

2015/16 Update to:

Dyslexia: Assessing the need for Access Arrangements during Examinations

A Practical Guide – Fourth Edition, edited by Anwen Jones

Introduction

This document provides a brief commentary on the changes to the JCQ regulations “**Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**” since publication in 2011 of “Dyslexia, Assessing the need for Access Arrangements”. It covers essential changes made within the 2015/16 JCQ regulations, which are very minimal. It also summarises some key recent changes from previous years.

The Patoss Guide itself provides much greater detail on the more fundamental aspects of access arrangement work including, for example, the range of skills to be investigated, tests to be used, interpretation of results, and discussion of the wider issues involved.

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

Extra Time

For up-to-date information on awarding extra time please see the regulations but also the JCQ/Patoss Guide to Extra Time available at: www.jcq.org.uk

Oral Language Modifier (OLM)

The criterion for an Oral Language Modifier has been revised this year. The JCQ has highlighted that the award of an OLM should be a “last resort” when other options have proved unworkable for the student. To award an OLM a standardised score of 69 or less relating to a test of reading comprehension or vocabulary must be in evidence, alongside a clear picture of need. As it is such an exceptional arrangement, while the application must still be processed through AAO, the system will automatically reject it and the Centre must make an online referral to the awarding body.

Reading and Writing Support

- Note the change to the availability of computer readers. Reading software is now allowed – even in papers testing reading. This might help a student to show their abilities and allow independent working, so it is worth considering if the student is familiar with the software. However, please note a human reader is still not allowed in papers testing reading.
- If a candidate might qualify for a scribe, in order to access specific marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar in certain GCSE subjects, a word processor with the spell check disabled might be a more appropriate arrangement, if this will meet the candidate’s needs.
- Word processors are available to any candidate for whom this represents their normal way of working within the Centre – as defined in the regulations. Those who have specific learning difficulties might well also be entitled to extra time, alongside the word processor, if warranted by speed of working measures. This might include for example, slow readers or those with significant working memory difficulties.
- Where a transcript is used, spelling cannot be corrected. It is recommended transcripts are used in exceptional circumstances and where only occasional words need to be corrected.

Summary of reading support options and evidence requirements

Increasing severity of need 			
Read aloud or use of coloured overlays	Specialist examination reading pen	Computer Reader	Human Reader
No evidence required		Standardised score of 84 or less	

Summary of writing support options and evidence requirements

Increasing severity of need 		
Word processor with spelling and grammar check switched off	Transcript	Human scribe, speech recognition technology, word processor with spelling and grammar check switched on.
No evidence required as long as arrangement appropriate to student need		Standardised score of 84 or less and/or additional evidence as per regulations

Assessing Candidates and Processing Applications:

Additional notes

- The JCQ has re-enforced its belief that it is important that the SENCO and specialist assessor work together. Section A of form 8 will be completed **prior** to the assessment to help the assessor understand the student's normal way of working and plan the assessment.
- The assessment evidence for 25% extra time, readers and scribes must be drawn from testing conducted **no earlier than the start of year 9**. However, Education, Health and Care plans are acceptable evidence here, as well as any current Statements of SEN, but both must be supplemented by centre-based evidence. (If these formal statements are in hand, there is no need to complete Form 8.)
- When candidates begin an A level course, they do not need to be formally re-assessed for 25% extra time, a computer reader/reader and/or a scribe. However, the SENCO must establish that there is a continuing need. This might be achieved through gathering commentary from teaching staff, mock examinations etc. The SENCO must also prepare a brief summary as per the JCQ regulations. (See page 23, 37 or 49).
- If the student's difficulties are related to medical or psychological impairments, there is no need to complete Form 8.
- Where a supervised rest break is required there is no need to process this through AAO, but the SENCO must present evidence to demonstrate the need is well-established and represents normal way of working.
- **Specialist Assessors** - All professionals must:
 - ✓ provide evidence of their qualifications, which represent a post-graduate qualification (level 7 equivalent) in individual specialist assessment
 - ✓ use age appropriate, nationally standardised, up-to-date tests
 - ✓ only sign off their own assessments
 - ✓ follow the Centre's reporting policy and use Form 8. The form must be dated and signed by hand.

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.
