

2017/18 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 2017/18 JCQ regulations, which are fairly minimal. Updates from previous years are also available on the Patoss website: www.patoss-dyslexia.org

The Patoss Guide itself provides much greater detail on the more fundamental aspects of access arrangements 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. **Please note** that a fully updated Patoss Guide will be published in 2018.

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.

Deadline for applications

The deadline for submitting online applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications is 21st February for the June examination series. However, late applications can be accepted for candidates who have a temporary injury or impairment, a late diagnosis of a disability, or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability after the published deadline. Evidence of need will still be required for any late applications and may be subject to scrutiny by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Where an existing approved application will expire prior to or during the June 2018 examination series, and the candidate is studying at the same qualification level, the application can be re-processed once it has expired, after 21 February 2018.

25% Extra time

Where a candidate has at least one below average standardised score (84 or below) relating to speed of working (as set out on JCQ page 22), the SENCo must keep detailed centre-based evidence of need on file to accompany the completed Form 8, signed data protection notice and AAO Approval Notice. The evidence could include, for example, mock exam or test papers showing the application of extra time or feedback from subject teachers and/or support staff.

In exceptional circumstances, two low average standardised scores (85 to 89) can be used as assessment evidence for 25% extra time. However, the scores must now relate to two different areas of speed of working. A detailed picture of need, see JCQ page 25, is still required to supplement the completed Form 8.

In rare and very exceptional circumstances, a cluster of at least three standardised scores just within the mid average range (90 to 94) can be used as assessment evidence for 25% extra time. These must now relate to three different areas of speed of working. In addition, the candidate must have a diagnostic assessment report from no earlier than Year 9 that confirms a significant learning difficulty or disability. Substantial centre-based evidence must be kept on file for inspection purposes, see JCQ page 25, to supplement the completed Form 8 and the diagnostic assessment report.

Extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time)

The assessment criterion for extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time) has not changed this year. However, the JCQ continues to highlight that the award of extra time of up to 50% is an exceptional arrangement and that there must be a strong justification as to why more than 25% extra time is required, including a substantial body of centre based evidence. For the overwhelming majority of candidates with cognition and learning needs who require extra time, 25% will be sufficient.

As extra time of up to 50% is an exceptional arrangement, while the application must still be processed through Access Arrangements Online (AAO), the system will automatically reject it and the centre must make an online referral to the relevant awarding body/bodies.

Computer reader/reader

Computer reader and reader have now been merged into one single arrangement. There is no longer a requirement to apply for each one separately.

In a paper, or a section of a paper, testing reading, a reader cannot be used. The candidate may have up to 50% extra time in place of the reader.

A computer reader or an examination reading pen can be used in a paper, or a section of a paper, testing reading. However, the candidate cannot additionally have up to 50% extra time in place of the reader.

The JCQ provides a reminder that a below average standardised score for reading comprehension can be used as assessment evidence for a computer reader/reader but not as evidence for 25% extra time.

A below average standardised score for reading fluency, reading speed or speed of reading comprehension can be used to award a computer reader/reader and/or extra time as all are measures of speed.

The results of a test of reading fluency (a measure which combines text-level speed and accuracy) may be recorded within Section C of Form 8 under reading speed.

Examination on coloured/enlarged paper

Coloured/enlarged paper is now a centre-delegated access arrangement. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement and there is no need to make an application via Access Arrangements Online.

The centre is permitted to open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the examination. Prior permission is not required.

However, to ensure better print quality and reduce the possibility of human error when collating and stapling, the JCQ recommends that a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper is ordered to print from directly.

A non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper may be used in conjunction with an on-screen/virtual coloured overlay.

Assessing Candidates

The JCQ continues to re-enforce the importance of the SENCo and assessor working together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. Before the assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. Section A of Form 8.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used as evidence for access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application via Access Arrangements Online. The assessor must have at least a 'skeleton' Section A prior to the assessment.

An independent assessor must contact the centre before the assessment takes place and request evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information.

Criteria for Assessors

The three categories of assessor continue to be as follows:

- a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate;
- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council;
- an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment*.

* The reference to at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment would include lecture, seminar and tutorial time, study time, assessment time and time spent completing assignments.

Courses which are accredited at AMBDA or APC Level would meet this requirement, as would post-graduate courses at or equivalent to Level 7 which provide a qualification in access arrangements assessment.

Evidence of all assessors' qualifications must be held on file within the centre and presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. Evidence may include a screen shot of an assessor's listing on the SASC, HCPC or Patoss website, or a copy of the assessor's qualification certificate.

JCQ Form 8

There have been some amendments to JCQ Form 8 for the 2017-18 academic year. However, the information to be recorded within Sections A, B and C has not changed from previous years.

In Section A, there is additional clarification about the centre-based information needed in each of the three boxes.

In Section C, there is additional information to remind assessors and SENCos of the access arrangements that areas of testing can provide assessment evidence for.

Assessors and SENCos need to ensure they are using the updated Form 8 from 1st September 2017.

Update by Lia Border 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.
