

## DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW IF SOMEONE IN MY CLASS HAS A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEED?

Some students will let you know how you can assist them, while others will choose not to disclose their disability (sometimes from fear of discrimination or being singled out). Special Needs Service and ALOs encourage students to let you know if there are ways you can assist, and will let you know if they have the student's permission. The Vice-Chancellor's Directive on Privacy and Protection of Personal Information provides a guide to staff responsibilities under state and commonwealth privacy legislation.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WHETHER THEIR SAFETY IS AT RISK?

Ask to speak with the student in a quiet place, preferably with another staff member present or nearby. Think through how you want to talk with the student as well as what you want to say. Tell the student in a direct and straightforward manner that you are concerned about them. Mention specific behaviours.

Avoid generalisations. Listen carefully to what the student says. Try to understand the situation from the student's point of view.

Discuss their beliefs about counselling (e.g. personal and cultural) and consider referring them to the UTS Counselling Service.

Renegotiate or restate your expectations for the student's academic performance, communicating these clearly.

For further information on making reports and referrals see the Counselling Service guide:  
[www.ssu.uts.edu.au/counselling/pdf/referral-grid.pdf](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/counselling/pdf/referral-grid.pdf)

## MAKING A REFERRAL

If the situation is an emergency, such as an imminent risk of physical harm call 000 or UTS Security (extension 6 or 9514 1192). During the day you may be able to walk the student to the Counselling Service and ask for immediate help, or call Counselling (9514 1177) and ask for someone to attend. If unsure call the Head of Counselling for advice. Security can contact the Head of Counselling outside office hours.

If the situation is not an emergency ask the student to call Student Services (9514 1177) and ask for an appointment with a Counsellor or Disability Services Officer.

## CONTACTS

### Special Needs Service

For information about how you can assist students with disabilities, or more generally about the University's services and procedures in relation to students with disabilities or ongoing illnesses.

[www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds) - for students

[www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds/staff](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds/staff) - for staff working with students with disabilities.

Email: [Special.Needs@uts.edu.au](mailto:Special.Needs@uts.edu.au)

Phone: 9514 1183

### Counselling Service

For information about counselling services available to students and staff.

[www.ssu.uts.edu.au/counselling](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/counselling)

Phone: 9514 1177

### Academic Liaison Officers

The ALO is your Faculty's contact point regarding students with disabilities and students with carer's responsibilities.

They are responsible for handling applications for learning and assessment arrangements from both groups of students.

[www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds/services/assessment/alo.html](http://www.ssu.uts.edu.au/sneeds/services/assessment/alo.html)

The application forms for Special Conditions can be downloaded from the Student Administration website.

[www.sau.uts.edu.au/forms](http://www.sau.uts.edu.au/forms)

### Equity & Diversity Unit

For disability-related professional development, advice about disability discrimination law, UTS equity policies and grievance handling.

[www.equity.uts.edu.au](http://www.equity.uts.edu.au)

Email: [equity@uts.edu.au](mailto:equity@uts.edu.au)

Phone: 9514 1084

### Creating Accessible Teaching & Support website (CATS)

For practical advice about teaching and supervising students with a disability.

[www.adcet.edu.au/cats](http://www.adcet.edu.au/cats)

### Website on disability access for students at UTS and beyond:

AccessAbility

[www.accessability.uts.edu.au](http://www.accessability.uts.edu.au)



EQUITY AND DIVERSITY UNIT



**INFORMATION  
FOR ACADEMIC  
STAFF -  
STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES  
AND ONGOING  
ILLNESSES**

UTS

THINK.CHANGE.IDO

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN A STUDENT TELLS ME THEY HAVE A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS?

Keep in mind that this may be the first time the student has told anyone at UTS they have a disability, illness or other problem affecting their studies. Ask whether they have registered with the Special Needs Service or the Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) in your Faculty. If they haven't, suggest they make an appointment with Special Needs by calling 9514 1177, or email [Special.Needs@uts.edu.au](mailto:Special.Needs@uts.edu.au)

If they have seen Special Needs and their ALO, ask what agreement was reached about assisting them. If you have not been contacted by the ALO about the student it is appropriate for you to clarify with the ALO how you should assist.

## WHAT IS THE UTS PROCESS FOR MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ILLNESSES?

Disability Services Officers (DSOs) in the Special Needs Service meet with students and assess their study needs related to their illness or disability. Students provide documentation from a health professional about their disability and its impact on their studies.

Special Needs Service provides or facilitates services such as notetaking, recording of lectures, provision of course materials in alternative formats and support from the Library. If adjustments to assessments are needed the DSOs refer the student to the ALO in their Faculty, with recommendations for reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks.

Adjustments to assessment arrangements need to be approved by an ALO, who is an academic appointed by the Faculty. The ALO consults with subject co-ordinators about the assessment requirements and decides what arrangements the faculty will provide. Arrangements may also be necessary

for some students to facilitate their participation in work experience in line with the Vice Chancellor's Directive on Course Related Work Experience:

[www.gsu.uts.edu.au/policies/documents/course-work-experience.pdf](http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/policies/documents/course-work-experience.pdf)

## WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO IMPLEMENT SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN FACULTY-BASED EXAMS AND CLASS TESTS?

Subject Coordinators are generally responsible for implementing special conditions. Special Needs Service can provide a trained scribe if required. To clarify ask your Faculty's ALO.

## WHAT IF A STUDENT TELLS ME THEY HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS JUST BEFORE AN EXAM OR ASSIGNMENT IS DUE?

Clarify what they are asking for. It may be within your authority to assist them (e.g. to give them a few more days to lodge an assignment). Whether or not you can assist, it is important that you refer them to Special Needs Service and the ALO who will:

- > assist them to whatever extent is possible so close to the due date
- > advise in relation to future assessment tasks and relevant services and policies.

## DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE WHATEVER A STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ASKS FOR?

No, it is not fair to change assessment requirements without approval by the ALO, whose decisions rely on documented evidence of a disability or illness.

## WHAT DOES DISABILITY LEGISLATION REQUIRE UTS TO DO?

UTS is required by the Disability Discrimination Act to consult with students with disabilities and provide reasonable adjustments throughout their studies. This can be most equitably achieved by academic staff referring students to Special Needs or their ALO. Alternative Assessments need to be designed to ensure students meet the inherent requirements of their subjects.

## IS HELP AVAILABLE IF I HAVE TO DO EXTRA WORK BECAUSE A STUDENT HAS SPECIAL NEEDS?

It depends on the tasks involved. Your ALO, your Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning) or the Special Needs Service can be consulted about what assistance is available.

## WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPECIAL CONSIDERATION AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS?

**Special Consideration** is used by students who encounter extenuating circumstances which affect their academic performance in single assessment tasks or across a semester (e.g. illness, misadventure, bereavement or trauma). Students apply for Special Consideration online, and provide documentation from a health professional, counsellor or minister of religion. Student Centre can advise students on applying.

**Special Conditions** are arrangements made for students with disabilities and ongoing illnesses to minimise the impact of disabilities in exams and tests. Extra time and use of scribes or computers are examples.

## WHERE CAN I GET ADVICE IF I THINK A STUDENT IN MY CLASS HAS A DISABILITY AFFECTING THEIR STUDIES?

Special Needs Service staff or your ALO can provide advice. If you think the student has a mental illness the Counselling Service can advise you. See "Making a Referral".

