February 2023

**Ensuring equal access to public examinations
for candidates with sensory impairment**

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Preface

Department for Education

A previous version of this guide document was prepared using funding provided by the Department for Education under contract with NatSIP, the National Sensory Impairment Partnership.

NatSIP
National **Sensory Impairment** Partnership

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Note:

In this document, the term 'deaf' is used to describe all deafness, hearing impairment (HI) and 'hearing loss'.

The use of individual terms to describe deafness in case studies are as written by the sector colleagues who authored the individual case studies, and kindly submitted them for inclusion in this document.

0.   Versions of this document

This document was originally writtem in 2017 by Paul Simpson and Rory Cobb. It has been revised regularly since, most recently in February 2023 by a team including BATOD's Examination Access Arrangement Working Group, and colleagues from VIEW, RNIB and NatSIP.

This, the *February 2023 Edition* **replaces** all previous versions, which should no-longer be used.

1.   Introduction

The implications of sensory impairment are well known to teachers of children and young people who are deaf, and/or have vision impairment (VI) and/or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI). These same factors can also have a significant effect on all aspects of learning and development and are well known also to affect assessment. It is crucial that candidates with sensory impairment are able to show what they know, and can do without changing the demands of the assessment, and that any barriers to their being able to do this are removed or mitigated.

Much of the content of this document can be applied to all forms of summative assessment, but the primary focus of this guide is on general qualifications, i.e. GCSE and A-level. While we hope the information and advice is accurate, readers are also strongly advised to consult the official publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*[1] produced annually by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

This guide consists of six main sections and three appendices as follows:

Section 1   Guiding principles

Section 2   Access arrangements – Introduction

Section 3   Access arrangements for candidates who are deaf

Section 4   Access arrangements for candidates with vision impairment

Section 5   Access arrangements for candidates with multisensory impairment

Section 6   Special consideration

Appendix A   Sample specialist reports

Appendix B   Definition of disability

Appendix C   Where to find information about access arrangements for National Curriculum assessment

Please note that access arrangements for vocational qualifications and Functional Skills assessment follow the same broad principles as general qualifications but some specific access arrangements may differ. Details are given in the JCQ publication listed above.

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[1] See: http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

2.   Guiding principles

2.1   What are the guiding principles underlying the use of access arrangements for candidates with a disability?

The concept of creating a level playing field by minimising the 'long term and substantial adverse effect' of a disability on a candidate's performance will be clear to all concerned. It is important to stress to colleagues and others not in the SI field that this should not be thought of as giving students 'concessions' - a word which should not be used in this context - but rather as meeting their entitlement to reasonable adjustments in the light of the effects of their disability. Further information on the definition of disability is given in Appendix B.

Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with their duty under the Equality Act (2010)[2] to make 'reasonable adjustments'. They are intended to remove or minimise disadvantage, whilst not giving the candidate an unfair advantage. They are not granted automatically, but should be a response to the identified effects of an individual candidate's disability on their access to assessment.

Being deaf or having a vision impairment does not entitle the candidate to any specific arrangements they wish to have – it has to be shown that the candidate needs them. This is achieved by 'painting a picture of their needs' - explaining the effects of the sensory impairment on the candidate and providing evidence to support this, including, where appropriate, the results of standardised testing. Further information about these principles and processes is given below.

2.2   Reasonable adjustments

The definition of a reasonable adjustment is not straightforward and depends on individual circumstances. To quote from the JCQ guidance:[3]

> Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:
>
> • the needs of the disabled candidate;
> • the effectiveness of the adjustment;
> • the cost of the adjustment; and
> • the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
>
> An adjustment will not be approved if it:
>
> • involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
> • involves unreasonable timeframes; or
> • affects the security and integrity of the assessment.
>
> This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

In most cases, it will not be considered reasonable for adjustments to be made to the assessment objectives within a qualification. To do so would be likely to undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. For the same reason, there is no duty to make adjustments to competence standards within vocational qualifications.

