



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority

Assessment for disabled students: an international comparison

QCA briefing document

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Introduction

This paper provides a briefing on assessment arrangements for disabled students in various countries. The briefing is based on research using international networks and literature. The focus of this briefing is on assessment in secondary education and disabilities. However, references to dyslexia, as requested, and primary education, where relevant and noteworthy, have also been included.

An enquiry was sent to two international networks: Eurydice¹ and INCA². Analysis of responses³ to this request was combined with further detail on selected countries drawn from an internet-based literature review⁴. The countries included in this briefing include:

- Australia
- Canada
- Czech Republic
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Italy
- Japan
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Singapore
- Slovenia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- USA.

In some countries with federal systems, the information provided relates education systems that are substantially organised at sub-national level. Australia therefore includes: New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania; Canada includes: Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan; and USA includes: Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Texas and Wisconsin.

This briefing therefore provides details of assessment arrangements for disabled students in 25 countries and a selection of states, territories and provinces. There are two main sections to this briefing: 'Control, terminology and mainstreaming' (structured country by country) and 'Changes to assessment arrangements' (a comparative analysis).

¹ The European Commission's information network on education in Europe: www.eurydice.org

² QCA's international curriculum and assessment network and website: www.inca.org.uk

³ INCA/Eurydice colleagues at NFER compiled the network responses (Annex A).

⁴ QCA commissioned the literature review from Ward Educational Consulting (Annex B).

Control, terminology and mainstreaming

In order to preserve the detailed, contextual information yielded by the research, the findings in this section are structured country by country. Where available, there is information on the level of control of assessment arrangements, on the inclusion of disabled students in 'mainstream' assessments, and on the terminology employed in each country (roughly equivalent to 'reasonable adjustments' in England but not always based on statute). Some examples with further detail are provided in text boxes.

In Australia, through voluntary coordination at national level, individual states have agreed that there should be 'special consideration procedures'. These aim to provide 'all students with the opportunity to show what they know and can do'. It appears to be the case that disabled students generally take the mainstream assessments.

In Australia, the Queensland Studies Authority varies examination conditions for students who have a recognised disability that would affect their result if they were to sit an examination under standard conditions. Candidates can gain special consideration through an application process. Documentary evidence must be provided that describes the disability (or injury or illness) and explains how it would affect their examination performance. There were also references to the need for documentary evidence in Netherlands, New Zealand and Singapore. In Texas, Saskatchewan, Singapore and South Africa, the arrangements made for assessments should reflect the arrangements present during learning.

In Canada, responsibility for education rests with provinces/territories but they cooperate, for example through the Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme for 13 year-olds (PCAP-13). The aim is to include all pupils in the national PCAP-13 tests by enabling schools to make 'accommodations'. Provinces/territories are responsible for their own testing programmes. Disabled students are also included in province/territory assessments through 'accommodations' (Alberta), 'adaptations' (British Columbia) and 'special provisions'/'accommodations' (Saskatchewan). In Alberta, students may be excused assessments if accommodations would be insufficient for the disability or fail to prevent harm.

In the Czech Republic, there are no national assessments at primary or lower-secondary level. There are national regulations for the organisation of upper-secondary exams, but headteachers have responsibility for the content and

implementation. A new system of upper-secondary exams is being developed for implementation around 2010. This new system 'will include examinations for pupils with special educational needs'. It is unclear whether this means there will be alternative assessments or modified assessments for disabled students.

On the basis of national assessment guidelines in Finland, schools determine their own set of guidelines for their teachers' assessment of pupils, including those with disabilities. Pupils with special needs have an individual education plan. This defines whether they will be assessed in relation to the national core curriculum with methods that enable them to demonstrate their attainment, or assessed in relation to an individualised programme of study, possibly verbally. At post-compulsory level, 'allowances are made for the hindrances to learning resulting from the pupil's disability or disorder'.

In Hungary, special arrangements for disabled students are regulated centrally (by legislation and government decree). Educational providers (usually the local government or local authority) must ensure provision in accordance with this central legislation.

In Hungary, a reportedly controversial new measure was also introduced following legislation passed in 2006. This arrangement allows disabled students an additional eight points in the entrance examination for institutions of higher education. This is reported to be a significant advantage and has caused considerable debate.

In Japan, education is organised at national level. Where possible, students in special schools take the same assessments as students in mainstream schools. Assessment arrangements for disabled students are designed to reflect individual needs.

In Lithuania, assessment arrangements for lower-secondary assessments and upper-secondary school leaving exams, for pupils who have a statement of their special educational needs, are determined by requirements set out by the national ministry.

It was reported that no special arrangements are made for the assessment of disabled students in Luxembourg. It is unclear whether these students are subject to alternative assessments or continuous teacher assessment.

In the Netherlands, national policy aims to integrate students with special needs into mainstream schools with additional support, wherever possible. Disabled students may therefore take the mainstream assessments and arrangements may be modified in response to disabilities. Assessment arrangements are set at institutional level. Headteachers can give a disabled pupil permission to take part, either fully or partially, in the examinations process, and can adapt the process to the pupil's needs. In such cases, the headteacher decides how the examination will take place, but must inform the inspectorate of the decision.

In the Netherlands national policy is moving away from the existing concept of special education and towards a new concept of 'suitable education'. This means analysing pupils' strengths and weaknesses in order to select an appropriate education pathway and qualification.

In New Zealand, an independent national authority sets examinations and assessments. This authority sets the rules for 'special assessment conditions', which are available through its application procedure. These special assessment conditions are for students who might be disadvantaged in an external assessment by a long-term condition or learning difficulty.

In Portugal, all students have a 'guaranteed right' determined by the national curriculum regulations to participate in all forms of assessment. Special arrangements are made so that pupils with disabilities can be included in these assessments.

In Singapore, the national ministry determines overall policy and the single awarding body sets out detailed regulations for assessment arrangements. Applications for special arrangements are made through the student's school in the first instance. Students with special needs may be educated in special schools, or in mainstream schools with additional support. Similarly, some students take the mainstream assessments, 'where appropriate'.

In Slovenia, the central examinations commission usually grants 'accommodations' following the approval of a local school examinations committee.

In Switzerland, education is organised across the 26 cantons and varies accordingly. However, there has been a tendency to integrate pupils with special needs into mainstream schools during compulsory education. Assessment is usually formative

rather than summative but continuous assessment of performance is very similar for students with and without a disability. In some forms of vocational training, disabled students can apply for 'a final exam that is adapted to their needs'.

In the US, federal law requires states to provide 'accommodations' for disabled students. However, if an assessment would be inappropriate regardless of accommodations, then a student may be exempted. In these few cases, alternative forms of assessment must be used so that results are reported for all students for accountability purposes. At sub-national level, states determine the eligibility criteria for accommodations, the nature of those accommodations, and the form of alternative assessments.

In the US, it has not been permissible since 2003 to flag 'scores obtained under special conditions' in the SATs taken at the end of high school. Similarly, in Queensland, Australia the Senior Certificate that marks the end of upper-secondary education and provides a basis for university entrance is issued without reference to special consideration. In Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Slovenia, adjustments are not or not generally noted on students' certificates. In Singapore, by contrast, such arrangements are detailed on the Primary School Leaving Exam certificate. Similarly, in Finland the 'adaptations' for assessments at primary and secondary level are noted on the student's certificate of achievement.

Changes to assessment arrangements

This section focuses on changes to arrangements for mainstream assessments but some information about assessment exemptions is also included. The section begins by outlining assessment arrangements for disabled students across the countries. It shows that there is some variation in the types of disabilities for which assessment arrangements can be changed, and some variation in the types of assessment arrangements that are permitted or encouraged in relation to disabilities. It makes clear that while some arrangements are present in several countries, others are limited to a few or single countries. For convenience, a distinction is made between students with sensory disabilities and students with physical or cognitive disabilities. The section goes on to treat assessment arrangements for students with dyslexia separately. Finally, the section describes an existing typology for ‘accommodations’ and successfully applies it to policies in each of the countries.

Some systems, such as New South Wales or Alberta, emphasise the arrangements that may be permitted rather than the disabilities for which provision may be made. In such cases, it has sometimes been possible to infer the disability to which a specified arrangement relates. On the other hand, Quebec, for example, prescribes a list of disabilities for which applications to the ministry for ‘special measures’ can be made. The nature of these measures was not clear, but applications appear to be decided on case-by-case basis.

Sensory disabilities

There are often assessment arrangements specifically for visually- or hearing-impaired students, which usually take the form of changes to the way the assessment is presented to candidates or the ways in which they may respond. These arrangements may take the form of Braille papers, large print papers, a reader, audio playback, a writer (scribe or amanuensis), audio recording of oral responses, use of headphones, a sign-language interpreter, or additional time.

Additional arrangements for visually- or hearing-impaired students in evidence in a few or individual countries are: special lighting (Tasmania), coloured paper (New South Wales and New Zealand), word-recognition software (British Columbia), ‘acoustically appropriate spaces’ (Finland), a CD and screen reader (Hungary),

audio-loops (Norway) and adapted questions (Tasmania, Gauteng). Tasmania permits questions on exam papers to be re-worded for students with severe hearing impediments. In contrast, British Columbia's procedures proscribe changes to the content of assessments such as 'paraphrasing, rewording, clarifying or explaining exam questions'. Similarly, Massachusetts proscribes any accommodations that 'alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase or eliminate any test item or reading passage'.

The Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA) commended the **South African province of Gauteng** on its 'assessment concessions' for deaf students: 'The Gauteng Department of Education makes provision for adaptations in Senior Certificate exam papers for all subjects, which are written by deaf learners. The language use in these exam papers is adapted so that the content is more accessible. However, the content is not different from that of the 'mainstream' papers. Inappropriate questions are replaced with different questions, eg questions that require knowledge of sound. This is done in conjunction with the internal moderators, thus maintaining the standard. Therefore DeafSA regards this practice as an example of reasonable accommodation related to equity and equality'.

Physical and cognitive disabilities

There are often arrangements for students with physical and cognitive disabilities but these were perhaps slightly less in evidence than arrangements for sensory disabilities. However, many countries allow students to use computers, recorders or similar aids to respond to questions. Additional time, supervised rest breaks and permission to stand up, stretch or move around are also frequently available. Several countries also make provision for a different test centre for a student to be assessed at, if they are unable to attend the usual place of examination. Some countries make provision for seating that ensures students can take their medication. Other changes to assessment arrangements in individual countries include individual supervision (New South Wales), prompters to keep students on task (Singapore and Malta), and spellchecker software (British Columbia).

British Columbia provides a technical case study. Adaptations which may be permitted for those with a specific learning disability, but require Ministry approval and a very precise definition of the disability, are:

- Word recognition software or a reader for those with a decoding or reading rate disability, where there is a significant discrepancy between a measure of decoding and/or reading rate and either verbal ability (eg verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required)
- Voice-activated software or a scribe for those with a written expression disability; this should be evidenced by a significant discrepancy between an achievement measure of written expression, writing speed or visual-motor integration and either verbal ability (eg verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required)
- Spellchecker (hand-held or computer with spellchecker without grammar option) for those with a spelling disability, where there is a significant discrepancy between a measure of spelling and either verbal ability (eg verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required).

In addition to the changes to assessment arrangements described above, some countries permit alternative modes of assessment to be used for disabled students in general. These were referred to in the information relating to Canada, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Slovenia and the USA. In Ontario, specific information was available. Teachers may use the full range of pupils' work to make an assessment of their attainment.

Dyslexia

In Finland, information was available in relation to assessment arrangements specifically for dyslexic students. When these students are assessed on their listening comprehension, a recording with longer pauses is used. This implies that the schedule and/or setting is changed. A further arrangement relates to the requirement for responses in ink in written tests. Dyslexic students are 'exempted'

from this requirement. In Texas, a specific reference to students with dyslexia was found – dyslexic students may be allowed an oral administration of some tests. In the Netherlands, specific provision for dyslexia takes the form of additional time (up to 30 minutes), large print papers or other formats, such as recorded or oral examinations.

