

Guidelines for the Handling of Special Educational Support at Luleå University of Technology

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1. Introduction

Engagement, perseverance, and independence are values that describe the pedagogical vision at Luleå University of Technology. Students are expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Everyone at the university plays an important role in supporting students to become skilled and proactive actors within their field of competence. Good hospitality includes concepts such as service, treatment, quality, friendship, and hospitality. The starting point is a welcoming and open attitude towards people and situations we encounter.

Special educational support at the university is financed through allocations in the university's undergraduate education grant. The funds are to be used for certain additional costs that arise to compensate for obstacles in the study situation for individual students, i.e., in cases where special solutions are necessary for the student to study on equal terms. The university annually reports costs and statistics on the number of students who have received special educational support to the coordinator for national funds at Stockholm University.

Through the Swedish National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools, the university can apply for special educational support for students with severe physical disabilities or psychological and neuropsychiatric disabilities, according to the regulation (2011:1163) on state grants for special educational support.

The conditions for being covered by special educational support are that the disability is permanent and documented, i.e., it must be substantiated with certificates such as medical certificates or reading and writing assessments.

1.1 Purpose of the Document

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify the responsibilities of the university and the individual student regarding special educational support for students at undergraduate and advanced levels with permanent disabilities.

1.2 Applicable Provisions

According to Section 1 of the regulation (2001:526) on the responsibilities of government agencies for implementing disability policy, agencies under the government must design and conduct their activities with consideration of the disability policy goals. The agencies must work to ensure that people with disabilities have full participation in social life and equality in living conditions. The agencies must particularly ensure that their premises, activities, and information are accessible to people with disabilities. The guiding principles should be the UN's standard rules for participation and equality (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

According to the Discrimination Act (2008:567) (DL), disability means permanent physical, mental, or intellectual limitations of a person's functional ability that, as a result of an injury or illness, existed at birth, have arisen thereafter, or can be expected to arise. Some examples of disabilities can be dyslexia, neuropsychiatric disabilities, and mental health issues. Temporary and transient injuries or conditions are not included.

According to Chapter 2, Section 5 of the DL, those who conduct activities referred to in the Education Act or other educational activities (education providers) must not discriminate against any child or student who participates in or applies to the activities. Employees and contractors in the activities are to be equated with the education provider when acting within the scope of their employment or assignment.

Lack of accessibility according to Chapter 1, Section 4, Paragraph 3 of the DL means that a person with a disability is disadvantaged by not having taken such accessibility measures that are necessary for the person to be in a comparable situation with people without this disability, which are reasonable based on accessibility requirements in law and other regulations. The measures that may be relevant are determined based on a comprehensive reasonableness assessment, considering, among other things, economic and practical conditions (see Government Bill 2013/14:198 p. 59 f.).

In accordance with the DL, the university must work to ensure equal conditions, where disability is one of the grounds for discrimination. This involves leveling differences at the planning stage to give all students the same basic conditions and thus avoid special adaptations and special solutions. However, sometimes special solutions for individual students may be necessary to compensate for deficiencies that may still arise in general accessibility.

Stakeholders include students, the Student Division, the University Library, The Centre for Educational Development, IT, Premises and Service, Communications and Collaboration, and course-giving departments.

2. Special Educational Support

A student who has been granted special educational support receives in the decision a recommendation on which support the coordinator for special educational support recommends. The recommendations aim to provide the student and teacher/examiner with a basis for a dialogue on what support can work and is possible in the current course.

The need for special educational support can often be avoided through simple measures to increase general accessibility for all students, as outlined below.

- Teachers should strive to ensure that all course materials are uploaded to the learning platform at least one week before they are to be used.
- Teachers are responsible for providing a structured and clear study guide, where all examinations and examination forms are specified and scheduled so that necessary measures, such as extended writing time, speech synthesis, etc., can be planned in advance.
- Examiners should consider that it can take up to eight weeks to have course literature recorded for students who, due to disabilities, need literature in other media and take the necessary measures accordingly.
- Teachers and schedulers are responsible for ensuring that the course schedule is available at least ten days before the course starts.
- Teachers should provide lecture materials before the lecture if they believe it will support the student.

- Teachers should use a microphone during lectures in classrooms where hearing loops are available.
- IT should, as far as possible, offer campus licenses for students to install on their own computers during their studies, such as spell check programs, speech synthesis, dictionaries, etc.

3. Responsibilities

Below clarifies the responsibilities of the university and the individual student regarding special educational support for permanent disabilities.

3.1 Student's Responsibility

A student in need of special educational support applies for the support via a special web portal, NAIS, available at the students web. The student should note that the application involves a processing time of a few weeks before a decision on support can be made.

The student is responsible for:

- Applying for special educational support and attaching certificates that substantiate the disability, such as from a doctor or speech therapist, etc.
- Taking part in information about the support measures offered.
- Informing relevant teachers, examiners, and other staff at the start of the course about the support the coordinator has recommended to compensate for the disability in, for example, lectures and laboratory work. The student should note that a recommendation is not the same as a decision.
- Informing the relevant examiner/teacher in good time if adaptations affecting scheduling are needed, such as for quizzes. The student should note that scheduling information is submitted for scheduling about 2 months before the course starts.
- Contacting the University Library for access to audiobooks, braille books, and e-text if literature in other media is needed. The student should note that it can take eight weeks to have literature recorded.
- Indicating the need for special arrangements, such as extended exam time, when registering for centrally administered exams and re-exams.
- Contacting the education administrator at the course-giving department if text-to-speech is needed when applying for exam adaptations.
- Using the available resources appropriately and returning them when studies are completed.
- Ensuring that the location can offer any necessary exam adaptations if the student has been granted permission to take the exam at another location.

