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# 2012 – 2013 Update for

## Dyslexia: Assessing the need for Access Arrangements during Examinations

A Practical Guide – Fourth Edition, edited by Anwen Jones

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### Introduction

This document provides a brief commentary on the changes to the JCQ regulations **Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration** for the year 1st September 2012 to 31st August 2013 – “the pink book” as it is often known. It looks at:

- Discussion of substantial adverse effects
- Additional clarity provided in regard to awards of **extra time up to 25%**
- New regulations in regard to the provision and use of **computer readers**
- The fully revised chapter covering the assessment of learning difficulties

It is **imperative** that all professionals concerned with these regulations familiarise themselves with the JCQ regulations directly and in full as these notes are intended to *support*, but in no way replace, the regulations.

Also note this document is a **supplement** to “Dyslexia: Assessing the Need for Access Arrangements during Examinations – 4<sup>th</sup> edition” which provides much greater detail on the range of skills to be investigated, the tests to be used, interpretation of the results, paperwork involved and discussion of the wider issues involved.

- **Substantial Adverse Effect**

As you read the new regulations you will note repeated reference to demonstrating difficulties which have a “substantial adverse effect” or result in a “substantial impairment”. This reflects language in the Equality Act 2010 and reminds all professionals of their duties towards disabled candidates.

However, it is also made clear that this does not mean a candidate must have a formal “disability” to have an access arrangement, nor that a candidate who does have a formal “disability” is *automatically* entitled to a particular arrangement. An individual with dyslexia is not *automatically* entitled to extra time – the need must be shown.

The focus remains on working within the regulations to provide “reasonable” and appropriate arrangements without giving any unfair advantage over any other candidate.

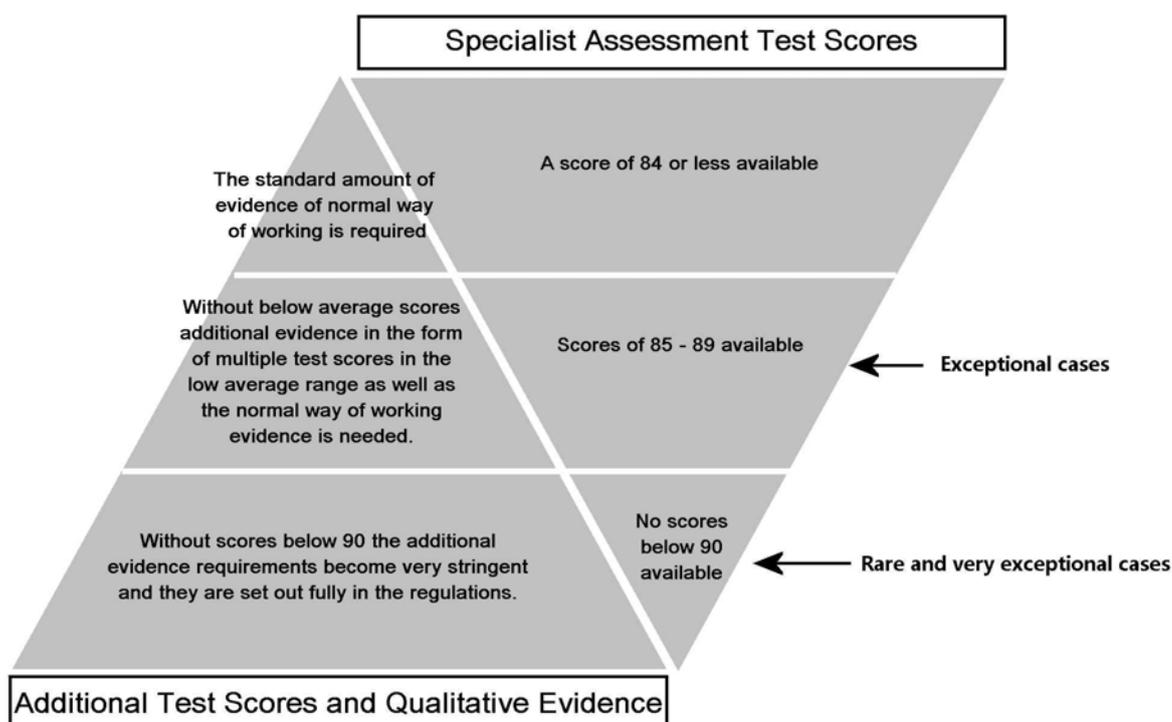
The fundamental practice requirements have not changed.

- **Extra Time up to 25%**

While this is the mostly frequently awarded arrangement it remains the one which often requires the most detailed investigation and joint work by the Centre and specialist assessor to paint the picture of need. The new regulations provide some extensions and additional clarity to previous regulations. However, most of the text given in our 4th edition publication on page 88 still applies.

The JCQ guidance has in recent years had clear guidelines on quantitative (score) evidence and these remain their key measures. In the vast majority of cases those awarded extra time will have reading or writing speeds, or measures of cognitive processing abilities which impact upon speed of working, in the below average range (standardised scores of 84 or less).

The key change is where some limited flexibility is now set out, to allow specialist assessors to build a case for the award of extra time in exceptional cases, if the below average score criteria are not met. Essentially, the spirit of the regulation change is about **balance**. As scores move away from the core criteria of below average scores the degree and weight of evidence required increases. This diagram exemplifies how in the end each candidate demonstrates an equivalent amount of evidence but the type of evidence might vary.



## Normal Way of Working

As the diagram shows, further evidence is always needed to show that using extra time is the candidate's normal way of working, not only in formal examinations but also in day-to-day study activities. For those with below average scores, this can be described within Form 8 in many cases, although not all. The history of need, details of the support currently being provided alongside confirmation that extra time is regularly used in class will suffice. For the exceptional and rare cases the supplementary evidence will include actual documentation to be attached to Form 8. There is no definitive list of evidence, although the regulations give guidance; the Centre must take a practical approach and present a solid case.

