

The Shaping of Policy on Equal Access to Study and Work at the University of Akureyri

Agreed at the University Council, 1st September, 2006

1. Introduction

The University of Akureyri emphasizes the providing of equal and open access to study and work for students and employees. The policy of the University is to build and secure a supportive study and work environment to ensure equal rights. The objective is to render the University environment accessible and to work towards the strengthening of positive attitudes and work procedures in order to prevent discrimination, cf. the University Policy on Equal Rights, Article 1, thus diminishing the effect of disabling conditions.

Enclosed is a description of the University policy in matters relating to students with needs because of impairments, illness, and specific difficulties. Furthermore, it includes references to policies and remedial measures concerning employees who live with illness or specific impairments. The policy relates to aims, ways, services and work methods. In general, there is a more detailed discussion on the students than the employees, since the rights of the latter group enjoy more security in terms of legislation and union agreements.

1.1 Premises and Definitions

According to a definition in Article 2 of Act No. 59/1992, a person is considered disabled if they have mental or physical impairments and “need special services and support for this reason. This refers to mental retardation, blindness and/or deafness. Handicaps can also be the consequence of chronic illness, as well as of accidents.” (Act on Issues concerning Disabled People, 59/1992). According to the tenor of the law, the concept is used as a heading announcing a variety of disabling conditions. The shaping of this policy on the other hand emphasizes the understanding that disability depends on

circumstances and consists in a discrepancy between the individual and the demands made on him or her by the environment at each time.

In the World Health Organization's classification and framework (International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health- ICF), disability serves as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions (WHO, 2001). According to ICF, impairment is classified as a disorder of the constitution of the body or its functioning. It covers i.e. specific learning difficulties, physical limitations, and sundry problems caused by accidents, traumas, illnesses or other causes. In concurrence with the main emphasis of ICF, the possibilities and opportunities of students and employees to engage in activities and participation in the university community represent the focus of the shaping of this policy.

The term 'specific remedial measures' refers to operations designed to equalize the circumstances of students for study and to ensure that in their study arrangements and all forms of assessments, reasonable and legitimate consideration will be given to students' specific needs. The remedial measures do not consist in diminishing requirements in the admission of students or study demands generally made by the University. Specific remedial measures for employees consist in operations designed to accommodate their needs in attending to their work.

2. Objectives

2.1 Students

The University of Akureyri offers its students an advantageous study environment, access to studying and effective communications between teachers and students (cf. HA Policy and Objectives 2001-2003). The University welcomes students living with various kinds of impairments and it strives to accommodate their needs as well as possible by having the following goals as guidelines:

- To ensure that the equal rights of students at the University of Akureyri to study are respected.

- To ensure an accessible, safe and stimulating study environment for all students and thus to encourage their participation and efficiency in their studies.
- To prevent discrimination because of disabling conditions of students requiring special remedial measures in their studies.
- That students with disabling conditions or specific educational needs have unobstructed access to the general remedial measures and support services that can be provided to ensure their participation in studies.
- To meet the individual needs of students in their studies by means of specific remedial measures insofar as possible, the law and regulations anticipate and the financial status of the University allows.
- That services to students with specific needs are assessed and a description of remedial measures, methods and processes is prepared for everyone seeking it and entitled to such services.
- To strive for that all employees of the University are well informed about the available remedial measures and prepared to accommodate students who have specific needs in their studies.

In addition to access to education, the University of Akureyri wants to ensure equal access to other services of the institute. This includes i.e.:

- The Academic Administration, such as Faculty Offices, the Examination Office, the Student Counselling Service, and the International Services
- The Quality Council and the Library
- The Computer and Media Center

2.2 Employees

The University strives to secure a work environment that is based on equal rights, good living conditions and a safe work environment (cf. Act on Working Conditions, Health and Safety in the Workplace No. 46/1980). Discrimination because of employees' impairments or chronic illness is to be opposed systematically. Equal rights are to be ensured in appointments (cf. Law on Disabled People No. 59/1992) and education for

novices is to be offered to promote the University policy concerning employees coping with illness or disabling conditions. Employees are encouraged to attend regularly courses and educational meetings designed to improve understanding of the issues facing disabled people in their studies and work.

