



## REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

<b>Date Approved:</b>	1 January 2023
<b>Date Effective:</b>	1 January 2023
<b>Policy Category:</b>	Student
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	National Manager – Student Support

### 1. Context, Purpose & Key Principles

SEDA Group Pty Ltd (“SEDA”) is committed to providing reasonable adjustments to ensure equal opportunity and participation for students with a disability, mental health or medical condition that may affect the student’s learning experience.

This Policy outlines SEDAs’ commitment to support all students with a disability, mental health or medical condition in accordance with the obligations outlined by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005.

### 2. Scope

- Student Services/Student Support
- All Trainers and Assessors
- All VET and VETiS students
- Prospective students enrolling in a SEDA course.

### 3. Policy Statement

SEDA recognises the individual needs of students and respects the rights of all students to participate inclusively and fully in all facets of the SEDA experience in particular the access and equity of student engagement outcomes.

SEDA is committed to providing opportunities and access to students with a disability, mental health or medical condition that are comparable to students without additional needs. The following Policy Principles are consistent with SEDAs’ legislative responsibilities and demonstrate SEDAs’ commitment to access and equity for all students.

### 4. Policy Principles

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 includes a requirement for academic environments to be free from discrimination on the grounds of disability. It unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a disability.

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The Act is supported by the Disability Standards of Education 2005 which clarify and elaborate the legal obligations in relation to education.

SEDA supports the principle of 'reasonable adjustment'. This principle asserts that wherever possible, necessary, and 'reasonable' to do so, the usual policy or practice will be varied to meet the needs of a person with a disability, mental health or medical condition.

SEDA is committed to:

- the promotion of and adherence to the principles of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005
- providing all students' access to SEDA's Student Support Coordinators (VET) and pastoral care support (VETiS)
- the provision of reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of students with a disability, mental health, or medical condition.

For information on reasonable adjustments for students with Language, Literacy or Numeracy or English proficiency or English as a Second Language, refer to the **Language, Literacy and Numeracy Policy** and **Student at Risk Policy**.

### Key Terms Defined

**Disability** – SEDA defines disability in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

A student with a disability refers to an enrolled student of SEDA with a disability that in relation to a person means:

- a total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

and includes a disability that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person.

resulting in a reduced ability to access educational services provided by SEDA including assessment tasks and requirements for reasonable adjustments and/or support services to address these barriers.

**Reasonable Adjustment** – SEDA defines reasonable adjustment in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005, subsection 3.4:

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An adjustment is a measure or action (or groups of measures or actions) taken by SEDA to assist a student with a disability, mental health, or medical condition to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

The measure or action assists a student with a disability to:

- apply for admission or enrol in a program.
- participate in the course or program; and
- use the facilities or services.

on the same basis as a student without a disability, mental health or medical condition and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

An adjustment is reasonable if it considers the student’s learning needs and balances the interests of all parties affected, including those of:

- the student with the disability
- the education provider (SEDA),
- staff
- other students

### Provision of Reasonable Adjustment

SEDA will provide reasonable adjustments to eligible students. These adjustments can include but are not limited to the physical environment, teaching delivery and format, assessments, and utilisation of assistance equipment.

Prospective and enrolled students should contact the Student Services team (VET) or Pastoral Care team (VETiS) at their earliest opportunity to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made available within required timeframes. It is important that students engage in this process as SEDA recognises that students themselves are best placed to understand their conditions and capacities.

- Prospective students who disclose a disability or on application to SEDA may require further consultation with the National Training Manager or equivalent to discuss the training package requirements prior to enrolment. A student is required to meet and adhere to all training package requirements before enrolment and throughout a course of study.
- Students with a disability, mental health or medical condition will be required to meet and discuss any potential need for reasonable adjustments within the admissions/enrolment process upon disclosure.
- **Privacy note:** only Student Support Coordinators (VET), the Program Manager (VET) Student Services (VET) and National Training Manager and National Manager Student Support (VETiS) and Pastoral care workers (VETiS) including Trainers and assessors (VET/VETiS) and the General Manager Training Operations (where required) will have access to personal information; this may include medical information to ensure that students receive the support they require.
- Provision of reasonable adjustment is dependent on complete and adequate documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional. That is provided by the student to substantiate a disability, mental health, or medical

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condition. All documentation must outline, recommend, and qualify the need for individual accommodations and reasonable adjustments in a learning environment.