2.3   Normal way of working

It is vital to ensure that normal classroom practice from the beginning of a learner's education reflects the sort of access arrangements which will be available when the formal assessment time arrives. This includes modified language in the classroom, modified curriculum materials in accessible formats, BSL interpretation where appropriate, and extra time in assessments if this will be requested later. In addition, there will need

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[2] See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents
[3] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AA_regs_22-23_FINAL.pdf

to be appropriate arrangements for specific tasks, e.g. the speaking and listening elements of modern foreign languages (MFL) or practical assessments in science. A key principle for external assessments is that any requested access arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in the classroom, and must not just emerge at the time of the assessment. Thus, candidates should be familiar by the time of the assessment with the implications of having extra time, the support of a language modifier or the format of modified paper they are going to use. Of course, 'normal way of working' is only acceptable if it does not undermine the basis of the examination, as explained above.

2.4   Choosing courses with care

While the majority of courses will be suitable for a young person with sensory impairment who has the appropriate academic ability, it is important to understand that embarking on a course does not automatically mean that the qualification at the end of it can be made accessible. Teachers of children and young people with sensory impairment need to support these learners at all stages and not just at the time of the assessment. This support includes ensuring that learners choose appropriate courses, and that suitable forethought is given in advance to any potential barriers in the assessment process and how these might be minimised or removed.

2.5   Painting a picture of need

It is not necessary for a candidate to have a Statement or EHC Plan or IDP in place in order to be eligible for an access arrangement. The main requirement is that the centre can provide a compelling case that:

a)   the candidate needs the access arrangement

b)   there is strong evidence to show why this is the case. and

c)   the access arrangement reflects the candidate's normal way of working.

This is referred to as 'painting a picture of need' and should take the form of a letter or file note held by the centre and made available on request in a centre inspection. The SENCo must have available evidence (on centre headed paper/template, signed and dated) which clearly shows evidence of need for each arrangement.

Although a Statement, EHC Plan or IDP is not required, for those learners who have them, it is good practice to ensure that reference to access arrangements for all types of assessment is included in the Statement or Plan, as this provides good evidence for the picture of need when applying for access arrangements.

It is important that these be discussed from as early in the learner's career as possible, so that they are embedded in practice within the school, and their use in formal assessments takes place smoothly as the learner's normal way of working. This is particularly important for pupils in the secondary phase of education, but also applies to Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs and the phonic check at the end of Year 1.

Paying close attention to a pupil's 'normal way of working' throughout their education, and in particular in the time leading up to an assessment, is also an important way of avoiding the use of access arrangements in the classroom which would not be allowed in an external examination.

2.6   Standardised test scores and JCQ's Form 8

For candidates with learning difficulties, the evidence required to support an application for extra time or a reader should always include standardised reading test scores, in order to demonstrate their eligibility for these arrangements. These tests scores should be recorded on JCQ's Form 8[4] and filed for possible inspection by JCQ centre inspectors.

Note that the current regulations state that tests used to support applications for access arrangements must be **current editions**.

It is important to emphasise that for candidates with sensory impairment, a standardised reading test score is **not always** required in order to justify a request for extra time or a reader in examinations. This is because it may not always be possible to assess these candidates' reading accuracy, speed or comprehension effectively, and also because medical evidence should already exist which proves that they have a disability and are therefore entitled to reasonable adjustments. This is particularly important for pupils with vision impairment, for whom appropriate reading tests are not readily available. Nevertheless, the centre must demonstrate that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their his/her reading and provide evidence of his or her normal way of working as evidence to support the application.

2.7   Preserving the integrity of the qualification

A key aspect of the provision of access arrangements is the need to preserve the integrity of the qualification. This means that some arrangements carry greater risk than others. The use of human support in particular, needs to be carefully controlled to ensure that what is assessed is the candidate's own knowledge and understanding. For example, language modifiers and communication professionals, although they must record the interventions they have made, are making them during the exam itself, so it is difficult to be sure that the arrangement is being applied fairly. These are therefore *high-risk* arrangements which, if not properly applied, could advantage or disadvantage the candidate, unfairly in either case.