3. Administration and Organization

3.1 Committee on Equal Access to Study and Work

The University Council is to appoint a permanent committee of 6 members (two alternates) on equal access to study and work at the University of Akureyri and it is appointed for a three-year term. The student representative, however, is appointed for a term of one year. The committee works on behalf of the University Council and the Rector. One of the main roles of the committee is to enforce the shaping of the policy presented here and to shape a more detailed arrangement of means of implementation and processes in matters relating to disabled people. The committee is also to ensure that employees and students are thoroughly familiar with the policy and ways to enforce it. The committee members are:

- The chairman of the Equal Rights Committee of the University of Akureyri
- A representative of the teaching faculties, who also chairs the committee
- A representative of the Academic Administration
- A representative of the Financial, Staff, and Administrative Section
- A representative of the Library
- A representative of the Student Union

A student counsellor serves the committee in a consulting capacity concerning students but he or she does not have the eligibility to vote. The committee is authorized to seek assistance from university employees and specialists from outside the University for advice and an opinion, if needed. The committee is to have meetings on a quarterly basis and to convene within two weeks from the receipt of a request or if other reasons require the opinion of the committee. The role of the Committee on Equal Access to Study and Work at the University of Akureyri is furthermore:

- To work on the disputes that may arise
- To prepare and follow up on implementation of the University policy on equal access to study and work.
- To coordinate the work of those who are in charge of matters in this category
- To implement regular revisions of this University policy and to collect statistical information.
- To take the initiative to educate on the subject of equal access, in order to reduce discrimination and differences in circumstances because of disabling conditions or specific difficulties.
- To keep abreast of innovations concerning these issues and how other universities deal with them.
- To publish an annual report on the implementation of the policy.

A student or employee, who believes that he or she has been the victim of injustice or is not satisfied with the remedial measures offered, is entitled to seek advice from the committee. The committee handles the case and seeks information about it from the Student Counselling Service (for students) or the employees' superior, if needed. The committee seeks a solution in such cases and concludes an agreement with the student or the employee. If a student's or an employee's case is already being handled by other units within the University, the opinion of the committee is to be sent to the respective instance. The committee does not review decisions made within faculties or other administrative units. If a student or employee is not satisfied with the conclusion, he or she can refer the matter to the University Council. The University Council, the Rector, faculties and administration units can request the opinion of the committee in individual instances, in which case the utmost confidentiality is to be exercised and such information is to be treated in accordance with the Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data. The processing of such cases is subject to the provisions of Administrative Law.

After three years have elapsed, the entire category is to be referred to the Committee on Equal Rights. The Committee on Equal Rights is to review the policy on equal access to

study and work every four years or more often, if needed, in connection with the Policy of Equal Rights of the University of Akureyri and new information on the subject. It is desirable that disabled students or the associations of disabled people participate in the review.

3.2 Responsibility and Implementation

The Faculty Deans and Directors of Administrative Departments are responsible for daily implementation of the policy but the University Council and the Rector are ultimately responsible for the implementation. Faculty Deans and the Program Directors ensure compliance with remedial measures.

The Student Counselling Service of the University of Akureyri supervises daily work as far as the students are concerned. The service offers suggestions on remedial measures based on the professional opinion of a specialist in each case, in close consultation with the student. The Student Counselling Service also conducts a follow up on remedial measures in cooperation with those dealing with the case. Faculty Deans and Department Heads are responsible for cases involving employees. The Financial, Staff, and Administrative Section is responsible for ensuring that access to housing satisfies applicable requirements and that improvements are carried out both in housing and on the University campus as a whole. These parties are also to attend to the prioritization of projects and prepare plans on more detailed improvements concerning access. The Administrative Section shall ensure that equal access is attended to in the design of new buildings, in consultation with specialists and users. The Computer and Media Center and the Library are responsible for offering specific remedial measures, cf. item 4, services, and work methods.