Assessment exemptions

Exemptions from some assessments for disabled students are permitted in certain countries, such as Germany, Greece and Latvia. In Queensland, exemption is permitted if there is enough alternative evidence of students' assessment. In Greece, students with visual impairment, a physical disability or dyslexia take oral examinations. Hearing- and speech-impaired students only take written examinations. In Finland and Lithuania, hearing-impaired students are exempt from listening comprehension exams. In Lithuania specifically, students can also be exempted from some aspects of a marking scheme. When assessing the scripts of hearing-impaired students, confusion between some letter couples (for example, p and b) is not counted as an error. When assessing the scripts of visually-impaired students, confusion between some pairs of letters is not counted as an error (for example, p and d).

Assessment equity and validity

Issues relating to assessment equity and validity were apparent in the information gathered for the countries. It seems then that several countries are very conscious of issues relating to equity and validity.

On the one hand, equity is emphasised, in terms of equality of opportunity. In Finland, the policy states that assessment methods should enable students to demonstrate their capabilities and performance as well as possible. In Singapore, special arrangements are designed to ensure students are not disadvantaged by factors irrelevant to the assessed constructs. In Australia, the purpose of special consideration procedures is to give all students the opportunity to show what they know and can do.

On the other hand, validity is emphasised, notably in regard to assessments of reading and writing. In Texas, it is stated that, while accommodations can reflect those present during teaching, they must not make the test invalid. Therefore no

assistance is permitted in the reading of test papers that assess reading or writing. Similarly, in Queensland there are restrictions on special considerations in reading and writing tests because 'one of the characteristics of the test is that the candidate sitting the test does the required reading and writing'. The test is therefore not produced in Braille and the use of a scribe, reader, interpreter, dictionary or voice-recognition technology is not permitted. In Australia, the states and territories have agreed that, in the interests of fairness to all students, certificates must show what the student did do, not what the student might have done in other circumstances.

In Alberta, schools make requests for the use of specific accommodations from the ministry, which grants these requests on a case-by-case basis, presumably to assure both validity and fairness.

In Hungary the award of additional marks to disabled students has been seen as providing a significant advantage over other students. This contrasts with the principle in Norway and legislation in Slovenia that accommodations should not lead to such an 'unfair' advantage.

Typology

In the US, one author has developed a typology of assessment 'accommodations' for disabled students:

- presentation accommodations: changes made to the presentation of the test or test directions such as large print versions, Braille versions, sign language translations, or reading aloud
- response accommodations: changes made to the way students respond to a test question or prompt, such as allowing a student to indicate an answer by pointing or gesturing, using a scribe to record written answers, and technological recording methods
- setting accommodations: changes to the testing environment or location, such as administering the test in small groups, individually, or even at a student's home
- scheduling accommodations: described as changes in the timing or scheduling of testing, such as extending the length of given time for the test to be completed and allowing testing breaks⁵.

⁵ Hopper M F (2001), *The implications of accommodations in testing disabled students*: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED463627>

It proved possible to assign almost all of the various assessment arrangements for disabled students in each of the countries to this typology of accommodations.

	Presentation	Response	Scheduling	Setting
Australia	•	•	•	•
Canada	•	•	•	•
Czech*	-	-	-	-
Finland	•	•	•	•
France	•	•	•	•
Germany	•	•	•	
Greece	•	•	•	
Hungary	•	•	•	
Iceland	•		•	•
Italy ⁶				
Japan	•	•	•	•
Latvia	•		•	
Lithuania	•	•	•	
Luxembourg	•		•	•
Malta	•	•	•	
Netherlands	•	•	•	
NZ	•	•	•	
Portugal	•	•		
Singapore	•	•	•	
Slovenia	•	•	•	
South Africa	•	•	•	
Spain	•	•	•	
Sweden*	-	-	-	-
Switzerland*	-	-	-	-
USA	•	•		

* In Czech Republic Sweden and Switzerland, continuous teacher assessment generally provides the basis for qualifications. It is therefore expected that teachers will take account of the needs of all pupils on an individual basis.

⁶ Disabled students may make use of 'aids' during tests but these were unspecified.

For France, 'setting accommodation' refers exclusively to the requirement that the setting for the assessment is accessible to disabled students, and that arrangements for individuals are put into place. The scheduling accommodation refers to the provision for extending the duration of timed tests, for staggering assessments over several sessions, and for the results of completed units of assessment remaining valid for up to five years. The research also found that tests themselves may be adapted, although it is unclear precisely how and for which disabilities.

There were just a few types of assessment arrangement that did not readily lend themselves to the typology. The modified or simplified instructions and questions for disabled students in Canada (Ontario), South Africa (Gauteng) and Singapore appear to be qualitatively different to accommodations relating merely to 'presentation'. The use of 'prompters' in Singapore and Malta, whose role is to encourage students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) to remain on task, intercedes between 'presentation' and 'response', and does not appear to fit into either type.

Overall though, the available information shows that all of the countries make presentation accommodations and most of them make response or scheduling accommodations as well. Setting accommodations, however, were much less apparent.

Limitations

This paper has outlined assessment arrangements for disabled students and examined the level of control of these arrangements. It has identified a typology for changes to assessment arrangements that are intended to create an equitable test situation for disabled students. It was then possible to apply this typology to the policies identified in each of the countries. Patterns of provision have been identified and a variety of policies have been highlighted as examples. Depending on precise areas of interest, further work could gather more information about policies and, in particular, their evaluation.

This paper has focused on assessment arrangements for disabled students and has also provided some information relating to dyslexia. The information gathered for several of the countries suggests that policy-makers have given consideration to the broader applicability of changes to, or exemptions from, these arrangements. Further international work could analyse assessment policies relating to students with special educational needs more generally.

Annex A – Responses from the INCA and Eurydice networks

Annex B – Literature review of selected countries

Context

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England is interested in assessment and examination arrangements for pupils with disabilities. An enquiry was placed to the Eurydice Network on education in Europe seeking answers to the following questions:

1. In your country, are there any assessment arrangements that are specifically for pupils with disabilities who are taking general school qualifications? If so, please provide details of these arrangements and the disabilities for which they are provided. For example, the provision of examination papers in Braille for visually impaired pupils or additional time for dyslexic pupils.
2. Which of these arrangements, if any, are centrally regulated or controlled? Which of these arrangements, if any, are locally regulated or controlled? Which of these arrangements, if any, are determined by schools?

The report which follows is an edited summary of the responses received from 10 countries. The Appendix contains some additional responses received to an enquiry which was put to the Eurydice Network by the Irish Unit in 2004. This asked about the types of special arrangements for pupils with disabilities and whether the special arrangements were recorded on a student's certificate.

Czech Republic

Regulations for the assessment of pupils are uniform throughout the Czech Republic. School headteachers have to provide conditions appropriate to the educational needs of all pupils.

Although there are currently no national examinations at primary or lower secondary level, when assessing pupils with special educational needs, the nature of their disability must be taken into account. The regulations for final upper secondary level examinations (usually taken at age 19) state only when the examinations will take place and determine the organisation and general composition of the examinations. The actual content of and implementation of the examinations are the responsibility of the headteacher.

A new system of final upper secondary examinations is currently being developed. This will include examinations for pupils with special educational needs. The new system is unlikely, however, to be implemented before 2010/2011.

Finland

The National Core Curriculum prescribes only the general principles and procedures for pupil assessment. On the basis of these national pupil assessment guidelines, individual schools determine their own set of guidelines for pupil assessment. This includes assessment and examination arrangements for pupils with disabilities.

The principles for assessment of a pupil who has been enrolled in or transferred into special needs education are defined in the individual education plan (IEP). If the IEP has established that the pupil should follow a programme of study which complies with the National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, the pupil's performance is assessed in relation to the general curriculum objectives and the expected levels of performance. In carrying out any assessment, methods should be used to enable the pupil to demonstrate his or her capabilities and performance as well as possible. Such methods may include:

- Providing the pupil with a reader/assistant. Such assessments must be video-recorded.
- Allowing the use of adaptive equipment.
- Allowing the pupil extra time to complete the assessment.
- In the case of hearing impaired pupils, exemption from a listening comprehension test.
- Separate, acoustically appropriate spaces for hearing impaired students.
- Special recordings with longer pauses for dyslexic students in listening comprehension tests.
- Exemptions from writing assessments in ink for dyslexic students.
- Allowing visually impaired students to use special computer software.
- Use of alternative modes of assessment.

Such adaptations are not noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

If the IEP has established that a pupil should follow an individual programme of study in one or more subjects, his or her performance is assessed on the basis of specific, individual objectives established for him or her and defined in the IEP. In such cases, the pupil's performance is not assessed in relation to the expected levels of performance established in the National Core Curriculum, and oral assessment may be used for the subjects studied in all years/grades.

Assessment of a pupil within the sphere of extended compulsory education is based on the individual objectives established in the IEP, and aims specifically to measure progress by activity area. Activity areas assessed are usually motor coordination, language and communication, social skills, skills in daily functions, and cognitive skills. Assessment is based on the pupil's growth and learning process compared with the baseline (starting points) and objectives. In assessing learning, allowances are made for the hindrances to learning resulting from the pupil's disability or disorder.

France

Pupils with disabilities are generally taught in a mainstream (ordinary) school environment. However, if their personalised school plan (PSP) requires the use of a specially adapted facility, they may be taught in a different type of educational institution.

In all cases, the teaching methods to be used with students with disabilities are set out in their PSP. A PSP sets out the methods of providing educational, psychological, medical and paramedical services to address the particular needs of students with disabilities.

Actions to support education for students with disabilities were strengthened by the Law of 11 February 2005 on the equality of rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of persons with disabilities. This law, which came into force on 1 January 2006, confirms the right of students with disabilities to an education, as well as the responsibility of the education system to guarantee the continuity of education provided to each student with disabilities. Under the law, students with disabilities have a right to:

- An education in a mainstream (ordinary) environment as close to their home as possible.
- The close involvement of parents at all stages in the preparation of the PSP.
- Continuity of education in line with the needs and capabilities of the individual student.
- Equality of opportunity with other candidates, by providing a foundation in law for adjustments to/accommodations in examination conditions.

In order to guarantee equality of opportunity with other candidates, students with disabilities who sit examinations or are at school or in higher education benefit from arrangements considered necessary by virtue of their condition. These arrangements apply to all forms of examinations or courses, regardless of the method of assessment used and, for a diploma, regardless of the method of acquisition. These arrangements can apply to all or some examinations, depending on the individual circumstances of the student.

Students with disabilities can benefit from the following types of arrangements/accommodations:

- Technical (adaptive equipment) and or human assistance, appropriate to their situation, when taking tests.
- Extra time for tests: pupils with disabilities may benefit from additional time for tests, providing that this extra time does not exceed the time normally allowed for the test by more than an additional third (unless otherwise justified by a doctor).
- Individual results for completed tests or units of study can remain valid for up to five years.
- Examinations can be staggered over several sessions.
- Tests themselves may be adapted, or pupils may be exempted from certain tests, dependent on their disability.

Such arrangements apply to all examinations and school and higher education courses provided by the Ministry for Education and the Ministry for Higher Education, or by institutions or services under the authority of these ministries.

The administrative authority responsible for organising the examination or course must ensure that the premises in which the examination will take place is accessible to students with disabilities. This authority must also ensure that the specific arrangements for each individual are put into place. The chairman of the examination board or course chairman is informed by the course/examination organiser of any special arrangements made for the candidates in question, whilst observing the candidates' right to anonymity. Where appropriate, he will inform the members of the board of the adjustments made.

