

St George's, University of London

Procedure for additional assessment and examination arrangements for students with disabilities or Specific Learning Difficulties

2020/21 academic year - notes relating specifically to procedure for additional arrangements for remote/online examinations

Additional arrangements specified on SOSNs will also apply to remote exams

Students requiring readers or scribes will have the option of using assistive technology or a remote support worker, to be arranged with support from the disability service.

In some cases, it may be possible for students to attend an 'in-person' exam as a reasonable adjustment in which case they will still be eligible for any recommended additional arrangements

1. Context and principles

- 1.1 The university has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable adjustments for students so they are not under any disadvantage as a result of impairment
- 1.2 These procedures are prescribed by the Senate in accordance with paragraph 11.10 of the General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study. They cover additional assessment and examination arrangements for students with physical or mental disabilities, sensory impairments (whether temporary or permanent) or Specific Learning Difficulties.
- 1.3 The procedures are designed to make appropriate additional assessment and examination arrangements for disabled students or those with Specific Learning Difficulties, in accordance with SGUL's 'Information for Disabled Students'. The following principles inform the procedures:
 - (a) Additional assessment and examination arrangements enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her true abilities in the prescribed tests.
 - (b) Such arrangements will not give a misleading impression of the candidate's attainment.
 - (c) Any additional provisions made shall not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.
 - (d) Additional assessment and examination arrangements shall be in respect of *how* the test is conducted, and shall not alter *what* is being tested (ie specific practical or cognitive skills and knowledge).

- (e) In a registrable qualification, standards required for fitness to practice shall be adhered to.

2. Procedure for disclosure of disability

- 2.1 Students can disclose a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty at any point during their studies. Ideally, prospective students with a permanent disability or Specific Learning Difficulty should declare this at the time of application to SGUL. This will allow consideration to be given to (a) whether SGUL can meet the applicant's needs to undertake and complete the course (taking into account SGUL's obligations under relevant legislation) and (b) whether, in the case of professional registrable qualifications, the applicant meets the requirements for 'fitness to practice' in those professions. The procedure for this is set out in '[Admission policy and procedure](#)' under 'Students with Disabilities' on the SGUL website.

On acceptance to a programme, an applicant who has declared a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty contacted by the Disability Adviser to discuss additional assessment and examination arrangements and any other reasonable adjustments which may be required during the course of their studies.

- 2.2 Existing students who declare a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty during the course of their studies are required to contact the disability advisor with the appropriate supporting evidence (see below) in order for any reasonable adjustments to be made.
- 2.3 Any student with a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty who wishes to have additional examination arrangements should submit relevant supporting evidence to the Disability Adviser (see below) at least *six weeks* before the student's first examination, except in the case of accidental injury or acute illness near to the time of an examination, when the application should be submitted as soon as possible after the event. It may not be possible to implement additional arrangements where applications are submitted late.
- 2.4 The student must ensure the Disability Adviser is provided with appropriate supporting documentation (see 2.5 - 2.8 below) upon disclosure. The student should allow sufficient time to obtain this in order to comply with the deadline.
- 2.5 In the case of Specific Learning Difficulty (ie: dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD.), the student must provide one of the following documents
- a full diagnostic assessment report from a qualified educational psychologist or specialist teacher covering the information specified in Appendix A.
 - where a diagnostic report is not available, a 'Form 8' access arrangements document dated within 24 months of enrolment and completed by a qualified person following [JCQ guidelines](#) on appropriate testing is acceptable. This type of evidence will potentially qualify students for exam arrangements only.
- 2.6 If the full diagnostic report is lacking the information specified in Appendix A, a new psychological or specialist teacher's report should be obtained, or alternatively, a review assessment completed by an appropriately qualified practitioner. The accepted report, along with any subsequent needs assessment report, will form the

basis of a student's support needs during the course of his or her studies, as agreed between the student and Disability Adviser.

