MLI Inclusivity and Additional Needs Policy and Procedures

Malta Leadership Institute

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1. Introduction

Malta Leadership Institute (MLI) is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment in which students with disabilities, neurodivergence, specific learning difficulties, long-term health conditions or other additional needs are able to participate as fully as reasonably possible in their programme of study.

This policy establishes a formal process for disclosure, needs assessment, tuition and learning support, specialist assessment where appropriate, reasonable adjustments, implementation, monitoring and review. It is intended to ensure that support is planned and documented rather than dependent on informal arrangements between individual students and tutors.

2. Document Control

Version	Section Responsibility	Authorisation	Date
1.0	Whole document	Pending formal approval by MLI Council	31 August 2026
—	Future amendments	MLI Council & Support and Wellbeing Officer	—

3. The Fundamental Principle of the Policy

The fundamental principle is that students should be assessed on the intended learning outcomes of their programme rather than being disadvantaged by barriers that can reasonably be reduced or removed. MLI will consider reasonable adjustments on an individual basis, taking account of the student's functional needs, available evidence, academic standards, programme requirements, health and safety, placement conditions and any professional or regulatory requirements.

A diagnosis is not treated as a measure of ability. Equally, reasonable adjustments do not remove essential learning outcomes, reduce academic standards, guarantee a particular result, or remove competencies that are essential for safe professional practice.

4. Policy Overview

4.1. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a clear route for students to disclose additional needs and request support at application stage or during the course of their studies;
- identify educational barriers through an individual needs-assessment process, if necessary;
- facilitate specialist assessment, including assessment for conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD or other specific learning or neurodevelopmental needs, where appropriate;
- provide suitable tuition and learning-support measures within MLI's educational role;
- establish, communicate and review reasonable adjustments for teaching, learning, assessment and placement;

- protect confidentiality while ensuring relevant staff receive enough information to implement approved arrangements; and
- ensure that arrangements for regulated or clinical programmes remain compatible with essential professional competencies and safety requirements.

4.2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to prospective and enrolled students on MLI programmes, including students engaged in face-to-face, online, blended, practical or work-based learning. Students may disclose a need at application stage or at any later point during their studies.

The policy covers long-term and temporary additional needs where these have a meaningful effect on access to learning or assessment. Where a student's circumstances are primarily a short-term wellbeing issue, the MLI Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedures may also apply. Where health affects safe clinical practice, Occupational Health and Fitness to Practise procedures may additionally apply according to the Good Health and Character Fitness to Practice Policy and Procedures.

4.3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Additional need	A disability, neurodevelopmental condition, specific learning difficulty, sensory or physical impairment, long-term health condition, mental-health-related impairment, or other circumstance that creates a substantial barrier to learning, assessment or participation and may require structured support.
Reasonable adjustment	A proportionate change to the learning, teaching, assessment or access arrangements intended to reduce a disadvantage without changing essential learning outcomes or compromising academic, professional or safety standards.
Specialist assessment	An assessment undertaken by an appropriately qualified external professional to identify or diagnose a condition or learning difficulty and, where relevant, make recommendations for support.
Tuition / learning support	Targeted educational assistance designed to help the student develop effective study approaches, understand learning material and participate successfully without completing assessed work on the student's behalf.
Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plan	A written MLI record of approved support measures, responsible persons, communication arrangements, review dates and any limitations or conditions.

4.4. Policy Key Principles

- Students should be treated with dignity, fairness and respect and should not be subjected to unlawful discrimination because of disability or additional need.
- Support is based on individual functional need rather than assumptions about a diagnosis or label.
- Students are encouraged to disclose needs early, but may disclose at any stage of their studies.

- MLI may put temporary interim support in place while appropriate evidence or specialist assessment is being obtained where this is reasonable and does not compromise assessment integrity.
- MLI staff do not diagnose ADHD, dyslexia, autism or other conditions unless the staff member is independently qualified and specifically acting in that professional capacity.
- Reasonable adjustments must preserve the approved learning outcomes and required academic or professional standards.
- Information about a student's additional needs will be shared only with persons who need the information to assess or implement support.
- Support plans will be reviewed when the student's needs, programme requirements or placement circumstances change.

