

# Accommodations & Student Support Guide

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## Definitions

Accommodations/provisions	Adjustments that can be made for a student to allow them to have an equitable learning experience to those without their condition, disability or circumstances.
Academic Reasonable Adjustment Plan (ARAP)	A legal document created with a university Disability Advisor that outlines the accommodations and supports to which you are entitled. (1) Formerly called Academic Integration Plan (AIP)
Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan (PRAP)	Similar to the ARAP, however it is specifically for placements and the unique circumstances they may present. (2) Formerly called Placement Integration Plan (PIP)

# FAQs

## Who needs an ARAP?

Anyone who requires accommodations, whether this is due to a condition, illness, injury or disability. The reasons someone may get an ARAP are incredibly varied, but some examples include ADHD, hearing impairment, dyslexia or dyscalculia, any condition affecting mobility, irritable bowel syndrome, epilepsy and chronic fatigue syndrome. This is by no means a complete list. Temporary illness/conditions or injuries also qualify someone for an ARAP, so anyone in medical school may need an ARAP at some point. An example of this is a broken arm, where a student might require modified clinical teaching, extra time in exams due to having one less functioning arm, recordings of teaching/tutorials due to an inability to take notes in real time and more.

## How do you get an ARAP?

To get an ARAP, you will need to (3):

- Make an appointment with a Disability Advisor by contacting Disability Services via 1300 668 370 (option 5) or [disability@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:disability@westernsydney.edu.au)
- Bring the “Impact of Disability and/or Health Condition on Study” form to your treating practitioner for them to fill out (link to blank form in additional resources at the end of this document)

You will be allocated a Disability Advisor who generally will help you for the duration of your ARAP and/or degree (see below for who to contact if you have concerns regarding your Disability Advisor). The “Impact of Disability and/or Health Condition on Study” form is usually provided after the first meeting with your Disability Advisor, however having it completed in advance will speed up the process of getting your ARAP and having it implemented. In your first meeting, mention that you have already filled out the form and ask for your Advisor’s email address so you can send it to them. You will then proceed with making your ARAP.

If the form is not completed before your first meeting, you will need to email it to your Disability Advisor for your next meeting.

## What accommodations are available to medical students?

There is no set list of accommodations available, but common accommodations include:

- Extra time in exams
- 7 day extension for assessments
- Written exams
- On-site exams
- Permission to stand and stretch in exams

If your condition/illness/disability/injury is uncommon, appropriate accommodations for your situation may not have been approved by the School of Medicine (SoM). This means that your Disability Advisor will need to discuss with SoM as to whether they can provide these accommodations in line with the course's inherent requirements (see below for inherent requirements).

It is always best to ask for as many accommodations as you think are relevant to your situation, even if you are unsure if they will be approved. You will not receive accommodations you (or your health practitioner) do not ask for.

## What information will be on my ARAP?

Your name, student ID, student email and course details will be on your ARAP, as well as the accommodations to which you are entitled. Your condition/illness/disability/injury will NOT be disclosed, so those who receive your ARAP will have no knowledge of why you have an ARAP.

**Only Disability Services have access to your medical information**, ie the paperwork your doctor fills out for you to get an ARAP. This will not be shared with the SoM or other faculties without your consent. If you want more information about this, you can call Disability Services to clarify and/or refer to the Privacy Management Plan Policy for WSU (4).

## Who sees my ARAP?

Your ARAP will be put into a folder with all other ARAPs from students in your cohort. These will then be seen by your year coordinator, who will share it with relevant staff. This will vary based on what your accommodations are, as some only apply to exams or assessments, whereas others will apply to learning activities such as PBL.

Once your ARAP has been drafted, your Disability Advisor will email it to you for you to check, along with an ARAP Distribution form which you will need to sign to authorise your ARAP being shared to the relevant staff. If you do not sign this form, your ARAP cannot and will not be implemented (3).

## How long does it take for the ARAP to be made and implemented?

Unfortunately there is no timeline for implementing ARAPs, so this can vary widely. Student reports have indicated it can take a week or two, or up to a few months. That is why you should make an appointment with your healthcare practitioner and a Disability Advisor as soon as you decide to apply for accommodations. If you have concerns about how long it is taking for your ARAP to be produced and/or distributed, please reach out to your disability advisor and one (or a few) of the contacts listed below.

If you do not think you have enough time for an ARAP to be made and implemented before an exam, you should still reach out to Disability Services and discuss your situation with them. There will be very little that can be done if you wait until after exams to bring up that you required accommodations that were not provided during your exam block. Having a “paper trail” that indicates you have reached out for support before exams will also provide good evidence for why you should be eligible to sit a deferred exam, should you need to.

## How long does an ARAP last?

Your ARAP is distributed at the start of each semester (you will be sent a copy of this as well), but this is done automatically and does not require any action from you. This will be done for the duration of your condition/illness/injury/disability, however you may need to renew your documentation.

Generally you are required to resubmit the “Impact of Disability and/or Health Condition” form every two years, so that any changes in your situation can be documented and any necessary changes in your ARAP can be made (3). Unfortunately, this cannot be circumvented even if you have a chronic condition that does not change over time, although disputing the need to resubmit the form vigorously enough may give you an extra year before you will be asked again.