Further information, in French, is available at:

- <http://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/2006/10/MENE0502666D.htm>.
- Law of 11 February 2005: <http://www.admi.net/jo/20050212/SANX0300217L.html>.
- Decree authorising adjustments to examinations for students with disabilities <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/WAspad/UnTexteDeJorf?numjo=MENS0502560D>

Hungary

There are several types of assessment and examination arrangements/accommodations which may be made for students with disabilities in Hungary. These are specified by legislation (the 1993 Act on Public Education). A headteacher may, for example, exempt a student with disabilities from either assessment or examinations, and from assessment/examination in one or several subjects. Such a decision must be preceded by the expert opinion of the 'Expert and Rehabilitation Committee' or by the expert opinion of an 'Educational Counsellor'. In instances where a student is exempted from a specific subject or subjects (but not from all subjects), the school must provide tailored individual courses for him/her in that/those subjects, in accordance with an individual development plan. The overarching aim of the individual development plan must be for the student to rejoin his or her original (mainstream) class/programme of study in future.

In all examinations, pupils with disabilities must be allowed more time than is normally allocated to complete the examination. They must also be provided with any special equipment (typewriters, PCs etc), which they would normally have access to during the course of a day in school. Students with disabilities also have to the right to choose to take written examinations rather than oral ones or vice versa.

When entering for the upper secondary leaving examination, visually impaired students complete a form requesting their preferred type of aid for the examination (examination papers in Braille or in electronic format with a CD and screen reader; original test papers in enlarged format etc).

A controversial new measure for students with disabilities was also introduced following legislation passed in 2006. This arrangement allows students with disabilities an additional eight points in the entrance examination for institutions of higher education. This is a significant advantage and has caused some considerable debate in Hungary.

As is apparent above, special arrangements for students with disabilities are regulated centrally (by legislation and government decree). Educational providers (usually the local government or local authority) must ensure provision in accordance with this central legislation.

Lithuania

The procedure for organising and implementing lower secondary assessment and upper secondary general school leaving examinations (usually taken at age 18) for pupils who have a written statement of their special educational needs is determined in accordance with the requirements established by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Specifically, lower secondary assessment of pupils with special needs and the procedures for the school leaving (maturity) examinations are regulated by the 'Ministerial Order on the Procedure for the Adjustment of the Organisation and Administration of Lower Secondary Assessment and the School Leaving (Maturity) Examinations to Pupils with Special Needs'. Subject to this order, the administration of examinations, the actual assignments and the evaluation of results can be adjusted to the individual needs of pupils with special needs.

When assessing the scripts of hearing impaired pupils, for example, confusion between the following letter couples is not counted as an error: p-b, t-d, k-g, s-z, š-ž, c-č, e-è, i-y, u-ū, u-

uo, è-ie.

When assessing the scripts of visually impaired pupils, confusion between the following pairs of letters is not counted as an error: p-d, b-l, g-d, n-u, n-r, p-g, p-b, m-n, c-e, o-c, y-g-j, b-g, d-b, v-r, ei-ie, uo-uo.

In addition, for the deaf and hearing impaired/partially deaf; for blind and visually impaired/partially sighted pupils; and for those pupils with physical and motor difficulties, examination time is extended by 25 per cent and, in exceptional cases, by up to 50 per cent.

For deaf and hearing impaired/partially deaf pupils who are exempt from the listening comprehension part of foreign language examinations, the marks for the listening comprehension test are not recorded. Instead, a pupil's accumulated points are multiplied by a coefficient approved by the National Examination Centre.

Teachers are also permitted to assist deaf and hearing impaired/partially deaf pupils when they take an examination. This is on condition that the teacher is not a specialist in the examination subject. The teacher may explain the examination procedures and the examination assignments to the pupil in sign language.

Examination papers are provided in Braille for blind and partially sighted/visually impaired pupils.

Pupils with physical and motor difficulties are also allowed to use computers.

In oral examinations, the time allowed for pupils who stutter/stammer can be extended by up to 100 per cent and deficiencies in oral fluency are not counted as errors.

Any such adaptation is not generally noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Malta

In the National Annual School Examinations and the Secondary and Matriculation Education Certificate Examinations (SEC and MATSEC respectively, usually taken at ages 16 and 18), the following examination arrangements are provided:

- For visually impaired pupils: enlarged print or fonts or Braille (for the SEC and MATSEC only, not for the National Annual School Examinations).
- For hearing impaired pupils: a 'communicator'.
- For pupils with dyslexia, ADHD, Asperger's syndrome or autism: a reader, scribe, extra time or prompting.

An amanuensis is also granted where required, as are rest periods.

Arrangements for Year 6 Primary and Junior Lyceum Entrance Examinations into Form 1 (pupils aged around 11), and for SEC and MATSEC Examinations, are centrally regulated. Those for other examinations are controlled by schools.

Netherlands

Headteachers can give a pupil with disabilities permission to take part, either fully or partially, in the examinations process and can adapt the process to his or her needs. In such

cases, the headteacher decides how the examination will take place, but must inform the Inspectorate of the decision. Unless the disability is clearly visible, a certificate from an expert (a psychologist or remedial educationalist for example), testifying to proof of disability, is required.

Adaptations can include an extension by a maximum of 30 minutes of the time allowed for an examination. Other adaptations can only be allowed if the expert's certificate includes a proposal for such adaptation, or if the adaptation patently fits the counselling and guidance advice contained in the expert's certificate. Such adaptations/accommodations may include the provision of a reader or assistant, for example, or the use of a tape recorder or other adaptive equipment.

There is no exemption for dyscalculia. For pupils with dyslexia, examinations can be adapted either by allowing pupils a 30 minute extension for the examinations or by allowing them to take recorded/oral examinations. Such adaptations again have to be reported to the Inspectorate.

Any adaptations are not generally noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Portugal

All students, including those with special educational needs, have a guaranteed right to participate in all forms of assessment as determined by the national curricular regulations. For students with disabilities, this may require the provision of special resources or special arrangements, including:

- The provision of examination papers in Braille, or in enlarged or digital format, for blind or visually impaired students.
- The provision of examination papers in digital format and of a computer to take the examination for physically handicapped students.
- The availability of a sign language interpreter for hearing impaired students.

Within the framework of the legislation issued by central government, and in line with school autonomy, schools identify and propose the kind of support to be provided to students with disabilities through their specialist support services. Such proposals are approved by local/regional government offices.

Spain

The assessment of students with disabilities is conceived as an isolated process in which both the objectives of the respective educational phase and the individual pupil's disabilities have to be taken into consideration. Educational guidance teams and educational psychologists advise teachers on the complementary resources and aids to be used with each student in accordance with his or her disability.

Spanish legislation does not establish specific measures to assess students with special education needs in mainstream schools. The regulations determine simply that the education authorities must ensure that schools have the requisite human, teaching and technical/physical resources to ensure that students with special needs, particularly those who suffer from language, motor or visual impairments, make progress in school and participate in education. The legislation further stipulates that, in cases where mainstream schools do not have enough resources to meet disabled pupils' needs in such a way, such pupils should transfer to specialist schools.

Although there are no national level regulations on the support of organisations such as ONCE (the Spanish National Organisation for the Blind), there is a long history of such organisations providing highly effective assistance to students with special needs, both in terms of personnel and in terms of specialist resources.

Legislation further permits adaptation of assessment requirements for pupils with disabilities. Dependent on individual need, this can include the provision of a reader or assistant; the provision of examination scripts in alternative formats; the use of adaptive equipment such as audio recorders or computers; or extended time for assessment.

Sweden

There are no national school level examinations or qualifications in Sweden. Support for pupils with a disability is support for the everyday education of such pupils. The general principle is that schools should provide individual students with whatever that student needs to be able to achieve the goals set for the education in question. Such provision could include, for example, the provision of textbooks on CD, additional lighting in the classroom, a simplified course in a particular subject, smaller study groups etc. Such arrangements are determined by the local school provider.

Appendix (more recent responses)

Germany

In assessments and/or examinations, the following special arrangements may be made for pupils with disabilities:

- A reader/assistant may be provided.
- The use of a tape recorder or other adaptive equipment may be permitted.
- Extra time to complete the assessment may be allowed.
- Exemption from a particular aspect of an examination/assessment may be allowed.
- An alternative mode of assessment may be permitted.

Any such adaptation is not noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Greece

In assessments and/or examinations, the following special arrangements may be made for pupils with disabilities:

- Visually impaired pupils may be allowed an assistant or reader.
- At the candidate's request, additional time may be allowed for completion of the assessment.
- Pupils may be exempt from a particular aspect of an examination/assessment.
- An alternative mode of assessment may be used to assess achievement of the same learning outcome.

Any such adaptation is not generally noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Pupils with special needs in Greece are assessed in accordance with the following principles:

Pupils with motor, visual or hearing disabilities in special primary schools are assessed in the same way as pupils in respective mainstream schools. Similarly, pupils with special needs in mainstream primary and secondary schools are generally assessed in the same way as their peers.

Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities which have been certified by Diagnostic Evaluation and Support Centres and who are attending general upper secondary schools or any other level of education, take oral or written examinations, depending on their abilities. For example:

- Visually-impaired or blind pupils take oral examinations, as do pupils suffering from dyslexia and pupils who cannot be examined by written examination due to a permanent or temporary physical disorder.
- Pupils who are deaf or hearing-impaired, and who have a disability percentage of over 67 per cent, take written examinations exclusively, as do pupils who suffer from speech disorders.

Iceland

In assessments and/or examinations, the following special arrangements may be made for pupils with disabilities:

- The use of a tape recorder or other adaptive equipment, such as CDs.
- Additional time to complete the assessment/examination.
- Enlarged print or other form of amendment to the presentation of the test.
- A separate room/location for the test.

Any such adaptation is not generally noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Italy

Assessment for pupils with disabilities is essentially the same as that for mainstream pupils; teachers assess each student formally every three or four months and at the end of the year with a view to determining their progress and educational achievement.

In addition, where possible, pupils take the same examinations as those without disabilities. In taking such tests, students with disabilities may make use of whatever aids they require.

Latvia

In assessments and/or examinations, the following special arrangements may be made for pupils with disabilities:

- The provision of a reader or assistant.
- Additional time to complete the assessment/examination.
- An exemption from a specific part of an assessment.
- Enlarged print papers for the visually impaired.

Any such adaptation is not generally noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Luxembourg

No special arrangements are made for the assessment of pupils with disabilities.

Norway

The types of special arrangements for pupils with disabilities in Norway can include:

- Permitting a pupil to take examinations/assessments in a separate room.
- Allowing rest breaks.
- The provision of enlarged or Braille texts, or examination texts on CD, for visually impaired pupils.
- The provision of audio-loops for pupils who are hearing impaired.
- Extended time for completion of an assessment/examination. Extended time in excess of one hour must be documented on a pupil's diploma/certificate.

The principle behind any special measure taken is that this must be suited to specific, individual need, without giving the pupil with disabilities an advantage over mainstream pupils taking the same examination/assessment.

Slovenia

In assessments and/or examinations, the following special arrangements may be made for pupils with disabilities (defined as those who are blind or partially sighted, deaf or hard-of-hearing, physically disabled, speech impaired or have a prolonged illness or learning disabilities):

- A reader/assistant may be provided.
- The use of a tape recorder or other adaptive equipment may be permitted.
- Provision of examination/assessment papers in Braille or other, similar format for visually impaired students.
- Extra time to complete the assessment may be allowed. In the case of the upper secondary leaving certificate (usually taken at age 19), for example, candidates with disabilities may be granted an additional allowance of up to 50 per cent of the total examination time for the written or oral component of the examination.
- An alternative mode of assessment to assess achievement of the same learning outcome may be permitted.

Any such adaptation is not noted on a student's certificate of achievement.

Accommodations are usually granted by a central examinations commission (the National Examination Centre), following approval by the school examinations committee.