Scope of Application

The condition for a student to obtain a special remedial solution is that he or she presents an assessment report by a specialist and signs an agreement in cooperation with the Student Counselling Service.. A pre-condition for the provision of specific remedial measures is that the student is registered for study, but it is not a condition for the

handling of the case that the person concerned is registered. Therefore, prospective students can obtain information on available remedial measures or those that could conceivably be offered. The policy also applies to those wishing to be registered cf. Article 17 in the Regulation for the University of Akureyri. In addition, it applies to employees, who live with disabling conditions or long-term illness.

4. Services and Work Methods

The following is a description of the services and work methods that apply to students on the one hand and employees on the other. If there is a choice between different remedial measures that provide students or employees with comparable support, the University of Akureyri reserves the right to choose between them, while taking the evaluated needs of the person concerned into consideration.

4.1 Students

Registration

Registration applications are evaluated on the basis of the admission requirements of the programmes selected. Decision making on the offering of specific remedial measures generally occurs independent of discussions on the registration of applicants. Prospective students are entitled to lucid information on access to buildings and the University campus, as well as to the special remedial measures available and those that can conceivably be offered. The University is duty bound to inform students with specific needs about their rights at all levels of study. The University is also to take the initiative in publicizing these points within the Institute. Responsible parties within the University are to take legitimate measures to ensure that students with specific needs are able to participate in studies. Examples of such measures are considerations in the preparation of a course schedule, determining the locations of lectures and examinations and other specific actions. A diagram of the organization and processing of cases is to be found in ANNEX 2.

Confirmation of Analyses of Specific Needs

A student requesting specific remedial measures is to turn to the University of Akureyri Student Counsellor, who supervises services to students with specific study needs. The precondition for the offering of remedial measures is that there is a professional evaluation by a specialist on the specific needs of the student on the basis of his or her impairment or illness. Students, who sustain setbacks during their studies, can also be requested to submit certificates from an appropriate specialist containing an evaluation of the altered conditions for the study that they have registered to pursue.

An Evaluation of the Need for Remedial Measures

The University offers remedial measures to students on the basis of the evaluation at hand. In exceptional circumstances, the University of Akureyri reserves the right to refuse to provide a student with remedial means, if it is obvious that the content, structure, or presentation of the study selected by the student is of such a nature that he is foreseeably unable to satisfy the study requirements. The University can also refuse to provide the student with remedial means, if it is considered impossible to provide the remedial measures considered necessary to enable the student to pursue his or her studies such as by providing facilities or personnel to assist the student. Specific remedial measures for students are free of charge. Except for the registration fee, the service is normally gratuitous. Nevertheless, the University does not give financial support towards purchases of instruments or books and it does not pay for certificates that may be required.

An Agreement on Specific Remedial Measures

The Student Counselling Service concludes on behalf of the University of Akureyri a written contract on the service, where the commitments are listed that the student and the University accept. In ANNEX 3, there is an example of such an agreement. The counselling service also attends to the computerized registration of individual cases in a system where others do not have access. This registration includes i.e. explanations for offering remedial measures and a description of the service rendered.

The registration can also include a journal covering interviews with the student. The data are kept in the custody of the Student Counselling Service until the student brings his or her studies to an end in which case the student receives the data upon request. Otherwise, the data are removed from the computer system. Should the occasion arise, either because of the student's or the University's request there is always the possibility of reviewing the agreement. If a student fails to fulfill his or her part of the agreement, the University reserves the right to refuse to provide him or her with remedial measures. Should the University fail to honour its part of the agreement, the student can appeal the case to the Committee on Equal Rights of Access to Study and Work at the University of Akureyri, where it will receive formal treatment, cf. item 3.1.

