subsidy will be due to the employer. The no-risk policy may apply as well. This means that sickness benefit can be requested from the UWV if a person becomes ill; this benefit will (largely) compensate the continued payment of wages by the employer. Depending on the situation, it may also be possible to use the services of a job coach, arrange workplace facilities or request a discount on employee insurance premiums (mobility bonus).

In the long-term plan, the Executive Board makes agreements with each faculty and unit about the specifics of employing persons with occupational disabilities. Each unit strives to have all the various job categories contribute to the quota.

The HR Department/P&O Department advises the units when creating new jobs. Agreements about how to achieve this are made together with the HR advisers/P&O advisers (every year). At this time,

consideration is given to a number of subjects, including postdoctoral positions, contracts with third parties (secondments and temporary employment agreements, Pantar work experience and training contract via FS) and the creation of new jobs on the basis of an employer's scan and the trainee pool. The HR Department/P&O Department monitors progress and reports to the Executive Board on an annual basis.

The steps to be taken to achieve compliance with the relevant legislation is elaborated on in the Participation Act action plan (Plan van Aanpak Uitvoering Participatiewet) (AUAS/UvA) with the object of recording who which facility is awarded to.

7 Registering personal data

Two types of registration are important to the policy on persons with disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment:

1. If students have a disability or chronic illness;
2. Information about which support, guidance or special facilities have been awarded to them will be recorded in the student information system, stating 'disability/chronic illness'. The nature of the disability or chronic illness will not be stated unless a student consents to the registration of this information;
3. The following employees are authorised to enter this information in the system:
 - a. The job holder in the faculty/units/executive staff that acts as the contact person for students and employees with a disability;
 - b. Student counsellors from the AUAS and study advisers from the UvA. These authorised employees alone will be permitted to access this data;
4. If employees have a disability or chronic illness, the AUAS and UvA employees authorised to do so will record the facilities awarded to them in the personnel information system. The nature of the disability or chronic illness is not entered into the system. Only employees with the appropriate authorisation will be able to access information about the facilities awarded;
5. If employees have an occupational impairment, all relevant legislation and regulations will be observed during the registration process, namely the Dutch Personal Data Protection Act (*Wet bescherming persoonsgegevens*) and the Quota Act, when assessing whether the AUAS and UvA are in compliance with the quota set. Here too, only persons with the appropriate authorisation will be able to enter and/or access this data.

8 Consultation structure and administrative feedback

To ensure that the current guidelines and facilities for the various type of disability and chronic illnesses are and continue to be adequate, an UvA/AUAS FCA Committee (for persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment) will be created and have the following remit:

The remit of the FCA Committee will be to oversee the implementation of policy on persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment. It will do this by regularly monitoring the introduction of and compliance with the measures determined and by identifying new developments and issues, amongst other things.

The key tasks of the FAC Committee will involve:

- producing and updating the (digital) Handbook (also see 5.1) and the 'Accessibility' section of the Schedule of Requirements for facilities (also see 4.1);
- providing direct or indirect support to the organisational units, both in terms of activities aimed at persons with a disability or chronic illness and in terms of achieving the objectives which have been set for the number of employees with a work-related handicap;
- keeping up-to-date with new developments and, where necessary, revising the policy as a result;
- flagging up AUAS/UvA-wide issues and resolving them or having them resolved;
- offering advice where incidents have not been satisfactorily resolved;
- reviewing the quality and efficiency of the implementation of this policy, e.g. by asking academic advisers and student counsellors, students and staff with a disability or chronic illness, through the results of the National Student Survey (NSE) and the Employee Monitor, or by conducting audits or having them conducted.

The FCA Committee will use the following report as its baseline document:

- *Meer Mogelijk maken. Studeren met een functiebeperking in het Hoger Onderwijs.* Recommendation of the standards committee, The Hague, 2010.

The Students' Charter sets out how the various aspects of the frame of reference – described in the report above – have been provided for.

The FCA Committee will be made up of:

- a student counsellor (Student Affairs) and/or a student counsellor (Student Services) and/or another expert from the unit in question;
- a faculty representative from both AUAS and UvA (education); heads of the education office of AUAS and the education office of UvA;
- two students with a disability/chronic illness: one from the AUAS and one from the UvA;
- two employees with a disability/chronic illness (chair): one from the AUAS and one from the UvA;
- a representative from the HR department (AUAS) and from the P&O department (UvA) (amongst others to coordinate matters relating to the Participation Act);
- Senior Adviser Safety and Security, AUAS/UvA.

Given the differences in the student target groups and culture of the two institutions, members of the FCA Committee will be drawn from both the AUAS and UvA.

