



**Procedure for Supporting Nursing Students with a disability undertaking the B.Sc. Honours in (General & Psychiatric) Nursing Programme, while on clinical placement**

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| **This document was drafted by a joint working group consisting of Lecturers and the Disability officer from Athlone Institute of Technology and Practice Development Co-ordinators, Clinical Placement Co-ordinators from the Dublin Midlands Hospital group, the Ireland East Hospitals Group and CHO Area 8.** | | |
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| **Revision Date: June 2018** | **Revisions to the document following recommendations from Academic Council in June 2016 and the HSE staff to include the following:**   * **A glossary of definitions** * **A Flow Chart which outlines the procedure in detail**   **both of which have now been included in the document** | |
| **Submitted to ASQ**  **Submitted to Academic Council on:** | **16.06.2017**  **15.09.2017** | |

**1. Introduction**

Athlone Institute of Technology and the Health Service Executive, Dublin Midlands Hospital group, the Ireland East Hospitals Group and CHO Area 8 serving Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath, are wholly committed to excellence in education and to providing a supportive, fair, and appropriate environment in pursuit of the holistic development of our students.

We have a proactive approach to the provision of information regarding available reasonable accommodation in both Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and in the clinical area. We acknowledge that the assessment of specific support requirements for the student should be done as early as possible in the placement and preferably before the placement commences.

Students have a responsibility to participate in any negotiation of reasonable accommodation and to communicate their needs to appropriate staff for them to avail of any supports available. Verification of the disability needs to be identified for reasonable accommodation to be provided.

The benefits of disclosure is that the relevant personnel can support the student in identification of needs and in the provision of reasonable accommodations.

In the interest of student confidentiality, information regarding a student’s disability will not automatically pass from the college to the clinical placement unless there is prior consent from the student.

If a student limits their disclosure, they may restrict the reasonable accommodation that can be made available.

Permitted disclosure allows the preceptor to become aware of the student’s specific learning needs and enables implementation of strategies to assist the student; this may help the student feel more positive about disclosure in the future.

The student may feel reluctant to disclose their disability for fear of discrimination, therefore a positive culture regarding disclosure is imperative to initiate support for the student. Creating a positive attitude towards disability will not only be advantageous to a student with a disability, but to all students in clinical practice.

The balance between providing reasonable accommodation for the student, whilst ensuring the student achieves necessary competence as defined by NMBI, (2016) requires a close partnership between education and the clinical area.

The needs of the student in relation to their disability must not override professional requirements to meet the required level of competence.

**2. Purpose of the Procedure**

The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the correct procedure to be followed to support a BSc (Hons) nursing student who discloses a disability in either Athlone Institute of Technology or while on clinical placement in the Dublin Midlands Hospital group, the Ireland East Hospitals Group and CHO Area 8, by staff who are involved in the education and assessment of student nurses in clinical practice.

**3. Legislative Background**

Under the disability legislation, employers and educators are required to take reasonable steps to accommodate the needs of employees/students with disabilities.Students with a disability may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to fully participate in their clinical placements, to achieve the required competencies.Reasonable accommodation is required to meet the individual needs of students with a disability and in such a way that is non-discriminatory.

The important Acts relating to disability are;

**The Employment and Equality Acts (1998-2011)**

**The Equal Status Act 2000.**

**Equality Act 2004**

**Disability Act 2005**

Disability is defined in the legislation as;

*“a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual* *impairment”* . Disability Act 2005.

Equality legislation seeks to protect those with a disability from either direct or indirect discrimination.

**4.** **Reasonable Accommodation**.

Reasonable accommodation has been defined as any action that alleviates a disadvantage. This may include altering the physical environment, the use of assisted technology or simply allowing extra time for completion of documentation (AHEAD, 2008).

**5**. **Confidentiality and Disclosure**

There is an ethical duty to take into consideration thatinformation in relation to an individual`s disability is sensitive and personal, and can only be shared with others if consent is given. The Link Lecturer and the Clinical Placement Co-ordinator (CPC)/Student Facilitator may be informed of a student’s disability with the consent of the student. The student is encouraged to discuss issues with the relevant staff in order to avail of reasonable accommodation.

Permitted disclosure allows an awareness of the student’s specific learning needs and enables implementation of strategies to assist the student; this may help an individual feel more positive about disclosure in the future. The student will be advised to complete the Disability Disclosure Consent Form, outlining the relevant people to whom disclosure can be made.

**6. Scope of the Guideline**

This procedure applies to lecturing staff within the Department of Nursing and Healthcare, Athlone Institute of Technology, all Registered Nurses and Midwives employed within the Dublin Midlands Hospital group, the Ireland East Hospitals Group and CHO Area 8, who are involved in the education and assessment of student nurses in clinical practice.

This procedure also applies to all nursing students undertaking the BSc (Hons) in General or Psychiatric Nursing programmes in Athlone Institute of Technology.