## How is a PRAP different to an ARAP?

A PRAP is specifically for placements, so it will require different accommodations, and it will need to be shared with different people, such as your placement supervisor (2). To get a PRAP, you will need to follow the same steps as getting an ARAP, which includes making a meeting with your disability advisor and getting your health practitioner to fill out the “Impact of Disability and/or Health Condition” form, specifically pages 1, 5, and 6. The personal information included on the PRAP and time it takes to be written and implemented is the same as an ARAP.

Like ARAPs, your PRAP should be distributed to all relevant people, such as your clinical school or placement supervisor, by the SoM. PRAPs will only be distributed to those who play a role in implementing any of the accommodations on the document, so if your accommodation is only a restriction in distance to travel for placement, this will be passed on to placement allocation and those involved in making timetables, not clinical supervisors. This means that students should not need to provide their PRAP on placement, as was often the case prior to June 2024.

## Will I need a PRAP?

You will need a PRAP if you need accommodations or special conditions for your placements. Not everyone who has an ARAP will need a PRAP, so if you are unsure of whether you would benefit from having one, contact your Disability Advisor or speak to your healthcare practitioner.

## Do I need a PRAP if I am a pre-clinical student?

In years 1 and 2 you will have GP and Medicine in Context (MiC) placements, so it may still be beneficial for you to have a PRAP. MiC placements are one-day long and you will never do more than one a semester. You can choose where you go for the placement to some extent, by preferencing placements offered by the MiC team, or nominating your own place. There is no guarantee that you will get your first preference or that you will be able to go to your nominated service. GP placements will consist of multiple sessions of 3-4 or 8 hours; it is up to the student and the clinic to decide whether short or long days are more suitable. The GP clinic can be nominated by you, otherwise you will have one allocated to you. The clinic you nominate must be approved for you to go there, so it is still a possibility that you end up somewhere else.

If you think you will need accommodations, such as those listed in the next question, to be able to do the above, it would be worthwhile to talk to Disability Services.

## What accommodations are available for placements?

Common accommodations include:

- Restricted locations of placement, ie within a certain distance or minutes from residential address
  - Please note that there are limitations to this, as you must be able to attend either Blacktown or Campbelltown Hospitals as a requirement for the course
- Accessibility requirements e.g. must have elevators

You should address accommodations for placements similarly to those in your ARAP, so refer to that section for more information.

## What are inherent requirements and how do they impact the accommodations I can get?

Inherent requirements refers to the abilities that are required for students to complete the degree to a level of participation that the SoM and Medical Board of Australia deem acceptable (5). The list of inherent requirements can be found in source 5. This means that you will be unable to get accommodations to compensate for a lack of a certain ability that is on the list. For example, if you had a condition making it difficult to complete physical tasks, such as drawing blood, you would be unable to get an assistant to help you as an accommodation since the SoM considers gross motor and fine motor skills an inherent requirement of the course.

If you are struggling with, or think you will struggle with, completing a certain aspect of the course, you should still talk to your disability advisor to see if there is any support available. If it relates to an inherent requirement, you might not be able to get accommodations to make your experience equitable to those who do not have your condition, but you may get some support to make it a little bit easier. Your disability advisor will help you navigate this, and will speak with the SoM on your behalf so you are able to remain anonymous.

## Who should I contact if I have a problem?

Your disability advisor and year coordinator will generally be your first point of contact. You may want to involve additional staff members, including those whose details have been provided below. It is also the WSMS Disability Officer's role to help support and advocate for students with disabilities, so feel free to reach out to them as well.

If you are experiencing difficulty managing your health, your first contact should be your GP/health practitioner, or the emergency department, if your health is at severe risk.

Christine Merry, School of Medicine Disability Coordinator	c.merry@westernsydney.edu.au 0481 036 722
Alicia McIntyre, Head of Student Wellbeing	a.mcintyre@westernsydney.edu.au

# References

Most of the information on this document can be found on the following WSU websites, and the rest has been collated from student experiences with WSU Disability Services. If you are unsure of anything written here, please reach out to your Disability Advisor, the WSMS Disability Officer and/or the staff listed above for clarification.

1. Academic Reasonable Adjustment Plans  
[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/services\\_and\\_facilities/disability\\_service/academic\\_reasonable\\_adjustment\\_plans](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/disability_service/academic_reasonable_adjustment_plans)
2. Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plans  
[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/services\\_and\\_facilities/disability\\_service/placement\\_integration\\_plans](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/disability_service/placement_integration_plans)
3. WSU Disability Policy  
<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=94&version=1#part1>
4. Privacy Management Plan Policy WSU  
<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=149&version=7>
5. Inherent Requirements for Medicine  
[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ir/inherent\\_requirements/inherent\\_requirements\\_for\\_medicine\\_courses](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/ir/inherent_requirements/inherent_requirements_for_medicine_courses)

## Additional Resources

ARAP Guidelines:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1979794/ARAP\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1979794/ARAP_Guidelines.pdf)

Example ARAP:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1766327/Sample\\_of\\_PRAP.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1766327/Sample_of_PRAP.pdf)

ARAP Form/Impact of Disability and/or Health Condition on Study Document:

[https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/1766324/Impact\\_of\\_Disability\\_and\\_or\\_Health\\_Condition\\_on\\_Study\\_2023.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1766324/Impact_of_Disability_and_or_Health_Condition_on_Study_2023.pdf)