

Extra Time up to 25%

Changes to the 2011/2012 JCO regulations

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) **Do I need a below average score on an assessment of speed (reading speed, reading comprehension, free writing or cognitive processing) in my evidence for a student with learning difficulties to have up to 25% extra time now?**

The short answer is yes, except in very exceptional circumstances when a low average score (85 to 89) might be acceptable if substantial further evidence is available. A new candidate cannot be granted extra time through Access Arrangements Online on the basis of a learning difficulty without a score in the low/below average range on an assessment of speed. The following documents are essential reading to gain a full picture of the current requirements: ¹*Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* JCO 2011/12 p5ff and ²*Dyslexia: Assessing the need for Access Arrangements during Examinations* PATOSS May 2011 p87ff.

- 2) **Do educational psychologists and specialist teachers have to adhere to the new requirements for a below average score alongside a picture of need, or is this just for specialist teachers who assess students for access arrangements?**

The JCO regulations are exactly the same regardless of the qualifications held by the assessor. This is the case for all access arrangements; the candidate must meet the evidence required as detailed in the JCO regulations. Where a report has been commissioned by the parent the centre has a responsibility to show that the requested arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working in the centre. The centre must make a decision whether the request is appropriate, and they make the final decision whether an application will be made through Access Arrangements Online or not.

- 3) I have candidates who already have an approved application for up to 25% extra time, but they wouldn't meet the new criteria as they don't have a below average score on a test assessing speed. Do I need to withdraw extra time for these candidates?**

No, if an application made before 1st September 2011 has been approved it will stand until the expiry date.

- 4) I have tested all my Year 9s and completed Form 8 (or a centre devised equivalent), but the application has not been made through AAO yet. Some of these students do not have a below average score, but they all have evidence of need as required by the 2010/11 JCQ regulations. Do I need to go back and reassess these students?**

If the assessment was conducted and dated prior to 1st September 2011, you may use this specialist assessment data to support an application now without any further testing. However, AAO applications made after 1st September 2011 must follow the regulations in force at the time, so a brief review as applications are made to ensure that a sufficiently full picture of need is available for inspectors, including below average scores (or low average scores with other substantial evidence in very exceptional cases). Please refer to the ¹JCQ regulations and the ²PATOSS book for more information on supplementary evidence which might be used to back up your application in this case.

- 5) I have candidates in Year 11 and 12 who have previously been granted up to 25% extra time for GCSE examinations and used it successfully. However, they do not have a below average score on a test assessing speed and I don't think they will qualify under the 2011/12 regulations.**

As far as your Year 11 GCSE candidates are concerned, it would be improper to withdraw extra time from such candidates who have yet to finish their GCSE course of study. The candidates have had extra time in Year 9 and/or Year 10, and therefore their existing evidence should simply roll forward to Year 11, even if this requires a new application because the 26 months has run out.

For Year 12 candidates remaining in the same centre it would be good practice to re-assess to confirm the continuing need for extra time. This is of course, at present, not mandatory.

Where a candidate remains in the same centre, i.e. an 11 to 18 school, and a previous application has passed the expiry date, the existing evidence from the specialist assessment may roll forward but the centre must make a detailed and compelling case as to why extra time is needed, particularly if the candidate has not been re-assessed. Please refer to the ¹JCQ regulations and the ²PATOSS book for more information on supplementary evidence which might be used to back up your application in this case.

- 6) If an able dyslexic student has an educational psychologist's report showing there to be a very large discrepancy between their ability and results on an assessment of speed (none of which fall below SS 85), will extra time be granted?**

The candidate should not be awarded extra time since their results on an assessment of speed do not fall into the below average category. In very exceptional circumstances if the candidate has crept into the low average band (scores on an assessment of speed of between 85 and 89) then extra time of up to 25% may possibly be awarded. However the centre would have to paint a more compelling picture of need. Please refer to the ²PATOSS book for a more in depth discussion of this scenario.

While considering the need for processing measures, not just attainment scores, it is important to be aware that a discrepancy between underlying ability and attainment or between verbal and non-verbal ability is not sufficient on its own to award extra time. The focus of our attention should be on the evidence of need for extra time rather than such a discrepancy. Please refer to p92ff of the ²PATOSS book for further discussion of this issue.