## Speed of Working?

The extra time guidance refers to measures of cognitive processing which have an impact on speed of working. Specialist assessors can select those measures that they see as appropriate to evidence the candidates' difficulties but while still paying close attention to ethical and statistical demands to ensure over-testing is not undertaken. Some examples of the type of measures are provided in chapter 4. They include abilities in:

- Phonological awareness
- Working memory (Digit span tests)
- Rapid naming
- Visual processing
- Visual/motor integration abilities

The key question for assessors is 'Does the cognitive difficulty have a substantial adverse effect on the individual's ability to work efficiently?' – the impact must not be minor or trivial.

## When to Assess for Extra Time up to 25%?

It remains the case that specialist assessment data supporting extra time can be drawn from any period within secondary education. However, the regulations now support practice which many have already adopted. Specifically, new elements recommend:

- assessments for extra time are best conducted from year 9 onwards (JCQ page 5)
- specialist assessments are formally re-evaluated when candidates begin an A level course (JCQ page 59)

Do read the extra time case studies in the 2012-13 regulations - they will help!  
(see JCQ page 11-12)

### • Computer Readers

A significant change has been made in regard to the use of computer readers. Reading software is now allowed – even in papers testing reading. The rationale here is that although the candidate is making use of a support tool they are doing so independently. To use a computer reader the candidate must still have a standardised score of 84 or less in an appropriate skill. Do note a **human** reader is still not allowed in papers testing reading.

## Some other key points to note ....

- Centres will be aware of the introduction of specific marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar in certain GCSE subjects. To allow candidates to access these marks assessors might consider a word processor with the spell check disabled, rather than a scribe, if this will meet the candidate's needs.
- Bilingual dictionaries with extra time – further notes on criteria are included. Assessors need to be clear on the source of the need for extra time and evidence it.
- Electronic bi-lingual dictionaries can now be used.
- In a transcript, spelling cannot be corrected.

## • Chapter 4: Learning Difficulties

This chapter discussing the assessment of learning difficulties has been completely updated and re-structured. It sets out the responsibilities of the various parties involved, who can assess and the processes needed. **Heads of Centres and all assessors are advised to read it in full.**

### New term: Specialist Assessor

The 2012/13 regulations introduce a new term – specialist assessor – which encompasses all professionals who conduct testing for access arrangements. There are no longer different rules for teachers and psychologists. All professionals must:

- provide evidence of their qualifications
- use up-to-date tests
- only sign off their own assessments
- report results in line with Centre policy.

For definitions of a “specialist assessor” see page 55 of the new regulations.

### Who Can Assess?

The JCQ has now formally withdrawn its old list of qualifications so the Head of Centre is entirely responsible for deciding who is “appropriate”. However, the JCQ provides a structure for choosing assessors and outlines the skills and/or qualifications they must have – noting a clear preference for assessors to be employed within the Centre.

### Recording Assessors?

The requirements have changed and reporting requirements now depend on the assessor’s qualifications and where they are employed.

For GCSE / GCE Arrangements*	
No need to record on AAO	Record on AAO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriately qualified psychologists - <i>working within the centre</i></li> <li>• Specialist Teachers holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate - <i>working within the centre</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All professionals <i>working outside the centre</i></li> <li>• All specialist teachers who do not hold an Assessment Practising Certificate</li> <li>• All other specialist professionals (e.g specialist teachers of the deaf)</li> </ul>

\* For non GCSE/GCE qualifications – the same principle applies to the completion of Form 8A

### What paperwork should be completed?

The JCQ prefers all centres and all professionals to use Form 8. However, Centres are at liberty to design their own forms – although these must provide the same key information as Form 8. However, individual professionals are not given that same liberty – they should follow the requirements of the Centre (see JCQ page 60). This is designed to support Examinations Officers to easily and consistently collect data and is also needed for JCQ Centre Inspections.

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Update by Anwen Jones and Nick Lait

Note: No responsibility is taken by Patoss, or contributing authors, for any misunderstandings or failures to comply with the JCQ regulations during this or subsequent years.

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# Dyslexia:

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A Practical Guide — **Fourth Edition**

edited by Anwen Jones

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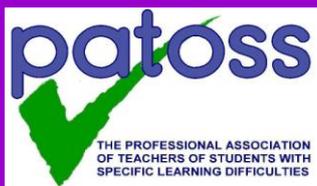
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**Additional guidance for FE**

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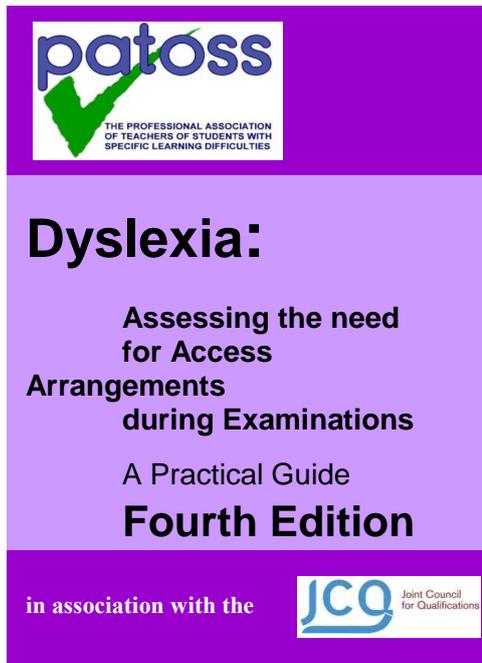


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