Whilst permitting the above forms of adaptation/accommodation for pupils with disabilities, legislation also emphasises that such special arrangements must not give such pupils an unfair advantage over other (mainstream) candidates.

Further information:

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E-mail: eurydice@nfer.ac.uk

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/eurydice>



The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is interested in special assessment arrangements for students with disabilities and, in particular, in responses to the two questions which follow:

- Are there any assessment arrangements that are specifically for students with disabilities who are taking general school qualifications? What are the details of these arrangements and the disabilities for which they are provided?
- Are such arrangements centrally or locally regulated or controlled? Are any such arrangements determined by schools?

There follows a summary of responses provided by contacts across some of the INCA countries to the above questions.

Australia, Queensland

Background

The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) is a statutory authority which is responsible for:

- The Queensland Year 2 Diagnostic Net: an assessment instrument developed by the QSA and administered by teachers to monitor and assess children's development in literacy and numeracy skills (at age seven to eight).
- The Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 tests in literacy and numeracy (taken at age eight-nine, 10-11, and 12-13 respectively). These tests are developed, administered and marked by the QSA. All students in Years 3, 5 and 7 sit the tests. The QSA provides individual, class and school reports. Aggregated results are also reported nationally in the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia.
- Externally-moderated school-based assessment in Years 11 and 12 (pupils aged 16-18). Queensland abolished external examinations in 1971 and since that time has implemented and refined a system of panel moderation of teachers' judgements of student achievement. The judgements are made against standards described in the syllabuses developed by the QSA.
- The Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test. This test is developed, administered and marked by the QSA. It is taken by all students in Year 12 (aged 17-18) who are eligible for tertiary entrance ranks. Group results are used to scale the externally-moderated school-based assessments made by teachers in order to aggregate these to form tertiary entrance ranks.
- Competency-based assessment for school-based Vocational Education and Training (VET) (the QSA is the external auditor of schools as the providers of VET to students).

The QSA is currently developing standards statements for all subjects at the key junctures of Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 as part of an endeavour called the 'Queensland Curriculum Assessment and Reporting (QCAR)' framework. Other aspects of QCAR include the development of an

assessment bank of quality items for Years 1-9, the development of Common Assessment Tasks to be administered in Years 4, 6 and 9 and the quality assurance of locally-devised assessment tasks.

The QSA also maintains a Year 12 external examination in a limited number of key subjects as a safety net for students whose schools are unable to offer the subjects and for students who are not able to attend school.

Assessment arrangements for students with disabilities

External examinations

For the Year 12 external examination (see above), the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) has responsibility for varying examination conditions for candidates who have a recognised disability, injury or illness that would affect their result if they were to sit an examination under standard conditions. Candidates wishing to apply for special consideration must do so to the QSA via a completed 'application for special consideration'. The application must include a copy of relevant documentary evidence, such as a medical certificate, to support the claim. This evidence must describe the candidate's disability, injury or illness and explain how it will affect the candidate's performance during each examination.

The maximum additional time and/or restbreaks usually considered is 20 minutes per hour. A candidate who has approval to use special equipment must discuss the arrangements for access to the equipment with the examination centre at least one week before the examination. Although the details of all special consideration applications are confidential, the QSA has to inform the examination centre of the variations to examination conditions which are necessary, and may provide the candidate's documentation to chief examiners if they have applied for special consideration in the assessment of their examination scripts. The Senior Certificate is, however, issued without any reference to special consideration.

The possible variations to examination conditions permitted in Queensland include:

- For students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): separate supervision/seating in a different place to other candidates; use of a computer (without spellcheck); possible restbreaks and/or additional working time (to a maximum of 10 minutes per hour of examination time).
- For those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): as above.
- For students with diabetes: separate supervision/seating in a different place to other candidates; permission to take equipment and medication into the examination room and to consume bite-sized food in the examination room; possible restbreaks and/or additional working time to a maximum of 10 minutes per hour of examination time.
- For students with epilepsy: separate supervision/seating in a different place to other candidates; restbreaks if students suffer a seizure during an examination.
- For those with hearing impairment: separate supervision/seating in a different place to other candidates; examination instructions in writing.
- For students suffering from illness such as glandular fever or chronic fatigue syndrome: separate supervision/seating in a different place to other candidates/or possible supervision at home; permission to stand/stretch; permission to consume bite-sized food/medication in the examination room; restbreaks and/or additional working time to a maximum of 10 minutes per hour of examination time.

Students suffering from illnesses such as chicken pox or measles may also be supervised separately to other candidates or at home. They may also be allowed to stand/stretch during

the examination and may be permitted restbreaks of up to 10 minutes for each hour of the examination.

Detailed information is available online:

Senior External Examination Handbook (pages 14-18)

(<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/testing/extern-exams/handbook/SEE-handbook-2007.pdf>)

QCS Test, Guidelines for Special Considerations Applications

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yourqsa/policy/special-c/docs/qcs-seguide.pdf>

School-based assessment

Responsibility for decisions on special consideration in school-based assessments lies with individual schools. The school is responsible for designing the assessment programme, within the requirements of the relevant quality assurance processes (including work programme requirements and moderation requirements), and for conducting the assessments. However, the QSA and its moderation panels may provide advice on special consideration to schools. Further detailed information is available online:

Policy on Special Considerations for School-based Assessments in Senior Certification

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yourqsa/policy/special-c/docs/spec-con.pdf>

Special Consideration, Moderation

http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yrs11_12/mod/special.html

Canada, Alberta

Background

There are state-wide, provincial standardised tests under the achievement testing programme in Alberta. The provincial achievement testing programme provides for the assessment of four subject areas on a four-year cyclical basis. The principal subject areas are English (language arts), mathematics, science and social studies. These subjects are assessed in Grades/Years 3, 6 and 9 (students aged nine, 12 and 15 respectively). French is also included in the assessment in Grades 6 and 9. The Grade 3, 6 and 9 achievement tests are end-of-year summative assessment, and are used to obtain a provincial picture of the health of the education system and to gauge how students are performing against two provincial standards – ‘acceptable level’ and ‘level of excellence’.

In addition, there are final diploma examinations on completion of Grade 12, age 18. Results from these examinations influence progression to the various institutions of post-secondary education which exist in the province; they are consequently high stake assessments/examinations required for university entrance.

Accommodations

Assessments in Alberta are not designed specifically for students with disabilities. However, a superintendent of schools has the authority to excuse a student if it is deemed that the student cannot respond to the test or would be harmed by the testing. The superintendent may also approve the use of test writing accommodations. The accommodations that may be used include large print and Braille formats; the removal from examinations of any questions deemed too difficult for students needing to use a Braille copy; audio taped versions of

assessments; taped responses; use of a scribe; use of a reader; use of a sign language interpreter; or extending the length of time normally allowed to complete the test/ assessment (up to double the scheduled time).

Schools request the use of scribes and/or readers and order Braille copies of examinations. The Ministry of Education (Learner Assessment division) (via the superintendent) grants the requests on a case by case basis for high school diploma examinations (because they are high stake), and school principals can decide to use readers or scribes with certain students, as long as they report this to the Learner Assessment division when they return the examinations/ assessments to the division. Braille copies have to be pre-ordered to enable the Learner Assessment division to send these to schools for the day of the examination.

Canada, British Columbia

The provincial Ministry of Education allows students with special needs to receive adaptations when writing provincial exams. The Ministry is responsible for the administration, policy and procedures for the adjudication process, which allows students with disabilities adaptations of: time, braille, large print, e-exams, computer, spellchecker, reader or scribe.

The Ministry provides guidelines to schools about documentation requirements for the Ministry categories of special needs. If a student qualifies in one of the categories, the school may provide extra time. Guidelines are provided for schools to determine if a student qualifies for a spellchecker. The Ministry oversees the review of requests for the adaptations of a reader and scribe based on established eligibility criteria.

Further information is available in the *Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program* at: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/handbook_procedures.pdf (see chapter 7).

Canada, Saskatchewan

A special provisions policy exists, which applies to any provincially-administered Grade 12 (high school graduation) examinations (taken at age 18-19). In accordance with this policy, special provisions may be made for students with sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, acute or chronic illness, and learning disabilities. Requests for special provisions must be based on assessment of need by qualified personnel.

The special provisions that may be made include:

- Extended writing time (beyond the 30 additional minutes allowed for all students).
- Use of a separate room.
- Specially printed examination papers (large print, Braille, coloured paper, for example).
- Use of a reader and/or scribe. In such cases, the session must also be audio taped for appeal purposes. A scribe must write the answers verbatim, with the student giving direction as to the form of the answer in the case of paragraphs and essays, and the spelling of significant words.
- Use of a word processor or braille. Students are not permitted use of programme utilities such as spellcheck, thesaurus, dictionary, or grammar check.

Decisions regarding special provisions or considerations are made by the Office of the Registrar (for provincial examinations), in consultation with the school and provincial education department personnel. Parents or guardians and other involved agencies may also

be consulted. The school principal must submit a formal written request for a special provision or consideration for a student. This must include:

- An explanation of the student's disability with supporting documentation.
- An outline of the current approaches used in written examinations as identified in the student's personal programme plan.
- A description of the proposed special provision for the examination.

Further information is available from the *Registrar's Handbook for School Administrators 2006-2007* at:

http://www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/branches/aar/prov_exams/handbook/handbk.pdf.

In addition, students taking writing assessments as part of Saskatchewan's provincial learning assessment programme may have accommodations made for them, but only in cases where such accommodations would normally be a part of the individual student's regular experience with classroom writing instruction and assessment. The aim is to facilitate participation in the provincial writing assessment. Accommodations may consequently include:

- A scribe who records only exactly what the student says.
- Additional time to complete the assessment.
- A separate room in which to write the assessment.
- Braille or large-print versions of all components of the assessment.
- Coloured overlays or coloured paper.

The writing collected from such students is submitted to the provincial department of education and contributes to school, school division, and provincial data.

Japan

Background

Children with special needs in Japan are either catered for in special schools, in special classes, in *tsukyu* (a teaching system for pupils with mild disabilities), or in mainstream education.

Special schools offer education to pupils with severe disabilities who would not be adequately catered for in schools. Such disabilities can include visual or hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities and/or poor health. Such special schools provide education according to phase (kindergarten, elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary education).

Special classes offer education to pupils with moderate disabilities in elementary and lower secondary schools. They cater for pupils with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, poor health, visual or hearing impairment, speech disorders and/or emotional disturbance. Such courses follow the standard 'Courses of Study' for elementary and lower secondary schools, but special classes have the discretion to vary Courses of Study as they see fit in accordance with a child's individual needs.

Tsukyu set up within elementary and lower secondary schools is a teaching system for pupils with mild disabilities. Pupils normally have their lessons in regular, mainstream classes; occasionally they have private lessons or are taught in small group lessons in resource rooms catering specifically for their individual need. Such mild disabilities can include speech disorders, autism, emotional disturbance, visual or hearing impairment, learning difficulties,

ADHD and other disabilities. Where pupils with special needs are taught in regular classes, the content and methods of teaching are planned and modified as their individual conditions demand.

Assessment

Wherever possible, assessment for pupils in special schools (for the blind, deaf, pupils with physical disabilities etc) is the same as that in mainstream schools. Pupils are assessed in accordance with four aspects or elements of assessment (*Kanten*), and marked by grade in each subject in each year. The four elements of assessment are i) interest, motivation and attitude, ii) thinking and judgement, iii) skills and expression, and iv) knowledge and understanding. As a general assessment of learning progress, they are marked by three grades in the elementary phase and five grades in the lower secondary phase. In upper secondary education, a five-grade marking system is used for each subject according to which, in line with the system of credits, pupils receiving a grade '1' grade (that is the lowest grade) in a subject, are unable to receive the credit.

Special schools for pupils with intellectual disabilities do not use the same three- or five-stage grading system. Teachers in such schools assess pupils' levels of achievement and learning progress against a pupil's individual learning programme and in accordance with his or her individual needs and disabilities.