**7. Procedure**

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| **Stage 1** | * Student Discloses to AIT Disability Officer * Needs Assessment conducted by the Disability Officer **(**may need to proceed to **Level 1)** * Student is advised of the advantages of disclosing to both the link lecturer and CPC/Student Facilitator . |

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| **Stage 2** | * When the student agrees to disclose to the link lecturer the student completes the academic engagement form * Link lecturer discusses with the student the level of support that may be required. |

**Level 1**

* Minimal Support Required
* Self-managed
* Supports required for academic needs will be in line with AIT Disability Guideline

**Level 2**

* Possible supports to manage on clinical placement is discussed by Link lecturer
* The student is advised to contact the CPC/Student Facilitator regarding their disability and forthcoming clinical placement.
* May progress to Level 3

**Level 3**

* Placement Planning is discussed by Link lecturer and CPC/Student Facilitator, ideally prior to the student commencing placement.
* Self-Assessment and Reasonable Accommodation Identification document commenced by student completing own sections
* Consent form is completed

And returned to the Link Lecturer.

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| **Stage 3** | **Disclosure Prior to Clinical Placement**   * The Self-Assessment and Reasonable Accommodation Identification Document is completed with CPC/Student Facilitator **/**Preceptor/ Student . * If required, **CPC/Student Facilitator** contacts relevant clinical staff, with student consent. **It is important to note that disclosure to other clinical staff will only be made on a need to know basis with the consent of the student.** * **CPC/Student Facilitator** initiates the reasonable accommodation plan for the student’s clinical placement in conjunction with the preceptor and key clinical staff. * The reasonable accommodation plan is reviewed as required * Difficulties which may arise with the implementation of reasonable accommodations in practice due to service needs should be discussed with the student at the onset of placement. All attempts will be made to provide reasonable accommodations in as far as possible. In the event that reasonable accommodations cannot be provided due to service needs, the student will still be supported by their preceptor, to work towards, achieving the necessary competence for their stage of training in line with NMBI Standards and Requirements (2016) * Documentation relating to the students disability and needs assessment will be maintained by the student. * The CPC/Student facilitator will liaise with the link lecturer if further support is required   **Non-Disclosure prior to Clinical Placement**  **Verification of the students disability or functional limitation needs to be**  **identified prior to the clinical placement to enable reasonable accommodation to**  **be put in place.** |

**Glossary of Terms**

**Academic Engagement Record** A record of engagement between the link

Lecturer, the CPC/ Student Facilitator and

the student

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| **Clinical Placement Co-ordinator (CPC)/Student Facilitator** | A staff member from the clinical site who liaises with the link lecturer in the AIT and other members of the Clinical Nursing team & members of the AIT Department of Nursing, and Health Science to support students with an identified disability. |
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| **Clinical Site** | Clinical site refers to clinical partners and specialist sites that provide the clinical placements for the nursing student during their programme. |
| **Clinical Engagement Record** | A record of engagement between the CPC/Student facilitator and the student |
| **Competence** | Competence is the attainment of knowledge, intellectual capacities, practice skills, integrity and professional and ethical values required for safe, accountable and effective practice as a registered nurse or registered midwife. (Nursing, Midwifery Board of Ireland 2015a:15). |
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| **Disclosure** | “The communication of information about a disability by the individual” (Stanley et al., 2007:42). |
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| **Disability**  **Informed Consent** | “A substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State, or to participate in social or cultural life in the State, by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment” (The Disability Act (Government of Ireland 2005:6).  Informed consent is the giving of permission or agreement for an intervention, receipt or use of a service or participation in research following a process of communication in which the service user has received sufficient information to enable him/her to understand the nature, potential risks and benefits of the proposed intervention or service.  Health Service Executive (2013) national Consent Policy/ |
| **Link Lecturer** | A lecturer with identified clinical sites who liaises with the CPC/Student facilitator in the clinical sites, within which student nurses are allocated. The link lecturer also liaises with other members of the lecturing team within the Department of Nursing, and Healthcare to support students with a disability. |
| **Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) formerly known as An Bord Altranais** | The regulatory body for the nursing/midwifery profession. Its functions include: maintenance of a register of nurses, regulation of nurse or midwifery education and training and fitness to practise, provision of guidance for Nurses and Midwives and management of the Nursing Careers centre. |
| **Preceptor** | The registered nurse/midwife who works with the student, guiding, supporting, supervising and monitoring, giving feedback and encouragement. The preceptor conducts the assessment of the student in the clinical area. |
| **Reasonable Accommodation** | Any action, or special treatment or facility that reduces a significant disadvantage. A reasonable accommodation may involve altering the physical environment, modifying the delivery of a course or providing assistive technology (Employment Equality Act (Government of Ireland 1998); AHEAD 2008). |
| **Self-Assessment and Reasonable Accommodation Identification Document** | A self-assessment tool for the collection of information about a student’s disability to allow for the planning and facilitation of reasonable accommodations. |

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**of this guideline.**

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