

**UNSW MEDSOC**

# **APPLYING TO UNSW EQUITABLE LEARNING SERVICES (ELS):**

**A GUIDE FOR MEDICAL  
STUDENTS**

By the 2022 Medsoc Disability Committee, with thanks to ELS for providing the basis for this document:

<https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/els/register>



## *Table of Contents*

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Key Contacts &amp; Supports</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HOW TO REGISTER WITH ELS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Updating your Plan</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Using Your ELP</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TL; DR?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<b>7</b>

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## **Introduction**

If you have a disability, chronic physical or mental health condition, or are the primary carer of a person with any of these, you may be eligible to register with Equitable Learning Services (ELS). If you have a short-term injury (e.g. a broken arm) that will affect your studies, you might also be able to access a temporary registration. If you're registered with ELS you can access reasonable adjustments to support you in your studies.

**Register early so you can have access to support when and if you need it!**

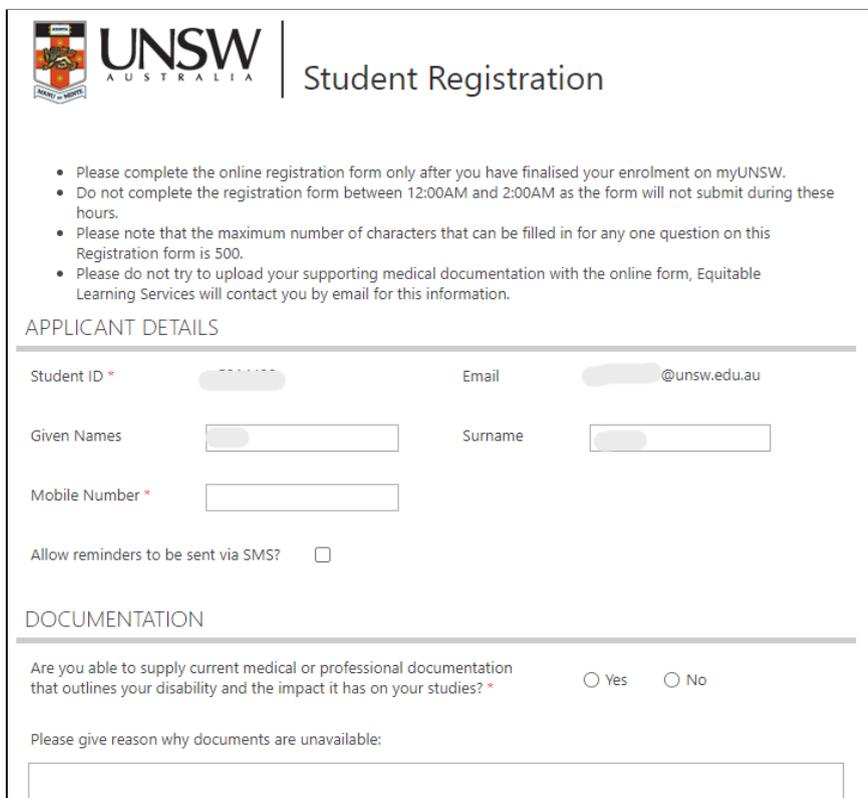
## **Key Contacts & Supports**

If you have any questions, you can contact:

- The ELS team at [els@unsw.edu.au](mailto:els@unsw.edu.au).
- MedSoc Disability Officers at [disability@medsoc.org.au](mailto:disability@medsoc.org.au)
- Catherine Marley (MedFac student wellbeing officer) at [c.marley@unsw.edu.au](mailto:c.marley@unsw.edu.au).

## HOW TO REGISTER WITH ELS

1. Go to <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/els/register> and read the requirements for ELS registration.
2. **Complete the registration form online**  
<https://seadu-portal.unsw.edu.au/application/student-registration/Lists/Registrations/NewForm.aspx> A partial screenshot of the page is shown below.