Selection criteria for candidates for upper secondary schools in Japan are based on the results of an entrance examination (usually taken at age 15) and a school assessment report and record. When pupils with disabilities take such entrance examinations, special arrangements are made in accordance with their individual needs and disabilities. Examples of such special arrangements include:

- For the visually impaired: examinations papers in Braille or enlarged copy; the provision of a reading glass or consideration of the pupil's seating position in the examination hall; additional time to answer the questions.
- For the hearing impaired: consideration of the pupil's seating position in the examination hall; the provision of hearing aids; a separate room for the test; alternative questions for oral/aural tests.
- For pupils with other physical disabilities: assistance to help the candidate with reading and writing; the provision of a separate room for the examination; the ability to take the examination in hospital; additional time to answer questions.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) issued an administrative memorandum in November 1997 on special arrangements in entrance examinations for pupils with disabilities. This determined that prefectural boards of education should give more consideration to the entrance examinations for upper secondary education, and specifically to diversifying the methods and means of selection used to ensure that the most appropriate assessments are in place for individuals with disabilities.

Selection criteria for candidates for university are based on the results of entrance examinations, school reports, essays, interviews, etc. Individual universities determine their own selection criteria in practice. At the same time, many universities use the National Test for University Admissions. This test allows some special arrangements according to an individual candidate's needs and disabilities. Examples include: the provision of examination papers in Braille or enlarged copy; the provision of a reading glass; consideration of the candidate's seating position in the examination hall; the provision of additional time to answer questions; the assistance of a sign language interpreter; provision of written guidance

and/or hearing aids; exemption from an aural/oral test; the provision of an assistant reader or writer for the candidate; and/or the provision of a separate room in which to take the examination.

In April 2007, MEXT conducted the first nationwide National Assessment of Academic Ability (NAAA) in 43 years, although smaller nationwide sampling tests have been conducted periodically. In 2007, all Year 6 and Year 9 pupils (aged 12 and 15 respectively) took the test, including pupils in special schools and pupils with disabilities. Special arrangements were made for those pupils with disabilities taking the NAAA. Visually impaired pupils, for example, were provided with test papers in Braille or enlarged copy; or could be provided with a reading glass; or allowed additional time to answer the questions. Pupils with physical disabilities could be allowed an assistant 'reader' or 'writer'; additional time to answer the questions; and or allowed to take the test in a separate room.

Similar special arrangements to those mentioned above are also allowed for pupils with disabilities when they take normal end-of-term examinations in schools.

Singapore

Most pupils with special needs in Singapore are in various types of special education (SPED) schools, and are consequently not subject to the statutory national system of assessment, nor do they take general/mainstream examinations. However, some pupils with special needs may follow the mainstream primary school programme, in which case assessment is essentially the same as that in mainstream primary schools. Consequently, when taking the mainstream Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) (at age 12), a pupil with physical or learning disabilities which may adversely affect his/her performance in the examination may request special consideration/arrangements during the examination. Certain special considerations/ arrangements are annotated in the pupil's certificate.

Applications for special considerations/arrangements must be made through the pupil's school in the first instance. Detailed application procedures can be obtained from individual schools.

Switzerland

In Switzerland, the 26 cantons are responsible for compulsory education. Consequently, assessment arrangements generally may differ from canton to canton. However, in compulsory education, and in primary education in particular, there is a tendency to integrate children with special needs into regular, mainstream schools and assessment of students with disabilities depends on individual need and the type of disability. Assessment usually takes place on the basis of individual learning goals and formative evaluation is more common than summative evaluation. Indeed, for students with a physical disability or sensory disorder, continuous assessment of performance is very similar to performance assessment for students without a disability.

In some specific forms of (two-year) vocational training, students with learning difficulties and disabilities can make an application for a final examination adapted to their needs.

USA

Federal and state special education legislation requires that all students with disabilities participate in state and district assessments. Specifically, the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that:

All children with disabilities are included in all general state and district-wide assessment programmes....., with appropriate accommodation and alternate assessments, where necessary and as indicated in their respective individualised education programmes.

The reauthorised IDEA specifies that alternative forms of assessment are to be provided for the small number of students with disabilities for whom the standardised assessment is inappropriate even with accommodations.

USA, Maryland

All students are monitored on a daily basis through continuous classroom (teacher) assessment. In addition, there is a state-wide student performance assessment system - the Maryland School Assessment (MSA). All students in Years 3 to 8 and in Year 10 (ages eight-nine to 13-14 and 15-16 respectively) are tested on the Maryland content standards embedded in the MSA reading and mathematics tests and, since 2007, in science in addition. There is also a high school assessment (graduation) (HSA) programme.

It is the policy of Maryland to include all students to the fullest extent possible in state assessment programmes. However, state assessment tests may be modified for students with disabilities. As a result, most students take the MSA, with a small percentage taking the Alternate MSA (Alt-MSA), an alternative test for students with severe disabilities. The decision as to which assessment is appropriate for an individual student is made by each student's individual education plan team. Modified HSA tests are also under development.

Full details of the accommodations available and the accommodations and assessment process for students with disabilities are available [online](#) via the *2006-2007 Maryland Accommodations Manual*. Information on the Alternate MSA is also available [online](#) via the *Alternate Maryland School Assessment Handbook 2007*.

USA, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was originally implemented for students in Years 4, 8, and 10 and has since been expanded to include children in Grades 3, 5, 6 and 7 in addition. It is generally intended that the MCAS tests should be administered to all students in the relevant Years/Grades, including those with disabilities. Indeed, in principle, legislation provides for no exemptions from taking the tests. This policy aims to ensure that all Massachusetts public school students are provided with the opportunity to learn the materials covered by the curriculum framework learning standards which are covered by the tests. MCAS tests may, however, be adapted to suit the needs of students with disabilities who meet eligibility requirements. Additionally, if a student is identified as having a disability/disabilities which prevent him or her from taking the MCAS tests, even with adaptations, that student must be tested by some alternative means of assessment, which is appropriate to the student's academic development.

Parents may not legally refuse their child's participation in MCAS. The Massachusetts Department of Education produces guidance for parents on the requirement for the participation of students with disabilities in MCAS. This publication also details the test accommodations permitted by the Department of Education and any alternative assessments. See: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/spedreq.pdf>.

USA, Wisconsin

In general, all students in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10 take part in the overarching Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS), under which the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination Criterion-Referenced Tests (WKCE-CRT) are administered to all students in Grades 3-8, ages eight-14 respectively, and to students in Grade 10, aged 15-16. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is required to provide for inclusion of all students in the state-wide assessment programmes, using accommodations where necessary. Alternative assessments are provided for students for whom the state assessment is inappropriate.

Ward Educational Consulting

Survey of international policy on access to qualifications and assessment

Introduction

The scope of the enquiry is **lower and or upper secondary education, general, not vocational.**

It is intended to cover 'the disabled', ie those with physical or sensory impairment and also to include dyslexia, but to **exclude** learning difficulties other than dyslexia.

It has become clear from looking at the sources that it is necessary to differentiate between testing/assessment to provide a measure of progress (which should be tailored to the individual, especially where there are special needs) and testing against national or regional standards, where users of the results (eg employers, HE) will expect a consistent standard of measurement. This study focuses on the latter, ie testing against national or regional standards.

There is an interesting article by Margaret Hopper available on ERIC.¹ This says that all US states have their own established policies on 'accommodations' (reasonable adjustments) for the disadvantaged, but that any general ruling to treat all students with a particular type of disability in the same way goes against the principle of Individualised Education Programmes.

She categorises the accommodations made as:

- presentation accommodations, described as changes made to the presentation of the test or test directions such as large print versions, Braille versions, sign language translations, or reading aloud
- response accommodations, described as changes made to the way students respond to a test question or prompt, such as allowing a student to indicate an answer by pointing or gesturing, using a scribe to record written answers, and technological recording methods
- setting accommodations, described as changes to the testing environment or location, such as administering the test in small groups, individually, or even at a student's home
- scheduling accommodations, described as changes in the timing or scheduling of testing such as extending the length of given time for the test to be completed and allowing testing breaks.

Margaret Hopper points out that the theoretical argument for accommodations is to create an equitable test situation for students who would otherwise be at a disadvantage because of a lack of skills unrelated to what is being tested. She spends some time on implications for diagnostic tests. An argument against accommodations is that it may impair the validity of the test, especially its predictive validity. Provision of accommodations may be seen as 'unfair' to other students.

Christine Ward
Ward Educational Consulting

¹ Hopper, Margaret F, The Implications of Accommodations in Testing Students with Disabilities (ED463627), 2001 Full text available on ERIC at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED463627>

Country: United States of America

Terminology used:

Accommodation is the term used for 'reasonable adjustments', including extra time and *assistive technology*.

When searching using ERIC (which has mainly US references), use *tests* instead of *examinations* and *evaluation* instead of *assessment*. The ERIC thesaurus includes *dyslexia* and *mental retardation* amongst many terms under the broad heading of *disabilities*.

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1997 (IDEA)* requires that all students with disabilities be included in state and district-wide measures of performance and that states must provide accommodations for students who are unable to participate in large scale tests. It does not, however, make clear the criteria for deciding which students require accommodations. (See below for differences between states.)

The general rule is confirmed by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, (see INCA archive). One aim is to ensure that students with disabilities are included in schools' reported results, so as to improve accountability.

Alternate assessment may be used for some students, but it appears that this is intended only to apply to those with 'the most significant cognitive disabilities', with an assumption that only 1% of the school population will be assessed as 'proficient' via alternate assessment.²

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Yes, with few exceptions.

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

Examples of state-specific policies suggest that accommodations are normally available for a broad range of conditions:

- In the Kentucky Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) special forms of the tests are made available for students who are hearing or visually impaired and the tests are also available in Braille on request. (INCA)
- In Maryland accommodations are available for students with disabilities or English as a Second Language (INCA)
- In Massachusetts accommodations are available for students with disabilities or English as a Second Language and may include Spanish language tests (INCA) and also large print, magnifying equipment, signing of instructions by administrator, Braille, transcription of answers by administrator or scribe. Reading aloud of questions and prompts by administrator is permitted, except for English Language and Literature and Reading tests. Accommodations may not alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test item or reading passage.³
- Texas allows accommodations, which are decided for each individual according to need and in line with the accommodations used in teaching, but must not include measures which would make the test invalid. Instructions may be signed to hearing-

² US Department of Education Federal Register / Vol. 68, No. 236 / Tuesday, December 9, 2003 / Rules and Regulations; 34 CFR Part 200 Title I—Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Final Rule <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2003-4/120903a.pdf>

³ Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS, available from http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/overview_faq.html?section=9

impaired students or translated for non-native speakers. Examinees may dictate 'composition' answers, giving the spellings and punctuation. Examinees may not receive any assistance in the reading of the Reading or Writing tests; examinees with dyslexia or similar may be allowed oral administration of the (multiple-choice) mathematics, Grade 8 social studies and Grade 8 science tests.⁴

Students with special needs who take Scholastic Assessment Tests (SATs) on completion of *high school* - required by many colleges or universities as part of the admission application - may take the examinations under special conditions, which may include additional time. Since September 2003, the College Board (the Board responsible for SATs) has no longer been permitted to flag disabled students' scores with the notation "Scores Obtained Under Special Conditions". (INCA)

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

See above.

References:

Gorn, Susan, *What Do I Do When...The Answer Book on Assessing, Testing and Graduating Students with Disabilities*. (ED443263), 2000; Abstract on ERIC. Includes Identifying Students with Disabilities Who Require Testing Accommodations, Measuring Progress and Assigning Grades, Participation of Students with Disabilities in General Statewide Assessments; High School Exit Examinations.