Treatment of Information

The Student Counselling Service of the University of Akureyri preserves confidential information about students with specific needs. The service attends to the channeling of necessary confidential information to the employees involved in implementing remedial measures. Confidential information is only divulged, when the implementation of remedial measures requires it and only when a student has signed the above-mentioned agreement on service.

4.2 Remedial Measures to Equalize the Status of Students

Students with special needs in their studies are offered three types of remedial measures.

- Remedial measures in ways of teaching, i.e. remedial measures that apply to circumstances and conditions during the teaching terms
- Remedial measures in studies that have a bearing on multiple aspects of study, the University as well as the students
- Remedial measures in examinations, i.e. measures that concern the taking of examinations

Examples of Remedial Measures in Ways of Teaching

- The selection of classroom location
- Access to classrooms equipped with an audio system for deaf or hearing impaired students
- Recordings of lectures
- Assistance in taking notes
- Overheads, teacher's notes on WebCT
- Adapted teaching methods
- Adapted preparation of schedules
- An assistant*
- Other remedial measures considered reasonable and legitimate

Examples of Study Remedies

- Supportive interviews.
- A course in study technique
- Examination anxiety prevention course
- Recording of lectures
- Overheads, teacher's notes on the Web CT
- Specialized software, work facilities and assistance in the Library and the Computer and Media Center
- An assistant*
- Other remedies considered reasonable and legitimate

Examples of Examination Remedies

- Extension or adjustment of examination time **
- Taking a computerized examination
- Taking an examination in a room with few students/one student present
- Oral examinations
- Enlarged or coloured examination papers ***

- Rest during an examination without a reduction in examination time
- Examinations recorded or read aloud by an examination custodian
- Specialized equipment in the examination rooms
- A secretary during examinations
- Other remedial measures considered reasonable and legitimate

* E.g. in cases involving students with grave physical impairments or impaired vision

** Such as for students with from examination anxiety, physical impairments, impaired vision, or dyslexia

*** Such as for students with impaired vision or dyslexia

Enclosed herewith is a report on policy making of the University of Akureyri in matters of students with dyslexia dated 30 November 2004. It includes clear examples of work procedures and specific services that are to be available to students with dyslexia (cf. ANNEX 4)

4.3 Personnel

Authorization to Act and Decide

Employees with disabling conditions or long-term illness are to request assistance formally because of their condition or altered premises for receiving the service offered. The request is to be sent to Faculty Deans or Department Heads and it is to be supported by a well-reasoned argument. These parties are also responsible for instructing employees on remedial measures and ensuring that their needs are met in an appropriate manner. Professional development interviews are i.e. to be used for this purpose. Faculty Deans and Department Heads are committed to confidentiality concerning the subjects and contents of the requests of the personnel.

Evaluation of Needs and Remedial Measures

The University of Akureyri offers assistance to personnel requiring specific remedial measures because of disabling conditions or illness in accordance with an evaluation of the need for such remedies. The premise for the provision of these remedies is that a professional assessment is at hand. The experience of employees and their evaluation of

the need for remedies is, however, in certain cases accepted as fully valid so that confirmation is not required from sources outside the University.

Remedial Measures to Equalize the Status of Employees

The University provides employees with gratuitous assistance and remedial measures that make it easier for them or enable them to attend to their jobs. The University Safety Committee/Representative can be alerted for cooperation and consultation purposes (cf. Act on Working Conditions, Health and Safety in the Workplace No. 46/1980).