- 2.6a Where a Form 8 only has been submitted, this will qualify the student for the arrangements evidenced on the form. A maximum of 25% additional writing time is permitted in the absence of a full diagnostic assessment.
- 2.7 Where a diagnostic assessment is required, this can usually be arranged by the university disability adviser and will be means tested. Details of this are available in the process for arranging SpLD assessments. Students should seek advice as early as possible and be aware that there may be a waiting list for these assessments. If a student does not wish to wait they are free to arrange for an assessment privately. However, the university will not cover the cost of a privately arranged assessment.
- 2.8 In the case of any other impairment or health condition which results in disability, the student must provide appropriately dated original copies of certification from a registered healthcare practitioner attesting to the nature and impact of the disability, or long term illness. Where a needs assessment report is not available, this certification should also specifically state how the injury or disability will adversely affect the student's ability to perform in an examination.

3. Procedure for determination of additional examination arrangements

- 3.1 After receipt of the relevant supporting evidence the Disability Adviser will create a 'Summary of Support Needs' for the student which will detail recommended reasonable adjustments including additional examination arrangements. The Summary of Support Needs will be shared with relevant members of staff once the student has provided consent.
- 3.2 In the case of temporary injury or illness resulting in a need for additional exam arrangements the student must provide appropriately dated original copies of certification from a registered healthcare practitioner attesting to the nature and severity of the injury or illness. This certification should also specifically state how the injury or illness will adversely affect the student's ability to perform in an examination. This should be submitted directly to the examinations officer who will make any arrangements as deemed necessary.
- 3.3 It should be noted that requests for additional arrangements received within 6 weeks of an examination date cannot be guaranteed and it is strongly advised that students submit requests at the start of the academic year if possible.

4. Principles and guidelines for additional arrangements

- 4.1 The principles stated in paragraph 1.2 above shall guide the Disability Adviser and the Dyslexia Support Tutor in making decisions about additional examination arrangements.
- 4.2 In practice, these principles mean that:

- (i) The original type of assessment prescribed (eg essays, SBAs, OSCEs, SAQs) shall be undertaken by the candidate, albeit with additional arrangements. This may be replaced by an alternative assessment as a reasonable adjustment which tests for the same competencies and which meets the same academic standards, as determined by the relevant course director.
- (ii) Additional time is not normally allowed in tests where a direct observation of a candidate's professional abilities under realistic time constraints is being made (eg, OSCEs, clinical cases), unless timing is not one of the competencies being assessed. The test is designed to replicate everyday clinical practice including managing a realistic workload, so rest breaks are not usually permitted. Where appropriate, however (e.g. restricted mobility), rest periods may be built prospectively in to a practical examination schedule, or other practical assistance provided.
- (iii) Where additional time for examinations is identified in the student's medical/diagnostic evidence, additional reading time for OSCE stations will be offered.
- (iv) Additional examination arrangements will be made based on the recommendations of the accepted supporting evidence where such recommendations are deemed to be reasonable and with the agreement of the disability advisor and at the discretion of the responsible examiner.

4.3 Additional writing time is usually awarded at 25% of the total exam time.

4.4 Students who are awarded rest breaks are permitted to take a maximum of 15 minutes in each hour of an exam. For example, in a three hour exam, a student may take up to 15mins rest break per hour, with a total of 45minutes permitted over the whole exam.

The student should indicate to the invigilator when they would like to take a break. The invigilator will stop the clock at this point. The student should cease writing and turn over any papers. They should then indicate when they will be starting the exam again at which point the clock will be restarted.

4.5 Separate room arrangements will be available for students where this is specifically recommended in the accepted evidence, subject to such facilities being available.

4.6 Extensions for in-course assessments for reasons relating to disability or Specific Learning Difficulty may be given in exceptional cases. Requests for extensions to deadlines are subject to academic discretion. Academics should consult with the Disability Adviser where appropriate. Students should consult their individual course guidelines for information about deadlines and processes when applying for an extension to in-course submission deadline.

4.7 Marking criteria is the same for all students. There is no special consideration given to students with a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty in terms of spelling and grammar. Students are encouraged to make full use of assistive technology and specialist academic skills support prior to the submission of written assignments or sitting examinations.