Interesting examples

⁴ *Testing accommodations for the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills*. This is provided as Appendix B of *The Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders*, but covers a range of disabilities in addition to dyslexia. (available on ERIC at http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/0d/da/36.pdf)

Country: Australia

Terminology used: 'Special consideration' is the term which covers 'reasonable adjustments'. Other related terms are 'equity' and 'equal opportunities'.

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

Assessment arrangements at age 15-16 are the responsibility of individual States and Territories although research has shown that all are using the national framework of Statements and Profiles as a basis for curriculum development and assessment. (INCA) Similarly, every State and Territory has an external certification system in Year 12 (students aged around 18).

Most of the state Boards have an Equity Committee which considers the needs of specific groups, including the disabled and indigenous peoples.

Co-ordination is provided by ACACA (Australasian Curriculum Assessment Certification Authorities), the Australian national co-ordinating body, made up of the authorities from the individual states. This has agreed a set of principles for assessment for certification (see references), which includes some references to special needs issues.

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Yes; not known how many.

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

ACACA describes the purpose of 'special consideration procedures' as being to give all students the opportunity to show what they know and can do. They typically involve varying the way in which information is communicated to or from the student in ways which maintain the validity of the assessment result and do not change the assessment standards. They may relate either to externally set tests or to the advice provided to schools in relation to internally set tests.

The ACACA Guidelines warn, however, that in the interests of fairness to all students the certificate must show what the student did do, not what the student might have done in other circumstances.

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

States differ in the range of groups for whom 'Special consideration' may be provided (ACACA Guidelines) and may have different rules for different types of examination. Most allow special consideration for students with physical impairments and those with emotional difficulties (eg bereavement). Detail has been researched for three states:

- **New South Wales** requires schools to apply for Special Examination Provisions for students with special needs, giving reasons for the application. The Board of Studies has a broad policy statement that – 'Regardless of the nature of the special need, the provisions granted are solely determined by the implications of that need on examination performance.' and 'Provisions include braille papers, large print papers, use of a writer, use of a reader, extension of test time, rest breaks, use of a personal computer, establishment of a special test centre, exam supervision, individual supervision, permission to take medication, or other provisions as judged appropriate.' No allowances are made for speakers of other languages: 'The Board does not consider the lack of familiarity with the English language to be a special need in this context. Therefore, special provisions such as the use of an English/foreign language dictionary will not be approved for students disadvantaged solely because of lack of familiarity with the English language.' A Special Provisions version of the Online Computing Skills test is available for students who are approved as needing one of the following special examination provisions: Extra working time; Rest breaks, feeding

breaks, diabetic provisions or toilet breaks; Large print; Coloured paper (background screen).

- The **Queensland Studies Authority (QSA)** permits special consideration in **school-based examinations** for students with impairments that have a physiological basis and those with educational needs, including needs arising from socioeconomic, cultural and/or linguistic factors. Adjustments are normally provided through alternative arrangements (eg Braille, signing), but exemption from the exam may be permitted if there is sufficient alternative evidence of the student's achievement. Adjustments can include 'providing assistance with the interpretation and comprehension of assessment items for students with language difficulties, such as students with language backgrounds other than English as long as this assistance occurs for assessment items which are not designed to assess those language skills'. In the **Queensland Core Skills Test (QCS)** QSA does not give exemption or special consideration to students with limited proficiency in English because the objectives of the test include reading and writing in Standard Australian English. This rule applies to students with a Non-English-speaking background (NESB) and also to those with a Specific learning difficulty/disorder (SPLD) and/or a Speech language impairment (SLI). There are other restrictions on the aids allowed in the QCS test because 'one of the characteristics of the test is that the candidate sitting the test does the required reading and writing'. Consequently, QSA does not produce the test in Braille or allow the use of a scribe, reader, interpreter, dictionary or voice recognition technology. For **Senior External Examinations**, QSA permits adjustments for physical and sensory impairments and some medical and psychological conditions, but does not permit the use of dictionaries, scribes or readers for candidates with a specific learning difficulty/disorder (SPLD) and/or speech language impairment (SLI), because 'most syllabuses assess the use of the English language as a major assessment criterion'. For non-English-speaking background (NESB) candidates, QSA may approve the use of a translation dictionary in some subjects, but will not allow extra time.
- **TQA (Tasmania)** emphasises that candidates in internal assessments must meet the academic standards of the chosen course, but will consider 'special examination consideration/conditions' to ensure 'equality of opportunity to participate'. TQA provides for 'alternative opportunities' for students 'unable to complete tasks because of cultural beliefs'. Special arrangements can be made to enable students with medical conditions, physical handicaps, injuries or specific learning difficulties to complete externally set written and practical examinations. These arrangements could include: additional time, use of a word processor, examination papers printed in large type or in Braille; rewording questions on examination papers for students with severe hearing impediments; the use of special reading equipment, such as magnifying lenses; special seating to allow students to take medication; special lighting; permission to move around during the examination; separate facilities for students unable to attend an established examination centre. The TQA must be advised of the nature of any student's difficulties and provided with relevant supporting documentation and details of the special arrangements required.

References:

ACACA, Principles for the integrity, quality and long term credibility of Certificates of Achievement, 1999 Available on <http://www.acaca.org.au/pdf/principleguide.pdf>

New South Wales Board of Studies, Special Examination Provisions for the School Certificate tests and Higher School Certificate examinations, available on http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/specialexamprovs.doc ; Assessment and Certification Manual 2005, available on http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/ace_manual.pdf

Queensland Studies Authority, Policy on Special Consideration for Schoolbased Assessments in Senior Certification, available on <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yourqsa/policy/special-c/docs/spec-con.pdf> ; Guidelines for Special Consideration Applications (for the Queensland Core Skills Test), 2007, available on <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/yourqsa/policy/special-c/docs/qcs-scguide.pdf> ; Senior External

Examination Handbook, 2007, available on <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/testing/extern-exams/handbook/SEE-handbook-2007.pdf>

Tasmanian Qualifications Authority, TQA Senior Secondary Handbook 2007, available on http://www.tqa.tas.gov.au/4DCGI/WWW_doc/007998/RND01/Senior_Secondary_Handbook_2007_April.pdf

Interesting examples

Ward Educational Consulting

Survey of international policy on access to qualifications and assessment – Part 2

Introduction

This paper supplements the earlier paper which considered the USA and Australia.

The scope of the enquiry is **lower and or upper secondary education, general, not vocational**.

It is intended to cover 'the disabled', ie those with physical or sensory impairment and also to include dyslexia, but to **exclude** learning difficulties other than dyslexia.

Where the sources allow this, a distinction is made between special arrangements for candidates with permanent or long term disabilities and those with short term problems such as accident or bereavement. The second group are outside the scope of this enquiry.

The examples identified show that a number of factors need to be considered when discussing country policies in relation to 'special arrangements':

- the types of disability for which special arrangements may be made
- the nature of the adjustment(s) which may be made
- whether centres must give advance notice of the need (always the case if the awarding body needs to respond – for example the provision of question papers in Braille)
- whether candidates (or their centres) must seek authorisation of special arrangements in advance or may implement the special arrangement and then report it
- what eligibility criteria apply and what evidence is required (eg a medical certificate or the report of an educational psychologist)
- whether approval of a special arrangement is linked to evidence that a similar special arrangement has been provided in class and/or in internal examinations
- the relationship of the disability to the knowledge or skill being assessed.

The final point is particularly significant. A good principle, sometimes stated, is that the special arrangement must not impair the validity of the assessment. For example it may be acceptable to read questions to a dyslexic candidate for a history test, but not for a literacy test.

Terminology

A wide range of terminology is used worldwide (see notes on each country. For the UK the JISC e-assessment glossary (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/eAssess-Glossary-Extended-v1-01.pdf) lists the following terms relating to special assessment arrangements for learners with special needs: - accommodation, special arrangement, reasonable adjustment. JISC indicates that 'special consideration' more usually applies to a temporary condition.

Country: Canada

Terminology used: Adjudication, adapted conditions, adaptations, accommodations, exceptional students (Ontario), special needs, des besoins particuliers (Quebec)

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

Responsibility for education rests with the individual province (of which there are 10) or territory (3); each has its own Ministry or Department of Education. There is no national Department of Education, but the provinces⁵ co-operate through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), which also handles external relations.

Some, but not all provinces have compulsory assessments at the end of Lower Secondary education. Most issues *high school* graduation certificates at the end of Upper Secondary education. Examinations for these 'are usually prepared and set at local level, although in certain provinces graduation diploma examinations in certain subjects are set centrally by the provincial Department of Education. ... Most provinces provide for both *high school* and general diplomas in recognition of modified programmes followed by students who do not intend to enter university.' (INCA)

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Normally yes, if they are following the standard programme.

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

Special arrangements (accommodations) are available, but their nature varies by province, as does the amount of information available. Four provinces and the central PCAP-13 tests have been researched and are described separately below.

PCAP-13 (Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme)

CMEC co-ordinates the PCAP-13 (Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme) Reading, Mathematics, and Science Assessments, which test a representative sample of 30,000 13-year olds each year. (PCAP has replaced the former SAIP assessments.) The aim is to include children with special needs in this testing programme; schools are allowed to make 'accommodations' to enable them to do so and Braille and large print papers are available.

Alberta

Under the Provincial Achievement Testing Program all students take tests in English language, arts and mathematics in grade 3 and in these subjects plus science and social studies at grades 6 and 9. Accommodations are available for students with special education needs for writing the achievement tests.

The Alberta High School Diploma Graduation requires at least 100 course credits, with a specified profile. Assessment includes a school mark and a diploma examination. Schools may request accommodations for students with special needs. These may include:

- an examination to be provided in Braille, large print or [audio] CD format
- a reader or sign language interpreter - regarded as exceptional; the reading and any conversation between the student and the reader must be recorded
- permission for the students to record responses on tape
- use of a scribe – in this case the whole of the conversation between the student and the scribe must be recorded and the tape returned with the written copy
- use of a computer for a few specified papers only

⁵ Hereafter 'province' is used in relation to Canada to mean 'province or territory'.

- a 'Franklin Language Master'
- administration in a private room or in a small group
- variation in writing time.

English as a Second Language (ESL) students (including foreign, visiting and exchange students) are permitted additional writing time as a special accommodation.

Under specific circumstances, the school-awarded mark may be accepted as the final mark [for the Diploma] upon application to and approval by the Special Cases Committee.

British Columbia

Adaptations may be provided in the assessment of students with special needs (for example, an oral exam instead of a written one). Local school boards are required to identify, assess and plan for students with special needs. This includes participation in the Foundation Skills Assessment programme at the end of Lower Secondary education – see <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/assessment/fsa>. Adaptations may include Braille or large print exam booklets, computers with text or voice recognition software, oral interpreters and supervised breaks.

For the Grade 12 (Upper Secondary) Provincial Examinations procedures and conditions for adaptations to the *administration* of the examinations for candidates with special needs are given in the *Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program 2006-2007*, Chapter 7, Adjudication. These apply only to students on the standard programme (not those on modified programmes) and do not permit changes to the content of exams, such as 'paraphrasing, rewording, clarifying or explaining exam questions'. They are required when the student is unable to write the examinations as they are usually administered, due to either 'predictable' or 'unpredictable' circumstances.' Predictable circumstances are, for example, long term disability; unpredictable circumstances include accident and bereavement.

All students may choose to take up to an additional 60 minutes to complete an exam and this is not considered to be an adaptation. Similarly, schools may provide any student with supervised breaks, a separate setting or a computer (without spellchecker), as these are not considered to be adaptations to examination conditions.

A range of other adaptations may be permitted, some of which require approval by the British Columbia Ministry of Education, with applications for approval supported by appropriate documentation; this process is known as 'adjudication'. Any use of a reader or scribe requires Ministry approval.