4.5. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Main responsibility
Prospective and Enrolled Students	Disclose needs where support is requested, provide relevant evidence when reasonably required, participate in planning, and advise MLI when needs or circumstances change.
Support and Wellbeing Officer	Coordinates disclosure, needs assessment, support planning, specialist referrals, communication and review.
Programme Coordinator	Confirms that proposed arrangements are compatible with programme learning outcomes, assessment requirements and, where relevant, professional or placement standards.
Tutors/Lecturers	Implement approved teaching and learning adjustments and provide tuition or academic support within the agreed plan and professional role.
Assessment/Academic Administration	Implements approved assessment arrangements and maintains appropriate records.
Occupational Health / Placement Provider	Advises on health-related or workplace/clinical adjustments where safety-critical practice is involved.

4.6. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and earlier where required by changes in legislation, MFHEA requirements, professional standards, assessment practice, student feedback or institutional experience. The review will be undertaken through MLI's quality-assurance arrangements.

5. Procedures

5.1. Disclosure or Request for Support

A student may disclose an additional need on application, during enrolment, at induction or at any point during the programme. The student may contact the designated Student Support & Wellbeing Officer directly or may ask a Programme Coordinator, tutor or member of administration to make the referral.

1. The request is acknowledged and a confidential discussion is arranged.
2. The student explains the main barriers affecting learning, assessment, attendance, access or placement.
3. Existing professional reports or evidence are reviewed where relevant.
4. The need for specialist assessment, tuition support or reasonable adjustments is considered.
5. Where support is approved, an Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plan is prepared and communicated on a need-to-know basis.
6. The plan is reviewed at an agreed point and whenever circumstances materially change and this should be triggered and be the Responsibility of Support and Wellbeing Officer.

5.2. Evidence and Needs Assessment

MLI will take a proportionate approach to evidence. Existing reports from appropriately qualified professionals may be accepted where they provide sufficient information about the student's current functional needs and recommended support. MLI may request clarification or updated evidence where a report is very old, does not address the relevant educational setting, or where the requested adjustment cannot otherwise be evaluated.

The needs assessment will consider the effect of the difficulty on learning and participation, the student's own experience, the essential requirements of the programme, available teaching and assessment methods, the practicality and effectiveness of possible adjustments, and any health, safety or professional implications.

5.3. Specialist Assessment for ADHD, Dyslexia and Other Needs

Where a student has persistent difficulties that may indicate ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, autism or another specific learning or neurodevelopmental need and does not already have suitable evidence, MLI may recommend or facilitate referral for specialist assessment.

- Assessment or diagnosis must be undertaken by an appropriately qualified external professional and not by unqualified MLI academic or administrative staff.
- MLI may provide the student with details of external professionals or services known to undertake relevant assessments. Students remain free to choose their own suitably qualified private professional.
- Any fee for an external assessment is normally the responsibility of the student. Where a preferential rate is available through an associated professional, the student will be informed of that option.
- A student is not required to accept a particular MLI-associated assessor. MLI may, however, require that any report used for formal adjustments is issued by a professional with qualifications appropriate to the type of assessment.
- Where reasonable, temporary support may be provided while an assessment is pending, but formal examination or high-stakes assessment arrangements may require appropriate evidence before they can be approved.

5.4. Tuition and Learning Support

Where educational barriers can be reduced through targeted academic assistance, MLI may include tuition or learning-support measures in the student's support plan. The nature and frequency of support will depend on the student's needs, the programme and available resources.

- one-to-one or small-group tuition to clarify difficult concepts or reinforce learning;

- study-skills support, including planning, organisation, revision strategies and time management;
- support with academic literacy, reading strategies, note-taking and structuring written work;
- guidance in the effective use of assistive technology or accessibility features;
- additional academic tutorials or structured check-ins with a designated tutor where appropriate; and
- signposting to external specialist tuition where the support required falls outside the expertise or normal provision of MLI.

Tuition support is intended to develop the student's own competence. Tutors must not complete assignments, rewrite assessed work to the point that authorship is compromised, provide answers to live assessments, or otherwise undermine academic integrity. Where external specialist tuition carries an additional fee, this will be communicated to the student in advance.

Additional fees might apply for such services.