- Students who register via the **Reasonable Adjustment Policy** must meet with a Student Services representative or equivalent at a minimum once per term (VETiS) /block (VET) to confirm ongoing reasonable adjustments.
- The end date of a Reasonable Adjustment for a permanent disability, mental health or medical condition is the same date as the expected course finish date. The term/block review meetings will assess any changes in circumstances or adjustments that may need to be considered to maintain the Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) conditions. If there is no change to the condition, this meeting will be to assess the RAP in place. If there is a change in condition further supporting documentation will be required to advise any additional adjustments to support the student.

### Determination of Reasonable Adjustment

SEDA aims to create and maintain a learning experience that is inclusive of the needs of the students with a disability, mental health, or medical condition and which optimises their participation, retention and success through accessible and equitable learning, teaching and assessment practices.

Whether an adjustment is reasonable will be determined in accordance with the Disability Standards of Education 2005. This will involve considering all the relevant circumstances and interests, including:

- The student's disability, mental health, or medical condition.
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on the student and on anyone else affected, including SEDA staff and other students.
- The adjustments to assessment for a student are to be made in such a way as to ensure that the fundamental nature of the assessment remains the same i.e., students with a disability, mental health or medical condition are still required to demonstrate a predetermined level of ability in relation to essential subject and course requirements.
- The standard rules and policy on assessment and teaching are still applied and assessment is only varied where a student can demonstrate with appropriate documentation that they are disadvantaged because of a disability, mental health, or medical condition.

Adjustments shall be made on an individual basis. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable all relevant circumstances will be considered, including the following:

- The student's disability, mental health or medical condition and any barriers, needs or challenges that may affect the student throughout a subject or course.
- The impact/s of a student's disability, mental health, or medical condition, as described by the students, on their studies.
- The advice provided by the Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional. / Qualified Specialists (e.g., medical report, test results, supporting documents) to support the student's application.
- The views of the students or the student's advocate.

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- The assessment types.
- The effect of the adjustment on the student’s independence and ability to achieve the professional learning outcomes and participate in their subjects and course.
- Whether the adjustment creates an undue advantage for the student, or an undue disadvantage for another student the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affecting including SEDA, staff, other students, and any other stakeholder.
- Whether the adjustment will impact on the training package requirements.
- The costs and benefits to all parties of making the adjustment including possible impacts on SEDA capital expenditure and/or operational budgets.
- The ‘willingness to pay’ the costs associated with the adjustment on behalf of either party.
- The course.

SEDA is not obligated to make any adjustment or accommodation that may impose an unjustifiable hardship on SEDA. Students with a disability, mental health or medical condition may be required to provide additional medical or specialised documentation to substantiate the reasonableness of the adjustment.

The bearing of costs associated with reasonable adjustment will be negotiated with the student at the time of the Reasonable Adjustment Plan being established.

SEDA supports reasonable adjustments in assessing the outcomes of areas of study and courses undertaken by students with a disability, mental health or medical condition through the use of alternate strategies.

It is the responsibility of SEDA, in consultation with the student, to identify those elements of a course that affect the student’s ability to participate on the same basis as a student with a disability. This may require reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning materials, teaching methodology and assessment.

Reasonable adjustments can include (but are not limited to):

### Technology

The use or loan of adaptive/assistive technology or specific equipment for use by students to enable them to undertake their study/assessment in a fair and equitable manner (e.g. seating, PC). SEDA’s Learning Management System (LMS) or MySEDA is CANVAS which has inbuilt accessibility measures.

### Assessments/Assignments

- alternative methods of assessment (e.g., verbal assessment, mode of questioning, mode of response); or
- Accessible learning formats (e.g., large print materials); or
- reasonable adjustments to assessment conditions may include extended time for assessments or
- alternate arrangements for work integrated learning (WIL), which may also include an extension of time for the practical assessment; or
- allowing extended periods of time for undertaking assessment tasks.

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### Extension time limits

Applications for an extension request should be submitted as soon as practicable after the circumstance is known and no later than 3 days after the circumstance occurs and/or the due date of the assessment.

Extension times of up to 14 days may be included in the RAP. A copy of the redacted RAP can be used as supporting documentation for an extension request.