4.8 If a student is taken ill during an examination they should inform the invigilator immediately who will take the appropriate action. If possible, the student may be

given the opportunity to continue with the exam. Where this is not possible, the student will be informed of the relevant course of action.

5. Notification of additional arrangements and record-keeping

- 5.1 The Disability Adviser or his/her nominee will provide the student with a copy of their Summary of Support Needs which will include any recommended additional examination arrangements and keep a copy on file. Additionally a separate record of all additional examination arrangements shall be kept on file.
- 5.2 A request for additional examination arrangements on the basis of a permanent disability, including Specific Learning Difficulty, shall be approved for the duration of the student's studies at SGUL. In the case of fluctuating conditions (to be determined by the Disability Adviser), such provision shall be approved case by case and subject to annual review. In the case of temporary injury or illness, additional examination arrangements will apply for one examination only or for so long as stipulated in the medical evidence.
- 5.3 Prior to each examination students with additional arrangements will receive email instructions from the examination team detailing the type of arrangements made, including specifying timing of the exam, if appropriate and the venue to attend.

6. Complaints

- 6.1 Students should consult the university Concerns and Complaints Procedure in any of the following circumstances:
 - i) They are dissatisfied with the recommendations for additional arrangements made by the Disability Adviser which are stated in the Summary of Support Needs.
 - ii) They are dissatisfied with the way in which the recommendations in the Summary of Support Needs have been carried out.

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Appendix A – requirements for a full diagnostic assessment report for learning difficulty

For the purposes of paragraph 2.6 of the Procedure, a full psychological assessment report should be provided from a qualified educational psychologist, or specialist teacher/assessor to include the following information:

1. *Cognitive assessments*

- Details of assessments, including methods used and the dates of the assessments.
- To include a test of general intellectual ability.
- Statement of the test results, and interpretation of these in terms of their implications for the candidate's examinations.

2. *Literacy attainments*

- Outline of candidate's history of literacy difficulties, including results of any recent tests of:
 - Reading accuracy and speed
 - Spelling
 - Writing speed and legibility
- Names, dates and 'test ceilings' of standardised tests used
- Interpretation of the results in terms of their implications for the candidate's examinations.

3. *Other information*

- (a) Statement as to whether the candidate has Specific Learning Difficulties.
- (b) If the candidate has Specific Learning Difficulties, details of these and why these are severe enough to warrant additional examination arrangements.
- (c) Whether, in the judgement of the author, there is a significant discrepancy between the reading/writing ability and the reasoning ability of the candidate.
- (d) Any other information to be taken into account, such as normal methods of working, additional arrangements that have been allowed in other examinations, other difficulties such as perceptual, attention or co-ordination disorders, and any other relevant emotional factors.
- (e) Any additional arrangements which in the judgement of the author will allow the candidate to compensate for his or her difficulty while at the same time not giving the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.
- (f) Any additional psychological information to be attached.

4. *Information about the author*

- Name and address
- State whether:
 - A Chartered Educational Psychologist
 - Holds a current practicing certificate issued by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
 - Employed as an Educational Psychologist by a Local Education Authority
 - Other (please specify)

Reports should be forwarded to the Disability Adviser marked 'Strictly Confidential'. They shall be used only for the purposes of assisting a student in the provision of reasonable adjustments including additional examination arrangements. Such reports shall be retained by the Disability Adviser, and shared with others only as stipulated by the student in his or her Disability Support Service Confidentiality Form.

Appendix B – references for relevant research on the impact of additional time in assessments

Ofiesh, N. & Bisagno, J. (2009). Test validity and test accommodations. *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, (15) 3.

Ofiesh, N. (2009). Students with LD and high stakes testing. *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, (15) 3.

Shinn, E. & Ofiesh, N. (2012). Cognitive Diversity and Implications for Test Design. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*. 25 (3), pp. 227-245.

Zuriff, G.E. (2000). Extra examination time for students with learning disabilities: An examination of the maximum potential thesis. *Applied Measurement in Education*, 3, 99-117.