The FCA Committee will have an advisory role in respect of the Executive Board and will facilitate and support managers in the faculties and organisational units in their fulfilment of this responsibility. Each faculty, unit and Executive Staff department will appoint an employee to act as a contact and sparring partner and be responsible for implementing the policy on persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment at a local level.

Depending on the agenda, the Committee may be expanded to include representatives of, for example: students or employees with a (particular type of) disability/chronic illness; faculty: information point, occupational health and safety coordinator, staff from the degree programme with specific expertise; Executive Staff and units: Student Affairs/Student Services, Education and Research (O&O)/Academic Affairs (AcA), Legal Affairs (JZ), University Library (UB/HB), Teaching Logistics Office (BOL), Facility Services (FS), ICT Services (ICTS), Real Estate Development (HO/BN), Communications Office; other: occupational physician, student doctor.

The FCA Committee will meet at least three times a year and more in the initial phase of policy implementation.

An AUAS student counsellor or UvA student counsellor respectively will form part of the subcommittee of the national organisation of student counsellors for higher professional education (*Landelijke Organisatie Studentendecanen hbo*) and the 'studying with a handicap' subcommittee of the national consultation of student counsellors (*Landelijk Beraad Studentendecanen*).

Institution-wide administrative feedback

Every year, the chair will submit an annual plan of the activities to be undertaken to the Executive Board and then feed back the results of these activities in an annual report. The outcomes of the national student survey, HI&RAs and incident and complaints will be included as well.

The chair will ask the consent of the Executive Board for matters that require extra funding (see under 10).

Local administrative feedback

The mandatory for the faculty, Executive Staff or staff and units will inform the FCA Committee of its/their activities on an annual basis. The FCA Committee will develop a format to be used for this purpose.

9 Reporting and handling incidents and complaints

Incidents and complaints are reported as follows:

	Building and site accessibility Safe and healthy workstation or study place	Organisation of the study/work Employment-condition-related aspects of the Participation Act
Employee	Occupational health and safety coordinator	HR adviser/P&O adviser for the unit
Student	Occupational health and safety coordinator	AUAS student counsellor UvA student counsellor
Support by	Disability Coordinator/ chronic illness FS	HR Department/P&O Department Student Affairs/Student Services

The job holders above are responsible for handling complaints and for reporting them digitally if this has not already been done.²⁹

The FCA Committee will receive a copy of all such reports.

If not handled satisfactorily, a complaint can be upscaled via the FCA Committee or the institution's complaints regulations.

²⁹ In accordance with Incident policy (adopted by the Executive Board on 30 September 2015), complaints are reported digitally.

10 Funding

The policy on persons with a disability, chronic illness or occupational impairment is inclusive, which means that the structural activities pursued in implementation of it will be included in the budget of the various units or be achieved via the functional adaptations (FA) route.

To be able to make adaptations on time, a budget will be earmarked within FA for the prefunding of adaptations.

Where activities are of an incidental nature, a project proposal that includes the financial items will be submitted to the Executive Board.

The Executive Board will pay student members of the FCA Committee an allowance for attending meetings of the committee.

Appendix 1

Legislation and regulations, the collective labour agreement and UvA/AUAS regulations

The *Dutch Equal Treatment of Disabled and Chronically Ill People Act (Wet Gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap of chronische ziekte)* (2003; under Sections 1, 2, 3.1 and 4) prohibits any direct or indirect discrimination, including intimidation, on the basis of a person's actual or perceived physical, intellectual and psychological impairments. As employers, the AUAS and UvA are obliged to make effective adaptations unless the adaptations in question would create a disproportionate burden for AUAS and UvA.

This prohibition will not apply if:

- a. the discrimination is necessary to protect health and safety;
- b. the discrimination relates to a regulation, standard or practice which is aimed at creating or maintaining specific provisions and facilities for the benefit of persons with a disability or chronic illness;
- c. the discrimination concerns a specific measure aimed at placing persons with a disability or chronic illness in a privileged position in order to eliminate or reduce de facto disadvantages associated with disability or chronic illness and the discrimination is in reasonable proportion to that aim.
- d. Examples include matters in respect of legal status, employment conditions and working conditions.

The Dutch government signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 but has not ratified it to date. The government will approve this Convention in 2015. Its object is to realise a society that is both inclusive and accessible.

The Working Conditions Act (*Arbeidsomstandighedenwet*) (Section 3.1c) requires employers to adjust the organisation of workplaces, working methods and job content in line with the personal characteristics of an employee as much as reasonably possible to expect. Section 4 of this Act requires the employer, as part of adaptations to be made to the workplace of an employee with a structural disability, to adjust the way in which the business is organised in relation to the work to be done by the employee in question and his/her related stay in the business.

The Working Conditions Act will apply to students too if they have duties similar to those in professional practice (Section. 2b). 2b).