Remedial measures for employees with disabling conditions can involve the following features:

- Access to university buildings and areas (cf. Regulation on Workplaces' Accommodations No. 581/1995)
- Selection of convenient housing for offices
- Specific equipment in the office
- A computer and computer connected items
- Reading of documents
- Audio systems in class rooms
- Supportive interviews
- Flexibility during work hours
- Assistance in the implementation of various projects

5. Final Words

With equality as a guiding light, it is important to seek ways to facilitate the access and participation of students and employees coping with impairment or disability in their studies and work. An attempt has been made here to set forth clear aims and specify channels of communication and work methods that can be regarded as an improvement. In most cases an individual plan of operations should be made, containing detailed descriptions contributing to practical solutions at each time. All processes need to be

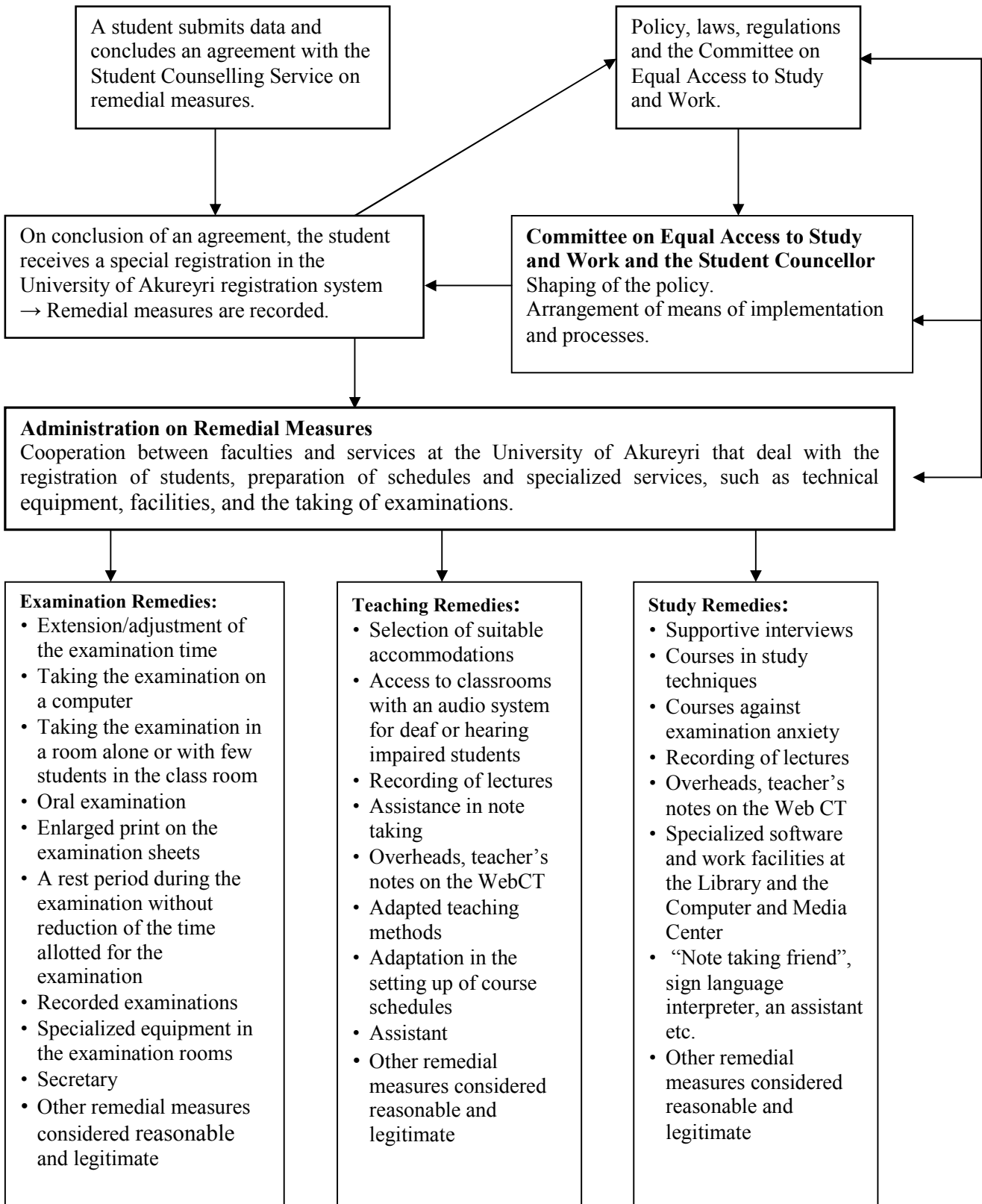
clear to students and teachers. Thus, at the University of Akureyri, conditions are to be created that realize the principle of study and work without discrimination.