7) What tests are acceptable to assess speed of reading, writing, processing etc?

There are a limited number of tests on the market which assess the time it takes a student to complete certain tasks, giving a standardised score showing their speed in relation to their peers. Please refer to the ²PATOSS book or the ³Test Information CD available from Communicate-ed for lists of appropriate assessment materials. Please note however that it is not just any below average standardised score that is required here – there is a distinction to be made between tests of speed and tests of other skills.

Many tests assess the ability to read or spell, but not the time the student takes to demonstrate that ability. For example the ⁴WRAT 4 single word or reading comprehension tests assess reading accuracy and comprehension. A below average score gives no indication of the speed at which the candidate completes these tasks. Such scores can be used as evidence for a reader, but cannot be used as evidence for extra time. The same goes for a below average spelling score, which might indicate the need for a scribe, but is not evidence for extra time. What is needed in these cases are further tests of speed of reading, reading comprehension, writing or other processing measures. With regard to writing speed, below average words per minute measures (for example as provided in the ⁵Allcock Group and Individual Assessment of Writing Speed) are acceptable as well as standardised scores.

A common method of assessing whether a student reads slowly is to allow students an extra 25% on the standard time allowed to complete a timed reading test, asking them to change the colour of their pen when the initial time is up. The assessor then calculates their score with and without the extra time. If the score has improved **significantly** in the extra time this may be used as supplementary evidence for extra time for reading. This method is not an exact science and gives the comparison of 2 scores rather than a standardised score specifically for speed. It can therefore be used as supplementary evidence in a report recommending up to 25% extra time, but does not provide the required below average score on its own.

- 8) I have an EP report on file from year 7 which states that this candidate has a learning difficulty. However, there is no specific below average score assessing speed. I am not a specialist teacher. Can I carry out a test (for example the ⁶Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting) demonstrating the below average score and add this to the EP report as evidence for extra time, or must the below average score been obtained by a recognised specialist?**

In this situation, where no below average speed score is quoted in the original report, a new assessment of speed (which shows a below average score) must be carried out by a recognised specialist. However, where an EP or specialist teacher report (or a Statement of SEN) diagnosing a learning difficulty (since the start of year 7) exists which does include the required below average standardised score on an assessment testing speed, updating of evidence to show the continuing need for extra time can be carried out by a non specialist under the supervision of a specialist. The findings should be reported in section A of Form 8. Please refer to the ¹JCQ regulations and the ²PATOSS book for more information about supplementing a report produced early in the student's secondary schooling.

- 9) Why doesn't AAO reflect this change to the 2011/12 regulations? I have to give a specific score in the below average range in an application for a reader, and I have to state that the candidate writes in the below average range in an application for a scribe for slow writing speed, but I am not asked about this in an application for extra time.**

As the requirement for a below average score on a test assessing speed is so recent, AAO has not yet been updated to reflect the change. The JCQ wishes to give centres time to become aware of the new requirements and for new practice to become embedded. It is possible that a change will be made to AAO in time for the 2012/13 academic year.

However, when an application is made through AAO the centre is agreeing that the evidence they hold complies with the current JCQ regulations. Failure to comply with the regulations will be considered as centre maladministration which may impact on the candidate's result(s).

References:

- 1) *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* Joint Council for Qualifications 2011: www.jcq.org.uk
- 2) *Dyslexia: Assessing the need for Access Arrangements during Examinations* Anwen Jones (ed) PATOSS May 2011: www.patoss-dyslexia.org
- 3) Test Information: information about 40+ tests suitable for use in assessments for Access Arrangements: www.communicate-ed.org.uk/26.html or email: resources@communicate-ed.org.uk
- 4) Wide Range Achievement Test - 4th Edition: Wilkinson, G. and Robertson, G. (2006) Psychological Assessment Resources Inc.
- 5) Group and Individual Assessment of Handwriting Speed: www.patoss-dyslexia.org/Handwriting_speedtest.html
- 6) Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting: Barnett, A, Henderson, S, Scheib, B and Schulz, J (2007)