For a second extension request beyond the initial extension, students are required to submit a Special Consideration Application (SCA). A second extension request will require the student to provide additional medical documentation. *Refer to the **Special Consideration Policy***. All Special Consideration Application requests for further extensions must be submitted no later than 24-48 hours after the due date.

All SCA requests for further extensions will need to be approved by the Program Manager (VET) or Trainer/Assessor (VETiS) and the student may be approved a further extension up to a maximum of 5 days.

No additional extension requests will be approved, unless in extreme circumstances with supporting documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional.

Further requests for extension will be approved by the National Manager, Student Support in conjunction with the National Training Manager.

Failure to provide updated supporting medical documentation for a further/additional extension request in the timelines stipulated will result in the National Training Manager determining a final mark/grade.

### Attendance Requirements

Attendance requirements may be reviewed based on presenting condition and reflected within the RAP.

### Environmental Considerations

May include:

- Seating arrangements (e.g., front of the classroom, seating adjustment).
- Lighting and/or sound requirements.

Reasonable adjustments to learning resources or teaching methods may include providing a student with a visual impairment with larger font handouts.

Reasonable adjustments to a learning environment may include using accessible teaching settings for students with a physical disability.

### Other Considerations

- Referral to additional counselling services (e.g., Student Assistance Program - SAP)
- Referral to attend teaching and learning support session (e.g., additional tutorials, individual support sessions with a trainer and assessor).

### It should be noted that:

Negotiation of reasonable adjustments will occur through consultation with the student, the student's advocate, the Student Services team, the National Training Manager, Program

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Manager and the National Manager Student Support (VET) or Pastoral Care Support and Trainers and Assessors (VETiS). Applicable industry partners will also be notified to ensure appropriate facilities and support onsite when needed.

Where a student is unable to meet the unit of study and competency requirements even with reasonable adjustment, the student may be required to meet with the National Training Manager regarding the Training Package requirements. Subject to meeting these requirements for the course an alternative course may be suggested or an administrative withdrawal from the course may be recommended. Refer the **Deferral and Withdrawal Policy**.

Notwithstanding the above, an adjustment is not reasonable if it would:

- Compromise the integrity of the subject, or course or assessment requirements and processes.
- Remove or bypass any learning outcomes of the Training Package requirements.
- Impose unjustifiable hardship on SEDA.

### Exceptions

Exemptions or exclusions from assessment tasks based on disability, mental health or medical conditions is not a reasonable adjustment as SEDA is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

SEDA is not obligated to provide adjustments for a student who chooses not to disclose a disability or to access the provisions of the **Reasonable Adjustment Policy**.

### Disclosure

SEDA expects students to disclose relevant information about circumstances that may impact their capacity to undertake their studies for the purpose of making reasonable adjustments. At SEDA we encourage students to apply for Reasonable Adjustments by the end of week 4 (census date) of the first teaching period (see definition).

The purpose of disclosure is not to exclude students from opportunities but to enable access to a safe environment, with appropriate adjustments, minimising their exposure to risk and risk to others. Students need to be clear about the reason for making the disclosure and what they are required to disclose to receive the support they require.

Students in exercising their duty of care are to advise staff in a timely manner of their needs in relation to their disability, including assessment related adjustments.

If SEDA is not advised in a timely manner, then it may not be able to provide a student with reasonable adjustments. If not, please refer to the **Special Consideration Policy**.

To assist with the identification of appropriate reasonable adjustments, including adjustments for assessment, SEDA requires students with a disability, mental health or medical condition seeking adjustments to supply appropriate supporting documentation about the nature and impact of their impairment/medical condition in the learning environment. Such evidence must be an accurate reflection of the student's current impairment/medical condition and may include medical or other professional advice, reports from previous educational institutes or government and community agencies.

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In some instances, a detailed independent expert assessment may be required to determine the nature of the adjustments that are appropriate for an individual student enrolled into a specific course.

### Documentation

Students who request reasonable adjustments will be required, in a timely manner, to provide appropriate documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional.

Supporting documentation should be provided by students to support their disability, mental health or medical condition and must be dated and signed by a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional outlined in the conditions section of this policy.

Documentation should be:

- No more than 2 weeks old for temporary conditions.
- No more than 6 months old for fluctuating conditions.
- Yearly for ADD/ADHD (unless considered permanent by the assessing specialist).
- No more than 3 years old for a learning disability – a psychometric report with a tertiary/adult emphasis.
- Unrestricted for a permanent disability.

