GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DE HAUTES ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Guidelines on Academic Accommodations

1. Purpose

These guidelines define the principles and procedures governing the granting of academic accommodations for studies and/or adjustments to assessments for Master and PhD students of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (hereinafter: "the Institute") whose health condition temporarily or permanently limits their ability to participate fully in academic activities.

They are intended to ensure equitable access to study programmes, fair treatment, and transparency in the handling of requests, in accordance with Swiss law and institutional commitments to inclusion, non-discrimination, and academic integrity.

2. General Principles

Students with a diagnosed chronic illness, physical or sensory disability, learning difficulty (e.g., dyslexia, ADHD), or mental health condition (e.g., depression, anxiety, PTSD) may request long-term academic accommodations and/or adjustments to assessments.

These requests must be based on a Medical Certificate as provided for in the *Guidelines on Medical Certificate*, which must demonstrate that the student has limited abilities or a mental health condition and set out the proposed accommodations and/or adjustments to address or compensate for this disability.

In particular, the Medical Certificate must include:

- The degree of incapacity, expressed as a percentage or as a qualitative assessment (e.g., "unable to attend classes or complete written work");
- Specific adjustments or recommendations (e.g. extra time for in-class exams and assignments etc. Beginning and end (date) of the recommended adjustments, if the health conditions can improve;
- A description of the expected development.

In general, the Medical Certificate must be issued within the last 12 months.

Notwithstanding the *Guidelines on Medical Certificate*, renewal of a Medical Certificate is not required if it attests a long-term disability.

Only "reasonable accommodation" can be requested which means *"necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case*"[1].

[1] Article 2 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Furthermore, the proposed accommodations and/or adjustments must not place the student in a position that would give them an advantage over other students.

PhD students on an employment contract with the Institute who require special arrangements as part of their work should refer to the *Politique sur les aménagements spéciaux en faveur des employé.es de l'Institut.*

3. Submission Procedure

Requests must be addressed to the Student Wellbeing and Support Service (wellbeing-support@graduateinstitute.ch) ideally prior to the start of a semester for a long-term academic accommodation or one month prior to the date of an assessment for an adjustment to assessment.

The Student Wellbeing and Support Service can help the student to prepare a formal request.

The student must fill a *Student Agreement Form*, which will be submitted to the Director of Studies Office, along with the Medical Certificate and any useful document for decision.

If the physical incapacity is temporary (broken arm, etc.), the request must be made directly to the Director of Studies Office.

4. Examples of accommodations and adjustments

The following measures can be arranged:

For assessments:

- Extra time (+25% or more if medically indicated);
- Rest breaks;
- Access to medication;
- Use of a laptop or assistive technology;
- Examination in a separate, quiet room;
- In certain cases, an alternative examination format (e.g., oral instead of written).

For coursework and teaching:

- Additional time for submitting written assignments;
- Adjusted attendance requirements;
- Provision of lecture slides or materials in advance;
- Possibility of taking breaks individually.

For physical or sensory impairments:

- Accessible classroom arrangements;
- Software or devices for visual or hearing support.

5. Decision

Decisions on academic accommodations and adjustments to assessments are taken by the Director of Studies Office.

The Director of Studies Office may request additional information and/or documents to make its decision.

Each case is reviewed individually taking into account the student's needs and the principles of proportionality, necessity and purpose, and in accordance with material and financial resources and feasibility.

The Institute is free to choose the most cost-effective solution that achieves the intended objective and may, in this regard, deviate from the findings of the healthcare professional, where appropriate.

The implementation of the decision may sometimes take some time, particularly due to delivery times or where the installation of the infrastructure in question is subject to budgetary constraints.

The decision may take the form of a refusal, the granting of academic accommodation and/or adjustment to assessment with or without conditions (e.g. a time limit or a reassessment after a certain period if the inability is progressive).

Academic accommodation and adjustments to assessments may not be granted retrospectively. The result of any assessment submitted prior to the granting of an academic accommodation and/or adjustment to assessment is final and may under no circumstances be re-assessed retrospectively.

6. Implementation of the decision

Teaching staff will be informed about the necessary accommodations and adjustments.

Teaching staff receive only the resulting decision on academic accommodations and adjustments (e.g., "approved extension," "exam rescheduled," etc.) without medical information.

Any academic accommodations or adjustments to assessment granted by the Institute apply only to studies or assessments carried out within the Institute. If a student is taking courses at another institution as part of their degree programme, they must apply to that institution for special arrangements.

7. Duration of the academic accommodations and adjustments

Long-term accommodations are normally granted for the duration of the studies at the Institute for as long the inability lasts.

Adjustments on assessments for temporary incapacity are granted for the examination session for which they are required. They may be renewed for the next session

The Institute reserves the right to request a follow-up certificate if the student's situation evolves.

8. Data Protection

The Institute's *Privacy Policy* applies to the processing of medical certificates submitted by students.

Approved by the Academic Committee on 13 October 2026