Similar considerations might apply to the use of a practical assistant to support a blind candidate's access to practical assessment – the assistant must only carry out tasks which are not considered to be an integral part of the assessment itself. In such cases, rigorous criteria are applied, and full recording of interventions made must be provided by the centre. Such arrangements will also need to be separately invigilated and/or take place in separate rooms.

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[4] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/AA_regs_22-23_FINAL.pdf

3. Access arrangements - Introduction

3.1 Low, medium and high-risk categories

The main access arrangements available are set out in the JCQ guidance *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.[5] The guidance is not exhaustive, in that access arrangements not listed may be permitted in individual cases through discussion with the relevant awarding organisation. In all instances, a clear case needs to be made and supporting evidence must be available.

Although not described in the JCQ guidance in these terms, access arrangements can be considered as falling into three main categories, which reflect the way in which they are requested and approved:

- **Low risk** - arrangements which can be approved by the local exam centre without external permission. Records of these arrangements must be kept and may be checked by JCQ inspectors. Examples include the use of a low vision aid, amplification equipment and supervised rest breaks.

- **Medium risk** - arrangements which require external approval via *Access Arrangements Online* (AAO),[6] the online tool used by exam officers to manage applications[7]. AAO will approve a wide range of access arrangements automatically, as long as these meet certain criteria. Examples include the use of up to 25% extra time, modified papers in standard formats, or the use of a reader in papers where the skill of reading is not assessed.

- **High risk** - arrangements which require explicit approval by the awarding organisation concerned, having been rejected by the automatic AAO tool because they might undermine the integrity and/or security of the assessment, or because they have cost or time implications for the awarding organisation, which could make them unreasonable. This rejection does not mean that the arrangement is not possible, but further discussion with the awarding organisation is required before it can be approved. Examples include extra time above 25%, the use of a language modifier or practical assistant, or the provision of modified papers in formats other than those listed in the JCQ guidance.

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[5] See: http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration
[6] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/cap/aao---useful-information/
[7] See: For more information about AAO, see the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk and specifically https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/cap/aao---useful-information

3.2   Exemptions

Under the Equality Act 2010, a candidate with a disability taking general qualifications may be exempted from a whole component of a qualification as a very last resort if:

- there is no access arrangement available which can provide access to the assessment

- the candidate is unable to fulfil **all** the requirements of that component

- the exempted component makes up no more than 40% of the qualification.

Where an exemption is granted, the candidate's grades will be enhanced, i.e. the marks gained in sections of the assessment which have been taken will be increased proportionally to make up for lost marks. However, candidates should be aware that an *indication* may be placed on their certificate stating that it was not possible to make the full assessment accessible to them. Exemptions are used very rarely and require detailed discussion with the awarding organisation concerned.

3.3   Deadlines for requesting access arrangements

Deadlines for submitting applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications are given on the JCQ website.[8] Awarding organisations will try to meet requests submitted after this deadline, but do not guarantee they will be able to do so.

4.   Access arrangements for deaf candidates

Listed below are the main access arrangements that are likely to be suitable for deaf candidates. This is not an exhaustive list and any candidate with a disability is entitled to have their needs addressed on an individual basis.

4.1   Technology

Equipment used by the candidate in their normal day-to-day studies should be allowed in examinations wherever possible. This includes all audiological equipment, including FM systems, and desktop, laptop and tablet computers if these constitute the normal way of working. Depending on the skills being assessed, it may be necessary to turn off some specialist functions on ICT devices, such as spell-checkers. This arrangement is granted by the centre.

4.2   Extra time - 25% and more

Many deaf candidates will need extra time to complete an examination. This is because deafness commonly affects an individual's speed of information processing and linguistic access, which may be unrelated to their cognitive ability. For example, it may take a candidate longer to read the text or to have it read to them. Their deafness may also have had an impact on their memory, which again would necessitate extra time.

Extra time may also be required if a candidate is making use of other access arrangements such as a live speaker in MFL, a communication professional, or language modifier. The amount of extra time requested should be based on evidence of the candidate's normal way of working using the proposed access arrangement (e.g. in mock examinations) and regular assessments. Extra time typically varies from around 25-50% of the time allowed for the standard paper. More might be allowed if sufficient evidence of need is presented. There may be some tests or examinations where extra time is not allowed because completing a task in a set time is one of the skills being assessed.