The screenshot shows the UNSW Student Registration form. At the top left is the UNSW Australia logo. The title 'Student Registration' is on the right. Below the title are four bullet points: 'Please complete the online registration form only after you have finalised your enrolment on myUNSW.', 'Do not complete the registration form between 12:00AM and 2:00AM as the form will not submit during these hours.', 'Please note that the maximum number of characters that can be filled in for any one question on this Registration form is 500.', and 'Please do not try to upload your supporting medical documentation with the online form, Equitable Learning Services will contact you by email for this information.' Below this is the 'APPLICANT DETAILS' section with fields for Student ID, Email, Given Names, Surname, and Mobile Number. There is a checkbox for 'Allow reminders to be sent via SMS?'. The 'DOCUMENTATION' section asks 'Are you able to supply current medical or professional documentation that outlines your disability and the impact it has on your studies?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons. Below this is a text box for 'Please give reason why documents are unavailable:'.

3. **ELS will email you on your UNSW email to request your documentation.**
4. **Send through documentation to ELS.**

In terms of documentation, there are two options. You can either get a letter from a medical professional that fulfils the criteria below, or you can ask your medical



practitioner to fill out the **Support Documents Form**. This is the link:

<https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/node/44705>

All applicants must provide evidence no matter what type of disability they have.

## Criteria for acceptable documentation

(as per <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/els/register>)

Acceptable documentation MUST state:

- The **nature** and **duration** of your condition.
- Any **treatment** you are receiving.
- The **impact** the disability or circumstances are having on your studies.

Documentation MUST be:

- **Less than 2 years old.**
- In **English** (if supporting documentation is provided by an overseas practitioner and is not in English, you need to provide a NAATI-accredited translated copy: <https://www.naati.com.au/>)
- Written on a **letterhead, signed** and **dated** by an appropriate **medical practitioner** (e.g. GP, medical specialists, OT, psychologist or others).
- Faxed, photocopied or scanned documents will only be accepted when registering online or via email. **Original documents must be sighted** before adjustments are implemented.

Documentation from high school submitted to the Board of Studies or documents **used by other educational institutions may be sufficient if less than two years old.** However, documents sent to University Admissions Centre (UAC) are not forwarded to UNSW therefore you need to submit all relevant documentation again.

Below is a screenshot of the Support Documents Form. Bring this to your GP or other health professional to gather necessary evidence.



UNSW Equitable Learning Service  
9385 4734 | els@unsw.edu.au

## Health Professional Report for Educational Adjustments

UNSW is committed to ensuring that all students are able to participate in all aspects of [University life](#). The information provided below will assist the Equitable Learning Service to develop educational adjustments to support your studies. Use the form to provide Equitable Learning Services with information about your disability, long term illness and or mental health condition.

NB: If you are providing a letter from your practitioner / health care provider instead of this form, it must be current and include:

- Information on the condition
- nature of the condition – permanent / temporary
- how your study may be impacted
- providers letterhead and / or provider stamp

Section A: Completed by Student	
Family name:	
Given name:	
Student number:	
I hereby <u>give</u> authority for the health professional named below to release information to the Equitable Learning Service relating to my health condition for the purposes of educational adjustments for study. Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Section B: Completed by Health Practitioner/ Health Care Provider	
Practitioner / Provider Name:	Provider Stamp
Contact Details:	
Diagnosis:	
Nature of condition: Permanent <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary <input type="checkbox"/> Expected Duration:	
Condition description: Fluctuating <input type="checkbox"/> Stable / Unchanging <input type="checkbox"/> Degenerative <input type="checkbox"/>	

<p><b>Impact of Condition:</b> Please provide information on how the student's disability, long term illness and / or mental health condition impact upon their study requirements. Please consider the following (as relevant to the student's condition): fatigue, concentration, memory, mobility, sitting / standing tolerance, impact of medication, attendance, sensory needs, participation in activities such as presentations, lab work and work-based learning environments.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Optional – To be completed for students who are primary carers only.</b> A primary carer provides the <i>majority</i> of the ongoing informal assistance to a person with a disability who has a limitation in one of the core activity areas of self-care, communication or mobility. This student is a primary carer. <input type="checkbox"/> Please provide information on the impact of the student's carer responsibilities on University participation.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Any other comments?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Signature of Health Professional / Practitioner:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>_____</p>

If you don't have your documents yet, still complete step one and two (registering with ELS) while you secure them.

### 5. ELS will send you a link to book in your initial appointment.

This appointment is to discuss your reasonable adjustments and create an Equitable Learning Plan.

### 6. Attend your appointment (online or in-person) where an Equitable Learning Facilitator will complete your registration and create an **Equitable Learning Plan** (ELP) with your reasonable adjustments. Now you can use your educational adjustments!