Acts, Regulations and Reports

The following legal bases, regulations and contracts were taken into account in the shaping of policy on equal access to study and work.

- Building Regulation No. 441/1998
- The University of Akureyri Plan on Equal Rights, 20 December 2002.
- Act on Working Conditions, Health and Safety in the Workplace No. 46/1980.
- Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men No. 96/2000.
- Act on the Affairs of Disabled People No 59/1992.
- Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data, No. 77/2000.
- The Regulations of the University of Akureyri no. 888/1999
- Administrative Law No. 30/1993
- UNESCO (1994) Final report. World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. Salamanca, Spain: UNESCO, Ministry of Education and Science, Spain
- World Health Organization (2001). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). Geneva: World Health Organization

Organization and Processing of Cases for Students with Specific Needs in Their Studies



An Agreement on Services for Specific Study Needs

1. The undersigned student requests assistance from the University of Akureyri in order to receive the benefit of assistance, in accordance with the University of Akureyri Policy of Equal Access to Study and Work that was approved by the University Council on September 1 2006. The undersigned student will provide the necessary documents confirming his or her specific study needs.
2. The undersigned student agrees that the wishes and requests on remedial measures are submitted in consultation with the Student Counselling Service that is in charge of the processing of cases classified as specific study needs.
3. The undersigned student prepares in cooperation with the Student Counselling Service a plan of study, upon request.
4. If the undersigned student has exemptions concerning examinations, he or she assumes responsibility for consulting the Student Counselling Service before each regular examination period. The undersigned student is also responsible for consulting the Student Counselling Service regarding exemptions from examinations held outside the regular examination periods, i.e. examinations held in faculties that exercise continuous evaluation.
5. The undersigned student authorizes the Student Counselling Service to follow up on his or her personal matters within the University of Akureyri and to deal with confidential information. However, this only applies when it is unavoidable, on condition that the utmost confidentiality is exercised, and only the most essential information is disclosed.
6. The undersigned student pledges to inform the Student Counselling Service on completion of his or her studies or when he or she terminates them.

Date. Student's signature

Date. On behalf of the University of Akureyri/Student Counselling Service

Policy Shaping of the University of Akureyri Regarding Students with Dyslexia

The University of Akureyri takes pride in providing all its students with meticulous care for a variety of positions in an international knowledge-based society. It is clear that students, who pursue their studies at the University, are not all equally prepared to cope with a written text and this applies e.g. to students with dyslexia. Dyslexia does not disclose anything about aptitude for study and it is to be regarded as a specific learning difficulty. Therefore, the University of Akureyri emphasizes the building of a supportive study environment for these students as well as others.

The policy of the University is that all teachers are to have knowledge of dyslexia and an understanding of the needs of students with dyslexia. Annually teachers are to have the opportunity to attend a workshop on dyslexia and the aim is for them to attend such workshops at least every four years. At each time, the University endeavours to ensure that in the Library and the Computer and Media Center there are employees with up-to-date knowledge concerning service to students with dyslexia.

Services to Students with Dyslexia

The University advertises service to students with dyslexia on its home page (<http://www.unak.is>) under the heading Student Counselling Service > disability and impairment. The service is also dealt with in University introductions to programmes offered and Support Services. The Student Counsellor attends to the service and advises students with dyslexia but all students can seek advice from a student counsellor.

Students with dyslexia are to have access to services during the time of study. Such service is rendered on the basis of a needs assessment and it is provided to each and every student seeking it. This service can be in the form of special short courses and workshops, concessions because of study and personal counselling service.

