

INFORMATION SHEET

EXAM CONCESSIONS GCSE/GCE

Taken from RNIB: Exam Arrangement Course on Tuesday 16th January 2018.

- Always refer to the 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' document online. Changes from last year are highlighted.
- SENCOs must apply for non-standard concessions themselves on headed paper and provide/hold evidence that supports the special arrangements. There is more emphasis on assessing needs via (school/college) centre-based evidence. The SENCO must also make file notes about why supervised rest breaks are required, their frequency and duration
 - SENCOs can incorporate evidence from teachers and TAs
 - Inspectors will ask to see SENCOs (or SLT members) if the centre is a concern (e.g. higher or lower number of concessions applied for than expected). They have to be satisfied that VI students have no advantage over sighted peers
 - SENCO must have evidence that it is the normal way of working
 - QTVI letters/reports can contribute to SENCO's evidence
 - If there is a Statement/EHCP confirming a sensory impairment attach evidence to it (near end of Section 5.5.4 bottom of page 35 of JCQ document)
 - Evidence of reading speed is NOT required as the medical information about the visual impairment is sufficient
 - Evidence is not required for enlarged print (EP) or modified large print (MLP) alone, but is required for rest breaks, extra time, a reader, scribe or practical assistant
 - The standard extra time for Braille is 50%. More than that is a special request
 - All awarding bodies offer size 18 on A4, size 24 on A3 and size 36 on A3. Most will provide size 24 on A4 (check first). All provide Braille papers in Grade 2 SEB or UEB.
 - Papers as A4 MLP in pdf cannot automatically be ordered electronically. Approach the exam board and request it separately (order standard MLP, then request A4 version)
 - You can enlarge an electronic version on the candidate's screen (if available – check with exam board)
 - Students can use both standard and MLP papers; they must be glued together and submitted with an explanatory note
 - If enlarging A4 onto A3, schools now have 90 minutes to do this (if early opening has been applied for). Previously it was 60 minutes
 - No underlining or highlighting is permitted
 - It is school's responsibility to transcribe Braille answer papers into print immediately after the exam, before they are submitted to the exam board. Music Braille has to be transcribed into stave notation
 - Complete cover sheets to explain special circumstances
 - Check extra time is appropriate; if candidate repeatedly finishes before their extra time is up, schools may need to revise the amount of time applied for. Also, some students changed their answers (to their detriment) by having too much time available, then doubting themselves. Extra time may differ from subject to subject, according to need
 - Word-processed exam scripts must have a header, footer and cover sheet
 - The PC/laptop/tablet used cannot have any data stored, no spell check, no access to drives or the internet. It should be used as a typewriter only. It may be easier to use a 'clean' laptop and download a 30-day trial of Super Nova
 - Approved arrangements last for 26 months.

Extra Notes from presentation by Nick Lait, JCQ. (January 2017)

Rest Breaks

- SENCo must quantify (with evidence) how long and how often rest breaks should be in exams. This may vary between subjects for an individual student. SENCo must also balance the needs of the student with the constraints of invigilation and finishing the exam
 - * The purpose of a rest break is to recoup energy (not to think about the answer to a question they have just read)
- Exam arrangements requested must be backed up with evidence of usual practice for the candidate. Each subject should be treated separately once requesting more than 25% extra time
- On-line applications must be submitted
 - Straightforward requests, usually granted, include:
 - Bi-lingual dictionary with 10% extra time
 - Computer reader
 - Exam on coloured/enlarged paper
 - 25% extra time
 - Reader
 - Scribe
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 - Requests with the following are initially declined (an automatic response):
 - Extra time over 25% (if over 50%, SENCo must provide evidence: address 8 key questions on Page 30 of JCQ regs)
 - Practical assistant in practical assessments
 - Practical assistant in written papers
 - Other (specific arrangements like using plain paper instead of squared in Maths, or needing background music whilst working to help with mental health issues)Schools must then refer to the specific awarding bodies for guidance (usually an application is made on school headed paper, signed by the SENCo or a member of the SMT)
 - Transcripts of students' poor handwriting are no longer allowed (word-process answers or use a scribe)

For ideas on how to plan ahead for exams and supporting students with a VI, look at suggestions on Insight (RNIB) as follows:

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/services-we-offer-advice-professionals-education-professionals/access-exams-and-tests>