Other adaptations may be applied by the school in accordance with the Handbook; the school must obtain appropriate evidence of the disability and must report to the Ministry the names of the students and the nature of the adaptation. Adaptations to which these conditions apply are:

- extra time in excess of 60 minutes, for any recognised category of special needs
- use of Word Recognition Software or Voice Recognition Software or provision of exam paper in Large Print (Paper copy), Electronic Large Print (PDF) or Electronic (Web-based) format for those with physical disabilities
- provision of exam paper in Braille, Large Print (Paper copy), Electronic Large Print (PDF) or Electronic (Web-based) format for those with visual impairment
- a Manual Interpreter or Oral Language Interpreter for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- use of Word Recognition Software, Voice Recognition Software or a spellchecker or provision of exam paper in Large Print (Paper copy), Electronic Large Print (PDF) or Electronic (Web-based) format for those with a learning disability.

Adaptations which may be permitted for those with a specific learning disability, but require Ministry approval and a very precise definition of the disability, are:

- Word Recognition Software or a Reader for those with a Decoding, or Reading Rate Disability, where there is a significant discrepancy between a measure of

decoding and/or reading rate and either verbal ability (e.g., verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required)

- Voice-Activated Software or a Scribe for those with a Written Expression Disability; this should be evidenced by a significant discrepancy between an achievement measure of written expression, writing speed or visual-motor integration and either verbal ability (e.g., verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required)
- Spellchecker (Hand-held or Computer with Spellchecker without grammar option) for those with a Spelling Disability, where there is a significant discrepancy between a measure of spelling and either verbal ability (e.g., verbal scale score or verbal comprehension ability – minimum difference of 1.3 standard deviations required) or another measure of cognitive ability (minimum difference of 2.0 standard deviations required).

Ontario

The Ontario Secondary School Diploma (end of Year 9) requires a minimum of 30 credits, including some compulsory subjects. Students must also complete 40 hours of community involvement activities and satisfactorily complete the Provincial Secondary School Literacy Test.

For the Provincial Secondary School Literacy Test the Ontario Ministry states that *the necessary accommodations must be made to ensure that students who are receiving special education programs and services and who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) have a fair and equal opportunity to successfully complete the secondary school literacy test. The accommodations made will be the same as those that are set out in the student's IEP and/or that are available to the student in the course of his or her regular school work, including examinations and other forms of evaluation. While accommodations such as alternative forms of print and extra time are acceptable, the actual content of the secondary school literacy test must not be altered.*

For other assessments for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (which seem to be mainly school-based assessment), the Ministry states that *Assessment procedures and strategies may also need to be altered to assess the extent to which exceptional students [this includes special needs, as well as gifted pupils] are achieving the learning expectations of their courses. Examples of such alterations to procedures and strategies may include:*

- *changing the time requirements for completing assignments or assessment tasks*
- *changing the format of the assessment materials*
- *providing a quiet environment in which assessment may take place*
- *simplifying test instructions and the language of questions*
- *providing for the use of scribes, tape recorders, typewriters, or word processors, or allowing oral responses*
- *allowing students to retake classroom tests or redo classroom assignments to improve their performance*
- *providing alternative homework assignments*
- *basing classroom assessment on the full range of students' work (e.g., portfolios, interviews, demonstrations, dramatizations, journals, peer evaluations, self-evaluations)*

Quebec

Quebec is predominantly French speaking (83% of the population). Secondary school (classes 5 to 1) ends with the SSD, Secondary School Diploma (Diplôme d'études secondaires). For admission to college students must hold either the SSD or the Diploma of

Vocational Studies (DVS). College education, which offers a choice of technical or pre-university courses, ends with the DCS, Diploma of College Studies (Diplôme d'études collégiales).

The Diploma of College Studies is awarded by the Ministère (Quebec Ministry of Education). Formerly based on courses prescribed by the Ministère, it is now based on courses developed by the colleges in accordance with central guidance. Programs leading to a DCS have a general education component and a program-specific component. Students must also pass an externally set and marked examination in the language of instruction (English or French).

For the Ministerial Examination of College English, Language of Instruction and Literature, 'special measures' are available for those with special needs:

Persons with disabilities can take advantage of special measures. These include students with a hearing impairment, a motor, neurological or organic impairment, a visual impairment, learning difficulties, mental health disorders, or pervasive developmental disorders. Aboriginal people and Allophones who completed their secondary school education in a language other than English or French can also take advantage of such measures. All requests must be made by the person responsible for ministerial examinations at the institution attended by the student and must be accompanied by the appropriate documented proof or evaluation documents.

The same conditions apply to the French examination taken by students whose language of instruction is French (Épreuve Uniforme de Français, Langue d'enseignement et Littérature).

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

See above, especially British Columbia. The key principle is that the *content* of the exam must not be changed.

References:

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC): List of Provincial and Territorial Departments and Ministries Responsible for Education in Canada (with web links) available on <http://www.cmec.ca/educmin.en.stm>

CMEC, PCAP-13 (Pan-Canadian Assessment Programme) Information on <http://www.cmec.ca/pcap/2007/indexe.stm>

PCAP-13 Reading, Mathematics, and Science Assessment (2007), Handbook for Schools <http://www.cmec.ca/pcap/2007/handbook.en.pdf>

Alberta Education, Guide to Education 2006-2007 (<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/educationguide/guide.asp?id=0107>)

Alberta Education, General Information Bulletin: Diploma Examinations Program (http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/diploma/dip_gib/default.asp).

Alberta Education, Diploma Examination Accommodations for Students http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/testing/diploma/dip_gib/05_Special_Cases_&_Accommodations.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education (1999). *Special Programmes: Special Education* [online]. (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/>).

British Columbia Ministry of Education, Handbook of Procedures for the Graduation Program 2006-2007 (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/handbook/handbook_procedures.pdf)

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, *Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12: Program and Diploma Requirements 1999*, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/oss/oss.pdf>

Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Ministerial Examination of College English, Language of Instruction and Literature (English Exit Examination), Everything You

Need To Know From A To Z, February 2007, http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-coll/Eprv_uniforme/Anglais/A-Z_Ang_Feb2007.pdf

Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Épreuve Uniforme de Français, Langue d'enseignement et Littérature, Toute l'information de A à Z, Février 2007, http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/ens-sup/ens-coll/Eprv_uniforme/A-Z_Fran_Fev2007.pdf

Interesting examples

Country: New Zealand

Terminology used: special assessment conditions

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

Examinations and assessments for secondary school qualifications throughout New Zealand are the responsibility of an independent body, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement, level 2 is taken at the end of compulsory schooling (age 16 or 17) and level 3 at the end of Upper Secondary education (age about 18). The level 3 Certificate provides the main route to HE. There is both internal and external assessment.

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Yes

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

The NZQA *Assessment and Certification Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools* section 6.1.3 sets out the rules for special assessment conditions for candidates with a long term condition or learning difficulty, who feel they may be disadvantaged in an external assessment, particularly an examination. Candidates must apply to the NZQA with evidence of the need; there should also be evidence that the need has been reported during their time at secondary school and that they have been receiving appropriate learning support at school and are allowed special conditions in internal assessments.

The special assessment conditions which are commonly approved are:

- Extra time
- Supervised breaks or rest periods
- Modifications to the visual presentation of booklets (usually for sight-impaired candidates) - enlarged/large-print papers, Braille versions of papers, special coloured papers
- Use of computers or other technological aids such as Closed Circuit Television (for candidates who have difficulty with reading or writing) if this is the usual method of communication
- assistance by a reader, writer or reader/writer.

See *Special assessment conditions commonly approved*

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/acrp/secondary/docs/special-assess-conds-approved.doc>

Special assessment conditions must not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates. For example, the fact that a candidate is a 'slow reader' or a 'poor speller' does not, in itself, justify special assessment conditions assistance. In such circumstances there will usually be some underlying cause of the candidate's difficulty.

For some assessments, mainly in foreign languages and graphics, some types of special assessment conditions are unavailable ('exclusions').

Special assessment conditions are not available to candidates with short-term disadvantages, such as a recent illness or an accident, who should apply instead for **compassionate consideration**.

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

A range of permanent or long term conditions are covered, including:

- physical disability
- sight impairment
- hearing impairment
- medical conditions which are long-term illnesses such as eating disorders, depression, diabetes and epilepsy
- significant proven reading or writing difficulty.

Schools may not apply for special assessment conditions in situations where ... the integrity of assessment would be compromised by reducing the validity and reliability of assessment.

References:

New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Assessment and Certification Rules and Procedures for Secondary Schools <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/acrp/secondary/contents.html> with links to documents giving greater detail.

Interesting examples

Country: Singapore

Terminology used:

Special education, Special needs (Singapore)

Special arrangement(s), adjustment (Cambridge International examinations)

The term 'special consideration' is used by CIE in relation to short term problems such as accident or bereavement; these are outside the scope of this survey.

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

Overall policy is determined by the Singapore Ministry of Education. The detailed regulations are those of the awarding body, CIE.

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Yes, where appropriate.

The relevant examinations are set by Cambridge International (formerly UCLES) - Singapore Cambridge (UCLES) GCE N Level and/or GCE O Level is taken at the end of lower secondary education and Singapore Cambridge (UCLES) GCE A Level after two or three years of upper secondary education.

Internal assessment is also undertaken as part of the teaching-learning process.

Pupils with special needs may be educated either in special schools (known as SPED schools) or in mainstream schools with additional support.

Pupils who are successful in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) are expected to continue their education in mainstream secondary schools, following the normal curriculum, with the help of special resource teachers if needed. The Ministry of Education is currently increasing the resources available to help pupils with special needs in mainstream schools and Special Needs Officers (SNOs) are being made available to help students with mild to moderate dyslexia and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

SPED schools exist for different disability groups, such as the visually impaired, those with hearing impairments and those with learning disabilities. These schools have additional support including resource teachers to help pupils cope with the curriculum.

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

The special arrangements which are available are set out at length in Part 6 of the Cambridge International Examinations Handbook for Centres (draft 2008 edition as supplied by CIE) and are the same as those used at other CIE centres. They are designed to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged by factors which are irrelevant to the knowledge and skills being assessed, but that they are not given an advantage over other candidates. It follows that special arrangements are not permitted if they would compromise the assessment criteria for the subject in question, eg if a reader was used for an examination designed to test reading ability.

The special arrangements which may be permitted include:

- extra time, usually up to 25% (eg for candidates with physical handicaps, hearing problems, a speaking difficulty or a learning disability) but up to 100% for Braille users
- supervised rest breaks (eg for candidates with physical or visual handicaps)
- provision of the paper in Braille or enlarged format
- special help for colour blind candidates where necessary

- provision of the questions in simplified language or via sign language to help the candidate to read the questions
- use of a reader to read the questions (eg to a visually handicapped candidate)
- headphones or other special measures for hearing impaired candidates in language listening tests
- use of a prompter for candidates with attention deficit to direct his/her attention back to the task
- use of a writer or scribe (eg for candidates with physical or visual handicaps)
- use of a computer, word processor or Braille machine, if this is the candidate's normal means of written communication (eg for candidates with physical or visual handicaps or a learning disability)
- permission for the centre to provide a transcript if the candidate's writing is difficult to read
- provision of a practical assistant for practical examinations

Centres must apply in advance for special arrangements for their candidates and applications must be supported by medical or psychological evidence.

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

See above. Dyslexia is named only in relation to an example (see below), but clearly may be included amongst the learning disabilities for which special arrangements may be made.

References:

Singapore Ministry of Education website (www.moe.gov.sg) especially sections on Education system/special education and Our Curriculum/Programmes/Support for children with Special Needs.

Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) <http://www.seab.gov.sg/> - no useful information found.

