Information for Doctors

What Are Alternative Study Arrangements ("Nachteilsausgleich")?

RWTH Aachen University ensures that students with a disability and/or chronic illness are not disadvantaged in their studies, but are appropriately supported according to their potential. For this reason, students have the right to apply for alternative study arrangements ("Nachteilsausgleich") in their studies if they have a disability or chronic illness (see Article 3 and Article 20 of Basic Law). Assessments can therefore be adjusted for the needs of individual students and their general study conditions can be improved.

What You Need to Consider

The examination board deciding on alternative study arrangements is usually not comprised of medical doctors. It is therefore important that even medical laypersons understand how the affected individual is restricted in the exam situation by their chronic illness or disability and the associated symptoms, and why alternative arrangements are therefore necessary in order to be able to take the respective exam with equal opportunities to other students.

Examples of Possible Arrangements

• Extension of deadlines (e.g. term papers)
• Modification of mandatory attendance rule
• More time to work during time-dependent academic assessments such as written exams (extending writing time)
• Breaks during a written exam
• Taking the exam in a separate room
• Seat close to the door (e.g. because of frequent bathroom trips)
• Changing the assessment format (e.g. an oral exam instead of a written exam – or vice versa) – it should be noted that the nature of the format must remain the same, which is why the conversion of a written exam into a term paper, for example, is not possible.
• Adapted documents (e.g. enlarged font)
• Use of aids

Structure of the Specialist Medical Certificate

• (Rough) diagnosis & current treatments
• Impairment in the specific study or exam situation
• Symptoms and effects
• Recommendation regarding the type of arrangement (e.g. extension of the working time, breaks, separate room ...)
• Percentages for quantitative data (e.g., writing time extension, breaks)
• Is there likely to be a change in the illness or should the arrangements apply to all exams in the individual’s studies?
Declaration of the Doctor

Ms/Mr __________________________, born __________________________,

Student ID number ____________
of ____________________________________________________

I hereby certify that the individual has the following chronic illness or disability (with ICD classification):
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

The illness results in the following treatments:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

The health impairment has the following impact on the exam:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

This results in the following recommendations for alternative arrangements (with justification):
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

For quantifiable information (e.g., increased working time, breaks), the arrangements are required at ____________ percent.

__________________________
Date, Official Stamp, Doctor’s Signature