Requests for Service

Applicants for study at the University of Akureyri are given the option of marking in a special box on disability and impairment on the application form of the University. If the student has marked the appropriate box, a student counsellor will invite the student to an interview for a discussion of the student's needs for support and advice. Students who already have commenced their studies can also request advice from a student counsellor. If a student requests service because of his or her studies and examination, a needs assessment is to be available.

Courses

The University of Akureyri offers prospective students, who have dyslexia, a four-day introductory course. It has to be paid for specially and the course is scheduled for *Success Week* that is held annually for freshmen. The course deals with subjects specifically aimed at the needs of students with dyslexia, such as study techniques, methods of reading academic material, writing essays and work on projects. Students learn about specific software in the Computer and Media Center and receive detailed guidance about the use of the University Library. The course emphasizes peer support and cooperation. The course is to be held in Akureyri .

In addition to the introductory course, the University annually offers students courses dealing with study techniques and examination anxiety. These courses also need to be specially paid for. The course is to be held in Akureyri .

Extending the Study Period

All university students have the option of extending the time for their studies by half without special permission. Thus, a three-year course of study can turn into a course of four and a half years. For further changes in the pace of study, students can apply to the faculty but changes depend on faculty rules on the progression of study.

Concession in Studies

A concession involves changes in the general working methods. Features such as the recording of lectures, overheads and teacher's notes, the scanning of a text into computerized form, "note-taking friend", more detailed guidance than normally encountered, altered demands regarding written text, alterations in work speed and the handing in of project reports, use of various supportive computer programs and a more extended period for returning books and other data to the Library, examinations and the taking of examinations.

A Personal Counselling Service

The University offers personal advice to students with dyslexia. A student counsellor organizes and supervises such service. The advice can relate to stress, self-image, depression, anxiety, procrastination, communication with students etc. A student counsellor can also take the initiative in the forming of self-help groups of students with dyslexia.

The Computer and Media Center

The Computer and Media Center at the University of Akureyri offers students with dyslexia access to specific software designed to facilitate their study and they are assisted by the personnel. The students receive e.g. assistance in transferring study material to computerized form. This service is in constant development and novelties in software and hardware available at each point in time are taken into account by this service. The service is covered in the introductory course and during Success Week.

Library

The University Library offers students with dyslexia services designed for their specific needs. This entails specific counselling services in searching for sources, a more extended book loan period and mediation in the provision of recorded materiale.

Examinations

The University offers students with dyslexia concessions because of examinations without diminishing requirements concerning results in their studies. A student

counseling services organizes these activities in cooperation with the student and the Proctor and, where applicable in cooperation with the teacher. This may involve extended examination time, taking an examination in a smaller setting, enlarged fonts on examination sheets, coloured background, computer use, reading instructions aloud, and assistance in writing.

Evaluations

University support of students with dyslexia is subject to the submission of a report on an assessment from a special education teacher or psychologist. The report is to be addressed to the Student Counselling Service. This report is to have been prepared within the last four years from the date it is submitted at the maximum, but still written after the student reached the age of 16.

Such reports are required to specify what kind of instrument was used for the evaluation, assess the nature of the reading difficulty and explain clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the student concerned with regard to difficulties in reading. The report should refer to remedial measures for the student in his or her studies, such as teaching methods, intervention, and other means of support that the specialist considers necessary for the University to use so that the study can be of maximum benefit to the student.

In September every year, the Center of School Development of the Faculty of Education acts as an intermediary in providing analyses of reading difficulties for those requesting them. A group evaluation is performed. If there are indications of reading difficulties, students go for an individual evaluation afterwards. The costs of the assessments are paid for by the students themselves.

The student presents to the University Student Counselling Services a copy of the evaluation report. This is followed by a conversation about the assistance that the University considers possible for it to give the student concerned.