3.2 University's Responsibility

The university's responsibility is described below, divided into operational support and course-giving department, and assumes that the student has fulfilled their responsibility as described in 3.1. The

educational support is related to the study situation, such as lectures, seminars, laboratory work, excursions, group work, study visits, interviews, and examinations included in the education. The measures can also involve adaptations in the teaching situation, the need for special equipment, or adaptations in premises. The university is not responsible for personal aids such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, technical aids for communication, or specially designed computer programs, nor for personal support outside the framework of educational support.

3.2.1 Student Division

The Student Division includes coordinators for special educational support, study counselors, and exam administration involved in planning and implementing special educational support. During the study period, the coordinator, in consultation with the study counselor, provides support and contact for students with permanent disabilities who have been granted special educational support.

The Student Division is responsible for:

- Mapping the support needs of the individual student based on the documented functional variation.
- Recommending measures based on the functional variation.
- Deciding on appropriate measures for centrally administered exams and re-exams, such as extended writing time (extended writing time, 50% of the regular time), but a maximum of two hours, exams in smaller groups, individual exam rooms, and writing exams on a computer.
- Planning the implementation of exams based on the requested educational support.
- Allocating funds from the special budget for special educational support.
- Describing and justifying the need for support from the IT operational area through the system management organization.
- Informing scheduling within the Premises and Service area if there is a need for scheduling in special premises.
- Recommending support measures considering the nature of the disability and, where applicable, the requirements of the current education.
- Coordinating support measures for students in need of note-taking support, proofreading, extra supervision during work-based education (VFU) and thesis work, as well as student mentors and sign language interpretation/writing interpretation. The decision on the extent of these supports is made by the coordinator for special educational support in consultation with the department.

3.2.2 University Library

The Swedish Agency for Accessible Media (MTM) has a special assignment to produce course literature for university students with reading disabilities. MTM adapts mandatory course literature as audiobooks, braille books, and e-text. The titles are available for loan in Legimus. It is through the University Library that students gain access to MTM's products and services. The library holds introductory meetings with students and registers accounts in Legimus. Through the library, students can order

mandatory course literature that has not yet been recorded. Additionally, the library prioritizes e-resources over printed ones to increase accessibility to literature. The library as a whole offers good opportunities to sit in a quiet and secluded environment. Furthermore, the University Library provides guidance support in information retrieval, academic writing, oral presentation, and overall study techniques.

3.2.3 The Centre for Educational Development (HPC)

HPC supports teachers in complying with the accessibility directive and offers suggestions for various alternative examination forms.

HPC is responsible for:

- Enabling general education aimed at teachers by integrating inclusion issues into the regular course offerings.
- Conducting targeted educational efforts upon request from and in collaboration with institutions/departments/teaching teams.
- Providing pedagogical resources regarding inclusion on its website.

3.2.4 IT

The IT division consists of three units: Architecture and service development, Infrastructure and platform services and Integration and software development

IT is responsible for:

- Procuring IT support and delivering campus licenses for students with functional variations in dialogue with the coordinators for special educational support.
- Installing and ensuring that spell-check programs and text-to-speech software work on exam computers, computers in computer labs, and that students with functional variations can install these programs on their own computers.
- Maintaining AV technology such as hearing loops, etc.

3.2.5 Premises and Service

The division is responsible for the university's facility management and planning, physical security, environmental and sustainability work, and services within the university, such as cleaning. Premises and Service ensures that the university's premises are accessible to all students regardless of functional variation.

Premises and Service is responsible for:

- Considering accessibility for all students regardless of functional variation when planning new premises and, if necessary, adapting premises or providing special equipment such as height-adjustable desks, adapted chairs, and other furniture/equipment.
- Adapting scheduling to premises with, for example, hearing loops or other adaptations if needed.
- Contacting the relevant landlord for adaptations regarding accessibility.

3.2.6 Communications and Collaboration

The division is responsible for internal and external communication, branding, graphic profile, and the university's website, and supports the university's collaboration and innovation.

Communications and Collaboration is responsible for:

- Considering accessibility when producing information material and web publishing.

3.2.7 Course-Giving Departments

There are five course-giving departments: Social Sciences, Technology and Arts (ETKS), Health, Education and Technology (HLT), Civil, Environmental and Natural Resources Engineering (SBN), Computer Science, Electrical and Space Engineering (SRT), and Engineering Sciences and Mathematics (TVM). The departments offer courses within programs at undergraduate and advanced levels.

The course-giving department is responsible for:

- Consulting HPC regarding how to increase accessibility to presentation/information material according to the accessibility directive if pedagogical support is needed.
- Consulting HPC regarding trying another examination form if pedagogical support is needed.*
- Considering general accessibility aspects in course planning, such as timely established literature, available course material, and a clear and structured study guide in the learning platform.
- Considering that it requires good advance planning to have course literature recorded and taking necessary actions such as updating the reading list eight weeks before the course starts.
- Reviewing the possibility of offering special arrangements for examinations administered by the institution, such as examinations of course components, written reports, etc.
- Providing support during work-based education, thesis work, internships within the education, study visits, etc., if needed. The course-giving institution can receive additional funds for this.

**A student granted special educational support can, in agreement with the examiner, take another examination form than what the course syllabus states. This does not apply to thesis work. Alternative examination is always the examiner's decision and must always be based on the learning objectives in the course syllabus.*