5.5. Reasonable Adjustments for Teaching and Assessment

Reasonable adjustments will be determined individually. Depending on assessed need and programme requirements, arrangements may include:

- accessible or alternative-format learning materials;
- permission to use appropriate assistive technology;
- adapted seating, room access or environmental arrangements;
- additional time, supervised rest breaks or a separate room for examinations where justified;
- adjustments to the presentation of assessment instructions or approved use of a computer;
- reasonable flexibility in the organisation of learning activities where this does not alter attendance, competence or assessment requirements that are essential to the programme;
- alternative but equivalent assessment arrangements where permitted by the accredited programme and where the same learning outcomes can be validly assessed; and
- other proportionate measures recommended through the needs-assessment process.

No adjustment will remove an essential learning outcome, lower the level of achievement required, alter the fundamental competence being assessed, or give the student an unfair academic advantage.

5.6. Practical, Clinical and Placement Adjustments

Where the programme includes practical, laboratory, work-based or clinical placement, reasonable adjustments will be considered in consultation with the Programme Coordinator and, where necessary, the placement provider or Occupational Health service. Adjustments may include changes to access, scheduling, equipment, communication methods, supervision or other practical arrangements, provided that essential competencies and safety requirements remain achievable.

For any programme whereby a placement has to be undertaken, adjustments must remain compatible with the competencies and professional standards required for safe nursing practice. Where health or functional capacity may affect patient safety, Occupational Health advice will be obtained. A disability or diagnosis will not in itself be treated as evidence that the student is unfit to practise.

5.7. Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plan

Where ongoing support is approved, MLI will prepare an Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plan. The plan should record, as applicable:

- the main educational barriers identified;
- approved tuition, learning-support or accessibility measures;
- approved assessment arrangements;
- any practical or placement arrangements and responsible persons;
- what information may be shared with tutors, assessors or placement personnel;
- any time limits, review dates or evidence still required; and
- the process for requesting a review if the arrangements are not effective.

5.8. Implementation and Communication

The designated Support and Wellbeing Officer will communicate only the adjustments that relevant staff need to implement. Detailed diagnostic or medical information will not normally be circulated to tutors or assessors. Students are expected to cooperate with agreed arrangements and to raise any implementation difficulty promptly so that it can be reviewed.

Where an adjustment affects an examination, formal assessment or placement, sufficient notice should be given wherever possible. Late disclosure will be considered sympathetically, but MLI cannot guarantee that every adjustment can be implemented immediately where specialist equipment, external approval or placement changes are required.

5.9. Review, Change of Need and Temporary Difficulties

Support plans will normally be reviewed at least once during each academic year for students receiving continuing adjustments, and sooner where circumstances change. Students should notify MLI where an adjustment is no longer required, is not effective, or a new difficulty has arisen.

Temporary needs, such as those arising from injury, short-term illness or significant temporary circumstances, may be supported through time-limited arrangements where reasonable. If the issue is primarily a wellbeing concern, the Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedures may also be used.

5.10. Where a Requested Adjustment Cannot Be Approved

An adjustment may be declined or modified where it would remove an essential learning outcome, compromise academic integrity or professional competence, create an unacceptable safety risk, be ineffective in addressing the identified barrier, or impose a disproportionate burden that cannot reasonably be mitigated.

Where MLI cannot approve a requested adjustment, the reasons will be explained to the student and an alternative arrangement will be considered wherever possible. For regulated programmes, MLI may seek Occupational Health, placement-provider or professional/regulatory advice before deciding.

5.11. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Records

Information concerning disability, neurodivergence, health or specialist assessment will be treated as sensitive personal information. MLI will store only the information necessary to assess, implement and review support. Access will be restricted to staff with a legitimate educational, administrative, safety or legal need to know.

Where a student consents to an external assessment, the resulting report belongs to the student unless otherwise agreed. MLI should normally retain only the report or relevant recommendations needed to support its decision-making and should not seek unrelated clinical information.

Records pertaining to additional needs such as psychologists reports and similar reports shall be kept for a maximum of 1 year after graduation or completion of programme.

5.12. Procedures for Students

- Disclose an additional need as early as practicable when support or adjustment is required.
- Provide relevant evidence where reasonably requested and participate in the needs-assessment process.
- Discuss what support is most useful and inform MLI if agreed arrangements are not working.
- Use approved adjustments responsibly and comply with academic-integrity and professional requirements.
- Notify MLI when needs, functional capacity or placement circumstances materially change where this affects the agreed support plan.