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[8] For July 2023, see https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Key_Dates_June2023_FINAL.pdf
For other dates see: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/key-dates-and-timetables/

4.3   Modified papers and language modifiers

A *language modifier* is the term given to the person responsible in an exam for modifying language at the request of a candidate. The awarding body must have allowed the candidate to have the JCQ 'language modifier' access arrangement.

Language modifier is also the term used by BATOD to describe a qualified teacher of deaf children and young people who is accredited to carry out modification of a written examination by the awarding body (AB). To avoid confusion, this role will be referred to as a BATOD-accredited language modifier (BALM).

In England, most awarding bodies produce papers that have been reviewed for language accessibility as part of the production process. This review/modification process is undertaken either by BALMs, or by personnel from within the awarding body.

In Wales and Northern Ireland, modified papers for deaf students have to be requested as part of a candidate's access arrangements.

Scotland does not currently have papers that are modified for language accessibility.

Oral language modifiers were renamed as *language modifiers* because staff delivering this arrangement are allowed to use elements of BSL, SSE and Cued Speech.

To qualify for a language modifier a candidate must have a standardised score of 69 or less (very substantially below average standardised score) in relation to reading comprehension and/or vocabulary. The candidate must have been assessed by a specialist who has conducted an appropriate up-to-date test within 26 months of the final examination.

Access Arrangements Online does not include a language modifier. However, it enables centres to refer individual applications to awarding bodies.

Accredited training courses for language modifiers are run throughout the year. The JCQ document states that language modifiers 'must' have undertaken this training. However, and importantly, JCQ says that a fully qualified Teacher of the Deaf may act as a language modifier without the need to successfully complete this accredited training.

The invigilation arrangements are very strict:

- A separate language modifier and invigilator must be available for each candidate. The invigilator must listen carefully and observe the conduct of the language modifier throughout the duration of the examination. The invigilator must countersign the cover sheet ensuring that it accurately reflects the actions of the language modifier during the examination.

- Language modifiers may open the paper one hour before the examination to prepare themselves, but can only provide language modification when requested to do so by the candidate. It cannot be offered unsolicited.

- Modified papers must be ordered if a language modifier is to be used. In England, modified papers must be applied for on Access Arrangements Online. A drop-down list appears. If the relevant exam (e.g. GCSE Geography) is not on the list, it means the paper is modified at source and no further action is needed (as is usually the case). Application for papers on the list should be made to the relevant awarding bodies.[9]

- A language modifier may also act as a reader. A separate application for a reader is not required. For a reader, scribe, prompter, the regulations indicate the person acting as reader, scribe and/or *prompter may not normally be the candidate's subject teacher or TA* and that if it is, they must have an invigilator present. For a deaf child/young person, it should be recognised that they may struggle with an unfamiliar voice, therefore the person should be someone familiar to the candidate.

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[9] Language modified papers are only available in Wales and NI, not England or Scotland. 'Modified papers' refers also to other types of modification e.g. for candidates with vision impairment.

- An approved application for a language modifier will allow the centre to grant the candidate up to 50% extra time in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading. Such a paper or section cannot of course be modified by a language modifier. A language modifier may explain the instructions/rubric of any paper, including those testing reading

- And as in other cases, the use of a language modifier must also represent the normal way of working.

Full details are in the document Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.[10]

4.4   Communication professional

The JCQ document states that the role of a communication professional may be undertaken by a communication support worker, a sign language interpreter, a teaching assistant or a teacher of the deaf. The communication professional access arrangement can be requested for a candidate who uses BSL in his or her education. No evidence has to be provided for this to be granted. The centre can grant this arrangement. The communication professional should mark on the cover sheet all parts of the examination paper which were interpreted. Usually, it is not possible for the candidate to reply to the questions in BSL, although individual words can be used and written down. However, if a case can be made that this individual needs to do that, and the practical implications can be addressed by recording and transcribing the candidate's responses, it can be allowed in discussion with the awarding organisation. JCQ states that centres should video-record the signing of the communication professional to demonstrate accuracy. It is noted that the term 'should' is used rather than 'must'. JCQ strongly recommends that videoing takes place but accepts that this may currently cause practical difficulties, so it is not yet compulsory.

