

Access Arrangements in Assessment and Examinations

Why Dyslexic Candidates may require Accommodations.

Formal tests and examinations can present challenges for dyslexic candidates. Speed of processing, organising information, sequencing, short term and working memory, reading accuracy and automaticity and fluency in writing can all be particular issues which can prevent the dyslexic candidate from achieving their potential. Visual difficulties in reading on-screen or tracking from one piece of paper to another can cause further problems. Some dyslexic people may have difficulty with legible handwriting. In addition, dyslexic people can be prone to stress, which in turn may exacerbate their difficulties.

Dyslexic candidates in tests and exams will normally require accommodations in order to level the playing field with non-dyslexic candidates. These would be recommended in a professional diagnostic assessment report from either an Educational Psychologist or specialist dyslexia teacher assessor. Accommodations can include extra time (+25% is normal), a reader, a scribe, using a computer instead of handwriting, using assistive software. There may be specific recommendations for particular formats of exam, such as multiple choice and case study exams. Every dyslexic person will have different requirements.

Why dyslexic candidates may need a separate room.

Where a dyslexic candidate is requiring special accommodations, they will need to be examined in a separate room from other candidates, even if they are only entitled to extra time. Many people with dyslexia find it difficult to screen out background noise and visual disturbance, which can impact on concentration. Once concentration is disturbed, it can be very hard to get back on track. Putting a candidate for extra time in the main examination hall could negate the benefits of the extra time with the disturbance caused by the body of candidates leaving at the end of normal time. In addition, some candidates may be particularly susceptible throughout the exam to extraneous disturbance in an examination hall with a large body of candidates.

Practical Tests and Exams.

Accommodations may also apply to practical tests. For example, understanding the instructions for OSCE, (the clinical skills assessment in medical schools) can present particular problems and additional time should be allowed. Videos can present additional problems for those with auditory processing difficulties as they cannot wind back.

Dyslexia as a Disability. Dyslexia is a recognised disability under the Equality Act which requires all organisations to ensure that people with disabilities are not treated unfavourably and are offered reasonable adjustments.

1. The National Curriculum

Assessment tests (known informally as SATs) are administered at the end of Key Stage 2 at 11 years. Notification is required for extra time and other arrangements to the Local Authority or [Standards Testing Agency \(STA\)](#).

Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6)

Details of Access Arrangements can be found in Chapter 5 of [Assessment and Reporting Arrangements](#).

Also further advice on arrangements for [extra time in Key Stage 2](#).

2. Common Entrance Examinations

Parents should discuss special arrangements with the new and existing schools. Senior schools would normally require schools with candidates with a specific learning difficulty or any other special educational need to seek permission from the School for concessions at Common Entrance. An Educational Psychologist or specialist dyslexia teacher report specifying appropriate arrangements should be sent with the special needs report to the new school.

For full detailed information see the section on SpLD candidates at: <http://www.iseb.co.uk/schools.htm>

3. GCSE, GCE 'A' levels and GNVQ Examinations

Full information of Access Arrangements is available on the [JCQ website](#).

For specific queries see [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Applications to the Examination Boards, with the required evidence, must be made by the school in good time.

Where a candidate's normal way of working is on a computer, the use of a computer with spell checker can be considered. A reader or scribe or use of a computer is allowed where this reflects the candidate's normal way of doing school work or exams. However this can also be

allowed in the case of a late diagnosis.

Where a school or college is unwilling to accept supporting evidence or put forward a candidate for access arrangements, they are now required to give reasons.

The school must be able and willing to implement the special arrangements, e.g. supervise candidates for extra time in a separate room and for those using computers.

If a school fails to fully implement agreed access arrangements, the parent can apply for Special Considerations. See chapter 12 of [JCQ Access Arrangements regulations](#)

Any complaints regarding Access Arrangements should be made to the Examination Centre, i.e. the school or college.

For further information see the exam regulator Ofqual:
<http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/for-students-and-parents>.

4. Further and Higher Education

Application for access arrangements can be made to the appropriate examination body or university.

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