## Updating your Plan

You do not need to re-register every year, however your Equitable Learning Advisor will regularly review your services. You might need to go for an



appointment to review your plan, and your advisor might ask you to provide updated documentation to receive ongoing support or make changes to your adjustments. If you have had a change of circumstances and need more support, you can always contact ELS for a meeting and/or provide updated documentation.

## Using Your ELP

An Equitable Learning Plan (ELP) is a set of reasonable educational adjustments which has been developed by ELS in collaboration with you.

Once you receive your ELP you should:

- Review it
- Email it to each of your course convenors at the beginning of every term. Their details can be found in the course guides or via the relevant Moodle page.

If your ELP includes an adjustment like an **extension on an assignment** you will need to:

- **email the course convenor at least 24 hours before the deadline.**
- use respectful language, **identify the course code** and **assessment number** and **cc ELS** into the email. **Assignment extensions are not automatically applied.**

You are entitled to the provisions in your ELP. If you have any questions, please email [els@unsw.edu.au](mailto:els@unsw.edu.au)

Remember: **you can still apply for Special Consideration** if you need something that falls outside of your ELP adjustments and timings!

If you require Special Consideration related to the impact of your disability or medical condition, you can provide a specific ELS Special Consideration Form. ELS can provide a generic support document if you do not wish to disclose your condition. This can be in situations such as:

- an exacerbation of your disability
- unexpected treatment or hospitalisation
- increased caring demands for a person with disability.

## TL; DR?

### SHORT SUMMARY:

1. Register using online registration

form (<https://seadu-portal.unsw.edu.au/application/student-registration/Lists/Registrations/NewForm.aspx>)

2. Wait for an email from ELS, then send them supporting documentation from your health care provider, such as the Support Documents Form

(<https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/node/44705>).

3. Attend an appointment with ELS to complete your registration and create your Equitable Learning Plan.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: I have a disability, health condition or I am a primary carer, but I'm not sure what reasonable adjustments I can ask for?**

A: You should apply for adjustments that would help you best. Your health care professional may be able to suggest accommodations that would benefit you.

Adjustments may include: exam adjustments, alternative formatting, note-taking, assistive technology, classwork support, etc.

Below is a list of reasonable adjustments that have been approved for med students in the past:

Classwork/Placement adjustments:

- Flexible hours/reduced daily hours attendance when unable to meet the stated participation requirements of the course.

- Flexible ways to meet course requirements should be considered as a reasonable alternative assessment.
- Rest breaks allowed throughout the day.
- A placement which is closer to your home.
- You may need to arrive late, leave early, or have a break during class.
- Early access to class registration (Good for Year 4).
- A one week extension when required for individual assignments, requested at least 24 hours prior to the due date.
- Be able to have food/medication during class either inside or outside the classroom.

#### Exam adjustments:

- Additional time for take-home exams of under 14 days (25% or nearest full day).
- Student condition impacts their ability to take short faculty-run exams.
- 15 minutes per hour, pro rate, extra time.
  - Extra time for exams is to be used at the student's discretion (reading, writing, resting, medical breaks).
- Snack/medication breaks in an exam.
- Alternative space for formal or faculty run exams, which can be provided in a group or single room.
- Take exam electronically instead of on paper.

This is not a comprehensive list of reasonable adjustments. If you think a specific accommodation would be appropriate for your situation, you should ask for it!

#### **Q: Will my lecturers, tutors or supervisors (etc.) know about my condition if I apply for an ELP?**

A: The nature of your disability will not be disclosed to your lecturers, tutors or other students, or UNSW staff unless you give permission. Some of your tutors etc. may need to know about the type of support you need, however, they will only be notified after you have given your written permission.



**Q: Am I 'disabled enough' for an ELP?**

A: 'Disability' covers a broad array of conditions including physical, neurological, sensory, medical or psychological conditions. A lot of people with disabilities experience either internalised ableism or 'imposter syndrome', especially when they are newly diagnosed. If you think that a certain accommodation would help you, then you should apply for it! You can still apply for an ELP even if you did not disclose your disability on your university application form. If you are still unsure you can always contact the MedSoc Disability Officers to talk it through.

[disability@medsoc.org.au](mailto:disability@medsoc.org.au).

It is always better to have the supports in place and not use them, than to suffer alone!