Continued Education for Teachers

The goal of the University is that teachers in all faculties obtain information about dyslexia, its main symptoms and how the disorder is manifested in studies. It is important that teachers at the University have substantial knowledge of dyslexia and are able to respond skilfully in each instance. The support systems, i.e. the Academic Administration, the Computer and Media Center and the Library and Information Services, need to be equipped in such a manner that they can function equally for the support of both teachers and students. Emphasis is placed on teachers being well informed about teaching methods that are well adapted to the needs of students with dyslexia and about the nature of the concessions in studies and the taking of examinations that may be available.

The University requires teachers to attend courses on reading difficulties and how to react to the problem in their teaching. Such courses are also to promote the University Support Services that are available to teachers and the kind of support offered to students with dyslexia. The University sponsors workshops on dyslexia for university teachers every autumn. By attending such workshops teachers can obtain instructions and discuss remedial measures in teaching.

Twice a year the University takes the initiative to invite teachers to an informative meeting about educating students with reading difficulties, where teachers have the opportunity to exchange information. The experience gained from what has proven successful is recorded and distributed by means of the University's orientation for new teachers.

The University prepares a handbook on reading difficulties for teachers. The handbook is to contain information about the nature of dyslexia and what it involves, the services available to students, who have such impairments, and remedial measures for their teachers and what they can do to support to students with dyslexia in their studies.

A Report

At its meeting on the 19th of March 2003, the Council of the Faculty of Education made the following agreement:

A work team is to be established within the Faculty of Education to shape rules on how to respond when a student or students, who have reading or writing difficulties, enroll in the faculty. Merely authorizing deviations on examinations is a short-term remedy and instead a policy should be developed on the basis of the knowledge of the problem available in the Faculty of Education. Reference is here made to the conclusion of a study on aid to students with dyslexia in secondary schools and universities during the winter of 2000-2001, which was prepared by the Center of School Development of the Faculty of Education at the University of Akureyri and the Skagfirðinga School Office.

In continuation of the agreement referred to above, the Faculty Council appointed Rósa Eggertsdóttir and Trausti Þorsteinsson to the work group, but at the same time, the council decided to request Solveig Hrafnisdóttir, Student Counsellor at the University of Akureyri, to join the work group. The work group was also authorized to seek assistance from other University staff members, if considered necessary. The group sought assistance from Sigrún Magnúsdóttir, head of the Library and Information Services, in order to solicit the membership of Eygló Björnsdóttir, employee of the Computer and Media Center of the University, in the work group. Eygló worked with the group until she accepted a new position within the University.

The work group began its work during spring term of 2003. It sought advice on policy shaping of this nature in universities in Iceland and abroad and it studied the results of a survey concerning assistance to students with dyslexia in the secondary schools and universities referred to in the above-mentioned agreement. The work group also held a meeting with University of Akureyri students, who have reading difficulties, where they were asked what was most needed in the service of the University and what was done well.

At the outset of the task, the group was informed that within the Academic Administration there was interest in shaping rules for the University of Akureyri concerning services for disabled people. Therefore the work group assumed that the policy of the Faculty of Education could become part of that work. Then, the shaping of a

policy on services for students with dyslexia would have to be more comprehensive than a policy that represented merely one faculty within the University. All university students would have to enjoy equality concerning these services. Students with reading and writing difficulties in other faculties of the University would have to enjoy equality of rights in this respect together with students in the Faculty of Education. The work group therefore decided to send to the Council of the Faculty of Education a proposal that could apply to the entire University. It would have to be a decision made by the Faculty Council, whether the council was to adopt this policy exclusively as its own or to take the initiative in presenting the proposal to the Management Board. If the Faculty Council wishes to make the proposal applicable only to the Faculty of Education, the council will have to adjust the wording accordingly.

The opinion of the work group is that it has completed its task and it herewith sends its proposals to the Faculty of Education Council.

Akureyri, 30 November 2004

Trausti Þorsteinsson

Rósa Eggertsdóttir

Sólveig Hrafnisdóttir