



An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence



Equality and Access to Training Policy

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Policy Summary	This policy outlines the commitment that ensures Civil Defence training programmes are accessible to all students and outlines how specific needs can be accommodated.
Changes Made	This policy has been updated to include procedures

Policy on Equality and Access to Training.

Contents

- 1. Background**
- 2. Purpose**
- 3. Scope**
- 4. Access to education**
- 5. Mainstreaming**
- 6. Accommodating diversity & disability**
- 7. Equality and diversity awareness Training**
- 8. Procedures**

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1. Background

This policy is developed in the context of the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2011 and Equal Status Acts 2000-2012 which prohibit direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation in relation to nine equality grounds: gender, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, ethnicity and membership of the Traveller community.

The Disability Act 2005 places significant obligations on public bodies in terms of providing integrated access to services and information to people with disabilities.

This policy reflects the College's commitment to ensure its educational programmes are accessible to all students. We measure this achievement through the implementation of the Acts.

Civil Defence is committed to ensuring as far as possible and within the framework of current legislative requirements, that students with disabilities have equality of access and participation in all courses, examination and assessment procedures. We will provide Reasonable Accommodation for students, this refers to adaptations to assessment methods, enabling students with disabilities or specific learning needs (temporary or permanent) to demonstrate their knowledge without altering the required learning standards. It ensures fair access, complying with the Equal Status Act 2000-2018, by modifying, for example, exam timing or format.

2. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to demonstrate Civil Defences commitment to promoting all aspects of equality in its provision of education and development.

The College aims to provide an inclusive environment which promotes equality and values diversity in an environment of dignity and respect where all students can develop their full potential.

Civil Defence College is committed to the continued development of educational practices and learning interventions which do not discriminate on grounds such as gender, civil status, family status, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or membership of the Travelling community.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all persons participating in training hosted / co-ordinated by Civil Defence College. Beyond the scope of this policy is training organised / hosted by Civil Defence Officers. Please contact the relevant Civil Defence Officer for details on their specific policy.

4. Access to education

Civil Defence

- Is committed to non-discrimination (direct or indirect) in access and participation in education in relation to any of the nine equality grounds: gender, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, ethnicity and membership of the Traveller community.
- Seeks to ensure that training programmes provided are free from discrimination and harassment.
- Will ensure its enrolment process, assessment and other procedures do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any student in relation to any of the nine equality grounds.
- Supports an inclusive learning environment of dignity and respect where all students can develop their full potential.
 - Is committed to a programme which will seek to identify barriers to equality and full participation and imbalances within college practices where they exist and take action to redress these.
 - Is committed to providing integrated accessible services and information to people with and without disabilities.
 - Will seek to ensure that information is produced in accessible format within the resources of the College.
 - Will seek to provide reasonable accommodation to students leading up to and during learning assessments.

5. Mainstreaming

The College seeks to mainstream equality in its planning processes to ensure an inclusive anticipatory perspective is incorporated into all College activities and training. This includes ensuring all college staff and faculty/instructors have undertaken disability and diversity awareness training.

6. Accommodating Diversity & Disability

The College will seek to accommodate the diversity of students from across the nine equality grounds by:

- Actively identifying and addressing student needs across the nine grounds. Different data, feedback and consultation methods will be used for this purpose.
- Providing reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities and providing reasonable accommodations access to services where practicable.
- Exploring barriers to participation from students.
- Ensuring flexibility in the operation of training programmes to allow student diversity to be accommodated.
- Seeking to ensure that students with a disability have as complete and equitable an access to all services as can reasonably be provided.
- Committing to a programme of improving the physical access of facilities and providing accessible information in consultation with the National Disability Authority.

7. Equality & Diversity Awareness Training

College staff will implement equality & diversity training and awareness programmes into its educational programmes; thereby ensuring diversity retains a central role in our college ethos.

8. Procedures for Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are defined as “those actions that enable candidates to demonstrate their true knowledge and ability in examinations without changing the demands of the examination.” The intention behind the provision of such accommodations is to alleviate substantial disadvantages without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Key Principles

Should be individualised and evidence based, when possible, tailored to the student needs – after a needs assessment. In some cases, evidence may need to be submitted, specifically for PHECC Practitioner State examinations

The granting of reasonable accommodations will not put the integrity or status of the course learning outcomes, examination or assessment at risk and will ensure fairness to all Candidates. Reasonable accommodation should support Candidates to become more independent in their learning.

What’s “reasonable” depends on the individual case

If the requested accommodation requirements compromise the course standard or assessment, is considered impractical, unfair, or would impose a considerable burden (resources or cost) in the Civil Defence unit, it may not be reasonable.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations can include:

- Modifying Course and Assessment Formats – Coloured Paper/Larger Print
- Providing subtitles on PowerPoint
- Arrange practical assessments to meet the needs of the student
- Providing a Reader
- Allowing additional Time
- Referring to the requirements for external assessment
- Ensuring all students are aware of additional supports

Requests for Reasonable accommodation

The request for reasonable accommodation can be made by the individual student and/or the Civil Defence Officer. The request can be submitted to the Course Director. This policy and procedures are made available to students before starting the course.

Scenario: Temporary Disability

On session two of a six-session FAR course a student (Mary) informs you that she has torn ligaments will be in a sling for a few weeks. Therefore, she will not be able to fully participate in the practical elements of the course for the next three sessions but wants to attend the final sessions and complete the assessment. The course is being held over six weekly sessions

Situation: Mary will not be able to actively participate in any of the practical elements of the course. She will be able to attend all the modules and observe the practical skills. She can write and can complete the MCQs completed during the course and will be able to complete the final assessment.

Solution: There are a few options which can be discussed with Mary

Continue to attend the course and in a few weeks when she gets the sling off, depending how she is feeling, she can be offered the option to stay on for additional training or come in early to complete the practical elements. Other students on the course will also be invited to avail of the additional time to practice ahead of the final assessment.

Mary is invited to continue to attend the course and observe the practical elements. If she will not be ready for the final assessments – she can complete the MCQ element and complete the practical later or following the next FAR Course.

Scenario: Student with Dyslexia

The Civil Defence Officer tells you that two students (Tom & Jim) in the EFR class have dyslexia. This is a 30-hour course with PowerPoint presentations and reading materials. You do not wish to single out the students in the class, but arrange to speak with them separately to identify their individual needs

Situation: Tom explains that he finds that coloured paper, such as pale blue or green can help when reading or completing assessments, plus he may need additional time. Jim explains that he does much better if questions can be read out to him and he also said that when needed to read coloured paper is a great benefit.

Solution: When preparing 'handouts' use pale blue or green print for all students. Include discussion as much as possible and have break-out groups to discuss topics, avoid as much student reading and writing as possible. During the assessment arrange a separate room and a second assessor to read the questions for Jim. Print the MCQs on pale blue for the rest of the class



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