In addition, the documentation provided should be specific and include:

- State the disability, mental health, or medical condition.
- Outline the impact on the student.
- Indicate whether the disability is permanent, temporary, or fluctuating.
- If a condition or disability is temporary, the documentation should specify the timeframe for which the student is expected to be affected, the nature of the condition and the limitations on the student’s performance.
- A statement indicating the severity of the condition and whether the disability is permanent, fluctuating, or short term or if the disability needs to be reassessed after a period (e.g., every 6 months, yearly).
- A clear statement of the condition, including diagnosis present symptoms and whether the condition is mild, moderate, or severe in nature.
- Recommend reasonable adjustments and/or suggestions that may act as a guideline to negotiate suitable academic adjustments for this student.
- Clearly identify the health professional and their credentials.
- Be legible, on SEDA required forms and medical certificates, additional supporting documents to be provided on a letterhead, dated, and signed by a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional.

Only interim support (generally up to a maximum of one teaching period) will be available if your General Practitioner makes a diagnosis in psychological or emotional impairment/difficulties.

**\*\* Please note: Supplementary medical information on letterhead may be requested to clarify the impact of the disability or condition on the student's capacity to meet academic requirements within the tertiary education context.**

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Specific learning disabilities, mental health or medical conditions may require further supporting documentation such as:

- Actual test scores and interpretation of these results.
- A comprehensive diagnostic interview that includes academic, developmental, family, and psychosocial history.
- A statement of the strengths and weaknesses that will affect the student's capacity to meet academic demands and recommendations relevant to SEDA environment. Recommendations should be based on objective evidence of limitations in learning and supported by test results.

Documentation should be no more than 3 years old unless the assessment and report has been conducted in adulthood.

For visual impairment/difficulty the amount of residual vision presents and whether the impairment is permanent, fluctuating, or short-term. The type of visual impairment such as cortical, eye injury, optic nerve should also be included.

SEDA's request for this information follows the minimum standards and operational guidelines as outlined in the Students with Disabilities: Code of Practice for Australian Tertiary Institutions (1998). SEDA requires students where necessary to demonstrate or supply certification of the functional limitations of their disability as a basis for requesting reasonable adjustments to be applied to their chosen course of study.

#### Documentation guidelines for academic adjustment

Once approved for Reasonable adjustment, SEDA provides a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) that supports and empowers students to achieve success in their subjects and course. The RAP is dedicated to the support of suitable reasonable adjustments based on individual needs to ensure that students with a disability, mental health or medical condition have the same fundamental rights of equality in a learning environment and education setting.

The required relevant and current documentation is listed below and is dependent on the conditions that may warrant academic reasonable adjustments.

#### Conditions that may warrant academic adjustments.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Hearing impairment

Illness

Learning Difficulty/Disability, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Dyslexia, Auditory Processing

Neurological impairment/difficulty

Conditions which may include Acquired Brain Injury, Cerebral Aneurysm, Cerebral Tumour, Concussion, Side-Effects from Cancer Therapies

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### Physical Impairment/difficulty

Conditions may include Permanent or Long-Term Condition, Low Muscle Tone, Poor/Impaired Motor Skills, Arthritis, Cancer, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Paraplegia, Cystic Fibrosis, Lymphoma.

### Psychological or emotional impairment/difficulty

Conditions may include Depression, Eating Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Panic/Anxiety Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Schizophrenia, Bipolar

### Temporary condition or injury

Conditions may include Arm in Plaster (Writing Hand), Arm in Sling, Broken Arm/Wrist/Finger (Writing Hand), Broken Scapula etc.

### Visual impairment/difficulty

## The Process

At SEDA we encourage students to apply for Reasonable Adjustments by the end of week 4 of the first teaching period or as soon as practical should a change in circumstances require support. A meeting with the Student Enrolment Manager or Student Support Coordinators or equivalent can be arranged to support you through this process.