Cambridge International Examinations, Extract (Part 6) from draft 2008 edition of the Handbook for Centres, specially supplied by CIE

Interesting examples

The Handbook provides three examples of situations in which special arrangements would not be permitted, because they would interfere with the integrity of the assessment. One of these relates to dyslexia:

A candidate with severe dyslexia wants to take English Language and Modern Language examinations but cannot read or write adequately. As the assessment criteria being tested in these subjects includes reading and writing, he cannot have an adjustment in the form of a reader in the reading papers. It may not be possible to use a scribe in the writing papers for Modern Languages, if it is not possible for the candidate to dictate the responses letter by letter, including all punctuation. A decision needs to be made as to whether to enter him for these subjects on the basis of how much he could complete independently.

Country: Netherlands

Terminology used:

adaptation (aanpassing)

dyslexia (dyslexie or leesblindheid)

visually impaired children (visueel gehandicapte kinderen);

deaf children (dove kinderen); partially hearing children (slechthorende kinderen)

children with severe speech disorders (kinderen met ernstige spraakmoeilijkheden)

physically disabled children (lichamelijk gehandicapte kinderen)

children with severe learning difficulties (ZMLK - zeer moeilijk lerende kinderen)

chronically sick children (LZK - langdurig zieke kinderen)

severely maladjusted children (ZMOK - zeer moeilijk opvoedbare kinderen)

students with learning difficulties (MLK students)

schools for students with learning and behavioural difficulties (LOM schools)

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

Policy is decided nationally.

Pupils with special needs may be educated either in special schools or in mainstream schools. Current policy is to encourage integration of special needs pupils into mainstream schools, wherever possible, with extra support provided. At primary level this is termed the 'Going to School Together' policy (WSNS - Weer Samen Naar School). A number of special schools still remain, however, divided into four categories, according to the type of disability.

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

There are three secondary options for students aged 12+:

- a four-year pre-vocational secondary education course, *VMBO* – this is primarily vocational and therefore outside the scope of this study
- the five-year *HAVO* (hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs), which leads to higher professional education
- the six-year *VWO* (voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs), which leads to university education.

The first two years or foundation cycle of secondary education (*basisvorming*) (students aged 12-15) is more or less common to all school types, based on centrally set learning outcomes (*kerndoelen*). A common certificate for this first stage has been abolished recently (see <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/onderbouwvo-nota1.pdf>). The second cycle prepares students for the differentiated terminal examinations.

The National Institute for Educational Measurement (Centraal Instituut voor Toets Ontwikkeling - CITO) is responsible for developing tests, assessment systems and examinations for general education. See <http://www.cito.nl/>.⁶

A new policy document (see <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/26259.pdf> - in Dutch) issued on 25 June 2007 reformulates existing practices concerning learners with special needs. The

⁶ See end of item for vocational examinations.

key principle is that the needs of the individual are central, so that the emphasis will be on what a child can do, and not on what she or he cannot do. A new concept has been developed; instead of special education (*speciaal onderwijs*) the policy document speaks of suitable education (*passend onderwijs*). In the past few years the number of children identified as requiring special education has grown by 50% to 90.000, despite attempts to integrate them more into regular education. By 2011 regional networks of special and regular education institutions must be functioning that can offer suitable education to any child that needs it. Havo and VWO can also join these networks in the future. Pupils who are unable to follow the regular study programmes, may follow a special education programme, with the extra support tailored to their individual needs. Every regional network must develop an integrated set of indicators, focusing as much as possible on how to deal with individual children. This means that on the basis of an analysis of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses an education pathway and appropriate qualification will be determined. The role of the inspection will also change and will focus on the question of whether all children are receiving a suitable education that leads to a clear qualification.

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

Information is available on the CITO website, but only in Dutch. It is clear from examination statistics, however, that exam papers may be made available in Braille, large print format, audio CD and text CD.

Expert evidence of the disability is required.

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

It can be assumed that all the conditions covered in special education (see list of terms at the beginning of this item) are intended to be covered by special assessment arrangements where relevant and appropriate.

Dyslexia is included and possible special arrangements include extra time (up to 30 minutes), large print and other formats – see <http://www.eindexamen.nl/9336000/1/j9vvgodkvkzp4d4/vg9zcbwzew7?regime=hflinks&horizon=vg41h1h8s8xm> (in Dutch) which links to article 55 of CITO regulations.

Information about provision for blind and partially sighted candidates (also in Dutch) is available on <http://www.eindexamen.nl/9336000/1/j9vvgodkvkzp4d4/vg41h1r9l9sr?regime=hflinks&horizon=vg41h1h8s8xm>

References:

EURYDICE UNIT, NETHERLANDS (2003). *The Education System in the Netherlands - 2001/02*. Online via the EURYDICE Network's EURYBASE database at <http://www.eurydice.org/> [The EURYDICE Network is the European education information network].

CITO, *Gezamenlijke persinformatie centrale examens 2006* (exam statistics – page 30 has figures for the number of tests provided in alternative formats) available on http://www.cito.nl/vo/actueel/persinformatie_examens_2006.pdf

Information relating to special groups of candidates is on <http://www.eindexamen.nl/9336000/1/j9vvgodkvkzp4d4/vg41h1h8s8xm#par9>

Interesting examples

Vocational secondary examinations

The CEVO (*Centrale examencommissie vaststelling opgaven* – Central examination committee for the determination of exam tests) oversees assessment for HAVO, VWO and VMBO. For the VMBO and the HAVO and VWO assessments there is a combination of school assessments and national examinations. For Secondary Vocational Education (MBO) there is a Quality Centre for Examinations (*KwaliteitsCentrum Examinering* - KCE) <http://www.kce.nl/> overseeing the quality of assessment, but specialised tests can be developed by providers, sectoral bodies (*Kenniscentra voor Beroepsonderwijs en Bedrijfsleven* - see www.colo.nl) or methodological expertise centres such as CITO, SLO or CINOP (www.cito.nl, www.slo.nl and www.cinop.nl).

Country: South Africa

Terminology used:

Special concessions, assessment concessions

What aspects [of access policy] are controlled or regulated centrally, and what aspects at [state or] institutional level?

In accordance with the National Education Policy Act 1996, the national Minister of Education determines national norms and standards for education, including assessment. Provincial governments have substantial powers, but must exercise these within the context of the overall policy goals.

One function of the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (*Umalusi*) is to accredit assessment bodies for examinations including the Senior Certificate and the General Education and Training Certificate (see below). There are currently 24 accredited bodies, many of them the Education Departments of South African provincial governments.⁷ *Umalusi* also monitors the quality of both the external examinations and the internal coursework assessment (CASS) for the qualifications which it certifies.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which is responsible for the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), also has a role in the accreditation of examination and assessment bodies, but mainly in vocational education and training. General education is covered by *Umalusi*

Education White Paper 6 in 2001 set out the principles for future special needs education, including that 'Assessment processes will address barriers to learning and current policies and practices will be reviewed and revised to ensure that the needs of all learners are acknowledged and addressed.'

The national policy document on the conduct of the Senior Certificate examinations, issued by the Department of Education (*National Policy on the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Assessment of the Senior Certificate, Department of Education, Circular 16/2005, April 2005*) provides 'norms and standards' for assessment concessions, but deals only with concessions on the number of languages to be taken by learners with aural impairment, aphasia and dyslexia (Section 20). It draws attention to further concessions related to reading and writing which may be granted in accordance with *White Paper 6*.

Individual provinces may issue more detailed regulations; an example is the Senior Certificate Examinations Manual of Gauteng Provincial Government.

In accordance with the special needs White Papers of 1995 and 2001, schools are given the flexibility to adapt programmes to meet the needs of special needs learners, so that some assessment decisions are likely to be made at local level.

Do students with disabilities take the general school leaving and matriculation examinations?

Students with disabilities may take these examinations. The relevant examinations are:

- the General Education and Training Certificate, taken at the end of compulsory lower secondary education (age 15, Grade 9); assessment for this is undertaken by the school, following the guidance provided nationally
- the Senior Certificate, taken at the end of post-compulsory upper or senior secondary education, which is known as further education and training (*FET*); there are three different pathways during this phase of education: the General academic pathway, the General vocational pathway and the Occupational pathway.

⁷ Interim Directives for Certification by *Umalusi*, September 2005 accessed July 2007 (see References)

If so, are any special arrangements made for such students to take the examinations and what might these arrangements involve?

In accordance with the key principles of the South African system of outcomes based education (OBE) teachers are encouraged to adapt assessment methods to learner needs to enable them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. These adaptations can also be requested for externally set assessments.

Schools are required to determine which learners should have access to adaptive methods of assessment and to make the necessary arrangements, including ensuring that any equipment is working satisfactorily. Special arrangements can include:

- provision of the exam 'paper' in alternative formats (on audio-tape, in large print or Braille)
- provision of an amanuensis/scribe
- supply of assistive devices, special equipment, etc.

Teachers may be assisted in these processes by a *District Based Support Team*.

The INCA archive provides a table of recommended alternative methods of assessment, but it is not clear whether all of these methods are permitted by all assessment bodies or how they are implemented. In Gauteng examination concessions must be agreed in advance and the invigilator must only permit those concessions listed on the individual candidate's exam timetable. The concessions mentioned in the Gauteng Examinations Manual are extra time, language concessions for the deaf, Braille papers, alternative questions, use of a sign language interpreter or a scribe, use of a typewriter or computer and concessions for learners with attention deficit problems or with spelling and writing problems.

The INCA table of recommended alternative methods of assessment is:

	Visual Barriers	Deafness of Hard Hearing	Deaf-Blindness	Physical Barriers	Learning Disability
Tape-Aid	✓			✓	✓
Braille	✓		✓		
Enlarged Print	✓			✓	
Dictaphone	✓			✓	✓
Video		✓			✓
Sign Language Interpreter		✓	✓		
Computer / Typewriter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alternative Questions/tasks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Additional Time	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amanuensis (scribe)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oral to teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

What kinds of disability are covered in these special assessment arrangements? Is dyslexia included?

See above. The documents found do not mention dyslexia specifically. INCA (para 1.2.1 in Special Education section) provides a list of learners for whom South Africa makes special

provision, which includes those with 'neurological and specific learning disabilities', but this does not necessarily mean that assessment concessions are available to all the learner types listed.

References:

QCA INCA archive (International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive <http://www.inca.org.uk/>); draft material on South Africa supplied by NFER in advance of final clearance and publication.

Government of South Africa, Department of Education, Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, July 2001 <http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/2001/educ6.pdf> (see section 2.2.6)

National Policy on the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Assessment of the Senior Certificate, Department of Education, Circular 16/2005, April 2005. Available on <http://www.info.gov.za/notices/2004/26789/> and http://wced.wcape.gov.za/circulars/circulars05/lg.html#www.info.gov.za/notices/2004/26789/index.html*e_inf_top.html#e2_05.html

Gauteng Provincial Government, Senior Certificate Examinations Manual, 2006, <http://www.education.gpg.gov.za/Legislation/circulars/2006Circulars/Circ.46.2006.ExamManual.doc>

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) website <http://www.saqa.org.za/>

Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (*Umalusi*) www.umalusi.org.za

Interim Directives for Certification by *Umalusi*, September 2005 <http://www.umalusi.org.za/ur/qualifications/Directives%20for%20certification%202005.pdf>

Deaf Federation Of South Africa, Education Position Paper, Draft 17, 20 January 2006 http://www.deafsa.co.za/doc/Deaf_Ed_PP_19.pdf

Interesting examples

Gauteng province appears to lead the way in appropriate concessions, at least for deaf learners. Their approach is commended by the Deaf Federation Of South Africa in their Education Position Paper:

The Gauteng Department of Education makes provision for adaptations in Senior Certificate exam papers for all subjects, which are written by Deaf learners. The language use in these exam papers is adapted so that the content is more accessible. However, the content is not different from that of the 'mainstream' papers. Inappropriate questions are replaced with different questions, e.g. questions that require knowledge of sound. This is done in conjunction with the internal moderators, thus maintaining the standard. Therefore DeafSA regards this practice as an example of reasonable accommodation related to equity and equality.