None of the sub-documents of the Occupational Health and Safety brochure produced by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (*Arbocatalogus VSNU*) or the HBO occupational health and safety catalogue (*Arbocatalogus hbo*) include sentences about persons with a disability or chronic illness.

In the national Social Agreement (*Sociaal Akkoord*) of 11 April 2013, agreements were made about the creation of jobs for persons with an occupational impairment. These agreements are elaborated on in the Participation Act and subsequently in the legislative proposal on occupational impairment (employment targets and quotas).

Section 6.3 of the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities 2015-2016 includes a provision on persons with a disability to the effect that the recruitment and selection policy pursued by an employer must include an incentive policy that focuses on persons with an occupational impairment amongst others.

In the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities for 1 January 2015 up to and including 1 July 2016, it is also agreed that the universities will implement the Participation Act in full. Agreements

are made about the number of jobs to be created as well. These agreements include the introduction of new salary scales of between 100% and 120% of the statutory minimum wage. As of 1 January 2016, the university education sector will also start to create structural jobs for Wajong benefit recipients, even if these persons do not fall under the definition of the Participation Act.

Article 1 of Chapter K of the 2014-2016 CLA for the higher education sector states that agreements may be made in the local collective labour agreement negotiations to spend some of the terms-of-employment fund on target group policy with the object of removing physical and financial impediments to the employment of persons with an occupational impairment amongst others.

For students, the constitution (Section 23(1) and (2)) states that everyone must have the right to receive an education. The Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (Section 7.13(2)(m)) states that the TER will set out the procedures and rights applicable to education and examinations per degree programme (or group of degree programmes). At the very least, this will include: the arrangements to be made within reason to enable students with a physical disability or chronic illness to take examinations.

The Student Finance Act (*Wet op de Studiefinanciering*) provides for extra financial facilities for students with a disability. For example, the possibility of an extra year of student finance and an extension of the degree period.

The UvA Students' Charter states that various facilities are available for students with a disability or chronic illness and refers students to a study adviser to request these facilities.

The AUAS Students' Charter (Article 4.7.1.f) gives students who enrol the right to academic student counselling and the services of a student counsellor. The dean offers special support and guidance to students with a disability. Under Article 4.7.3, the university of applied sciences and/or dean is required – with due observance of the legal frameworks and according to standards of reasonableness and fairness – to put appropriate measures in place for a student. This will apply if the disability a student has means that he/she is unable to exercise his/her rights sufficiently.

See Sections 6 and 7 respectively for legislation about persons with a disability and privacy legislation.

Appendix 2

Standard model TER

a. UvA (adopted by the Executive Board on 6 May 2015)

Article 6.5 (bachelor):

Article 5.2 (Master's degree):

Adaptations for students with a disability:

1. Students with a disability may submit a written request to the study adviser for adaptations to courses, practical training and examinations in order to accommodate their disability. Such adaptations will accommodate the student's individual disability as much as possible but may not alter the quality or degree of difficulty of a course or examination. In all cases, the student must fulfil the exit qualifications.
2. A request as referred to in Paragraph 1 will only be taken into consideration if it is accompanied by a recommendation from a student counsellor. This recommendation may be no older than 12 weeks and must be based in part on a recent statement from a physician or psychologist. In the case of a chronic disability, however, the foregoing recommendation need only be provided once.
3. The dean or, on his/her behalf, the College/Graduate School director or the programme director will decide on adaptations concerning teaching facilities and logistics. The Examinations Board decides on requests for adaptations to examinations.
4. Requests for adaptations will be refused in the event that granting the request would put disproportionate strain on the organisation/resources of the Faculty or University.
5. If a request as referred to in Paragraph 1 is approved, the student must make an appointment with the study adviser to discuss the form that these facilities will take.
6. Requests for adaptations will be refused in the event that granting the request would put disproportionate strain on the organisation/resources of the Faculty or University.
7. If the student's disability necessitates an extension of the time set for completing an examination, the Examinations Board will provide a statement proving the student's entitlement to this extension.
8. The statement referred to in Paragraph 6 is valid for a maximum of one year. This validity period may be extended on the recommendation of a student counsellor.

b. AUAS (adopted by the Executive Board on 6 May 2015)

Chapter 3 Curriculum

Article 3.4 Facilities for physically disabled students

The dean endeavours to offer students with disabilities a learning environment that is equal in all possible respects to that available to students with no disabilities, and with equal scope for success. The dean may consult with the student counsellor before taking decisions.

Chapter 5 Interim examinations, tests and assessments

Article 5.1

6. Students with disabilities may ask the Examination Board to be given the opportunity to sit the tests in a manner adapted, insofar as possible, to their individual disability. The Examination Board will consult the student counsellor before taking any decision.