The process involves the following steps:

1. Submit the Reasonable Adjustments Registration Form and the supporting documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional to [info@sedagroup.com.au](mailto:info@sedagroup.com.au)
2. The National Manager Student Support and National Training Manager or equivalent will review and approve the reasonable adjustments requested in the documents.
3. Based on the adjustments requested you may be required to attend a meeting with the National Training Manager or equivalent.
4. Meet with the Student Enrolment Manager or Student Support Coordinators or equivalent to finalise the RAP.
5. Sign the final documentation for approved adjustments.
6. Keep a copy of the RAP for requests that require supporting evidence.

## Roles & Responsibilities

SEDA maintains its responsibility to:

- Ensure that this Policy is accessible to all staff and students.
- Ensure that this Policy is implemented and applied consistently across all campuses of SEDA including its online learning environment.
- Ensure SEDA is fully compliant with the State National Laws and regulatory bodies' mandatory reporting requirements. **Refer to the Disability Policy.**

**It is the student's responsibility to:**

- Identify themselves as a student with a disability, mental health, or medical condition and to request reasonable adjustments based on the identifying condition.

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- Provide appropriate supporting documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional. based on the presenting condition.
- Be actively involved in managing their condition within a learning environment and to seek support and solutions when required.

### Student Support

SEDA is committed to providing accessible support for students. At all times SEDA respects an individual's rights to privacy and confidentiality when providing support services.

SEDA provides a **Student Assistance Program** that offers confidential counselling 24/7. This service can be accessed by phoning 1800 959192 or via [info@accesseap.com.au](mailto:info@accesseap.com.au)

### Confidentiality

Information provided to SEDA support staff and to the nature of a student's disability, mental health or medical condition is protected by the **Student Privacy Policy** and will not be disclosed outside of the nominated support team unless:

- SEDA has reasonable grounds for concern about the health or safety of the student or other persons; or
- The student gives express consent; or
- Where there is a serious threat to your life, health, safety, or welfare or that of another person.
- Disclosure of the information is required by law; or
- It is necessary for SEDA to obtain legal advice.

Information regarding the functional impact of a student's disability, mental health or medical condition may be included in the RAP and shared with staff solely for the purposes of determining what Reasonable Adjustments can be made to assist the student with their learning, teaching and assessment requirements.

### Complaint or Grievance

Students who have a complaint or grievance, academic or non-academic, should refer to the **Complaints and Appeals Policy**.

Students who have a complaint or grievance related to disability or reasonable adjustment should first contact their Student Support Coordinator or equivalent.

### Definitions

**Academic Integrity** – in the making of reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, SEDA must continue to ensure the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those upon whom it confers an award is able to present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience, and expertise implicit in the holding of a particular qualification.

**Advocate** – a representative appointed by the student to assist in consultation with SEDA to determine appropriate support and reasonable adjustments for the student. An advocate could

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be a family member, close friend, carer, medical professional, or other party chosen by the student.

**Assessment** – is the process of forming a judgement about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore by inference a judgement about the learning itself.

**Duty to Disclose** - refers to a responsibility or agreement to disclose information that may be relevant in a decision-making process.

**Learning Outcomes** - are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills that it is essential that a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate because of learning in a subject or course to preserve the academic integrity of SEDA qualifications.

**Special Consideration** – students may apply for Special Consideration when a decision has been made by SEDA upon application of the relevant policy that may require reassessment due to extenuating circumstances. For example, students may apply for an extension of a written assessment or deferral of an examination if a situation occurred that was beyond the student’s control which affected the student’s participation in study.

For further information refer to the relevant **Special Consideration Policy**.

**Student** – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at SEDA. The individual person is that who appears on SEDA’s documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

**Support** – SEDA connects students with a disability to specialised services or adjustments with the aim of assisting them to achieve personal and educational goals at SEDA. This support enables SEDA to meet its access and equity commitments as well as disability legislative requirements under Commonwealth law. For further information refer to the Disability Policy and the Access and Equity Student Handbook or Access and Equity Student Handbook – VET

**Teaching period** - as advertised on the relevant published SEDA calendar/s for your enrolment, a Block (VET) or Term (as per VET in Schools - VETiS).

**Training Package Requirements** - the specific skill, knowledge, performance, or behavioural requirements that a student must meet to successfully complete a VET training package delivered by SEDA and to enable graduates to register with professional associations or licensing bodies.

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2.0	01/11/23	1/01/23	NTM	New standalone policy – Disability and Special Needs Policy split out from Student Handbook previously included Reasonable Adjustments – now made into its own Policy and process.

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