5.13. Procedures for Tutors/Lecturers

- Implement approved adjustments consistently and discreetly.
- Provide tuition or learning support within the agreed plan and professional competence.
- Do not request unnecessary diagnostic details from the student or independently decide that an approved adjustment is not required.
- Refer new or changed needs to the designated Additional Needs Contact rather than creating informal arrangements that affect assessment standards.
- Maintain academic integrity and report any practical difficulty in implementing an adjustment so that an alternative can be considered.

5.14. Procedures for MLI Staff

- Maintain a clear route for disclosure and referral and provide students with accurate information on support options.
- Coordinate specialist assessment referrals where appropriate and explain any cost or evidence requirements before referral.
- Prepare, communicate and review Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plans.
- Ensure approved assessment adjustments are communicated to the relevant academic/assessment staff in sufficient time.
- Consult Occupational Health and placement partners where an adjustment affects a safety-critical or clinical environment.

- Maintain secure records and use anonymised information where possible for quality-assurance monitoring.

5.15. Review and Complaints

A student may request a review of an Additional Needs decision where circumstances have changed, new evidence is available, an adjustment is not effective, or the student believes that relevant information was not properly considered. If the matter cannot be resolved through review, the student may use MLI's formal complaints or appeal arrangements as applicable.

6. Related Frameworks and Documents

- Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413, Laws of Malta), including the principle of reasonable accommodation.
- MFHEA National Quality Assurance Framework and Internal Quality Assurance requirements, including appropriate learning resources and student support.
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Malta Data Protection Act (Cap. 586).
- MLI Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedures.
- MLI Good Health, Good Character and Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures for the BSc Nursing programme.
- Applicable MLI academic regulations, assessment procedures, safeguarding arrangements, complaints procedures and data-protection requirements.

Appendix 1: Referral Flowchart - Inclusivity and Additional Needs

This flowchart translates the referral and support process in the MLI Inclusivity and Additional Needs Policy & Procedures into an operational sequence for students and staff.

1. Need identified or disclosed

At application, enrolment, induction or at any stage of the programme. The student may self-refer or may be referred by a Programme Coordinator, tutor/lecturer or administration.

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2. Referral to Student Support and Wellbeing Officer

Acknowledge the request and arrange a confidential discussion as soon as reasonably practicable.

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3. Initial needs discussion

Identify the main barriers affecting learning, assessment, attendance, access, practical work or placement. Review existing evidence where relevant.

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4. Is further evidence or specialist assessment needed?

Consider whether current evidence is sufficient and whether specialist assessment is required for ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, autism or another specific need.

NO - evidence sufficient	YES - referral required
Proceed to support planning and consideration of reasonable adjustments.	Facilitate/signpost referral to an appropriately qualified external professional. Explain evidence and any fee requirements. Temporary support may be considered while assessment is pending.

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5. Support and adjustment planning

Consider tuition/learning support, teaching and assessment adjustments, assistive technology, access arrangements, and any practical/placement adjustments. Programme Coordinator confirms compatibility with learning outcomes and professional/placement standards.

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6. Safety-critical or clinical implications?

Where health or functional capacity may affect safe practice or placement, consult Occupational Health and/or the placement provider. Essential competencies and safety requirements must remain achievable.

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7. Individual Support and Reasonable Adjustment Plan

Where ongoing support is approved, document the identified barriers, approved support and assessment arrangements, practical/placement measures, responsible persons, information-sharing limits, review date and any outstanding evidence.

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8. Implementation and communication

Student Support and Wellbeing Officer communicates only the information relevant staff need to implement the approved arrangements. Assessment administration and tutors implement approved measures.

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9. Review and follow-up

Review at the agreed point, normally at least once during each academic year for continuing adjustments, and earlier if needs, programme requirements or placement circumstances change.

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10. Review/complaint if required

If arrangements are ineffective, circumstances change or relevant evidence was not considered, the student may request a review. Unresolved matters may proceed through MLI complaints/appeal arrangements.

Cross-referral points: If the matter is primarily a short-term wellbeing concern, use the Student Wellbeing Policy and Procedures. If there is immediate/serious risk or safeguarding concern, use the urgent safeguarding route. Where safe clinical practice is affected, Occupational Health and Fitness to Practise procedures may also apply.