> The communication professional must be proficient in the use of the candidate's sign language, being qualified to a minimum of BSL/ISL at Level 3 (ideally at Level 6). The communication professional must be at an appropriate level for the examination. It is advisable that the communication professional should also be a qualified LM. The communication professional must be familiar to the candidate and must always work at the candidate's pace.

Following concerns expressed by colleagues that some of their communication professionals did not have level 3 in BSL even though they are operating at that level or higher, it was agreed that centres could approach JCQ to explain that fact.

As a result of the concern expressed, the 2019-2020 regulations, which still remain in force, are worded as follows:

> The communication professional **must** be proficient in the use of the candidate's sign language, ideally being qualified to a **minimum** of BSL/ISL at Level 3 (and aspiring towards Level 6). The communication professional **must** be at an appropriate level for the examination. It is advisable that the Communication Professional should also be a qualified Language Modifier. The communication professional **must** be familiar to the candidate and **must** always work at the candidate's pace.

This decision shows that JCQ and the awarding bodies respond in a positive manner when concerns are expressed.

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[10] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/

4.5 Listening tests in modern foreign languages

Live voice can be used where the candidate has difficulty hearing a recorded conversation. If several voices are used in the stimulus material, more than one person can be employed. This arrangement can be granted by the centre. Further information on ordering transcripts of tests which will be required can be found in the JCQ guidance document.[11] The transcript must be ordered in advance.

4.6 Music

Access arrangements for music examinations are usually discussed with the awarding organisation and can include alternatives to a listening test, exemptions, extra time and in some cases repetition of stimulus material.

4.7 Spoken Language Endorsement in GCSE English Language

Specific access arrangements for the spoken language endorsement element of GCSE English Language can be found in a document[12] written by the Inter-board working group for GCSE English Language and published on the BATOD website.

4.8 Readers including computer reader

Candidates who are unable to read quickly enough in an exam context as a result of linguistic delay caused by their deafness may need the support of a reader. For a deaf candidate, it should not be necessary to provide evidence of their reading speed and comprehension when applying for this arrangement.

The reader is permitted to read the text or questions but must not explain or clarify the questions or text, or advise on timing or the choice or order of questions. A language modifier may be more suitable to assist in clarifying complex language although qualification for an LM is more difficult as an LM is regarded as an 'arrangement of last resort'. Readers are not usually allowed in sections of papers which are testing reading, as candidates cannot be granted marks for a skill that they are unable to demonstrate, but if a candidate cannot access a computer reader, a lip-speaker may be permitted. For papers testing reading, the candidate can make use of the read aloud facility, where they can have 50% additional time to compensate for not having a reader. Read aloud should be accommodated in a separate room. The read aloud facility is an arrangement that can be utilised for reading assessments or papers that include reading sections. See below for more details about this arrangement.

See JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments[13] Appendix 1 for memory aid for a reader. This explains what a reader can and cannot do in an exam. Candidates should be made familiar with these rules in advance of their first exam, e.g. during internal school tests or mock exams.

4.9 Reading aloud

It can make a significant difference to a candidate who **persistently** struggles to understand what they have read, but who does not qualify for a reader, to read aloud. Where candidates are reading difficult text they may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read. **The arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.** A candidate who reads aloud to himself/herself **must** be accommodated separately within the centre.

If candidates are entitled to a reader, they can make use of the read aloud facility for reading exams or parts of papers that are testing reading. This is quite significant as it was not stated previously in guidance and the only previous option was the 50% extra time. Hearing candidates have the option of a computer reader or

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[11] See footnote 8.
[12] https://www.batod.org.uk/information/gcse-english-language-spoken-language-endorsement-advice-to-teachers/
[13] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/cap/aao---useful-information/

reading pen. Read aloud can be helpful not only for candidates who struggle to process what they are reading, but further it can support candidates being able to edit their own writing.

That is, read aloud is not just for candidates reading texts or sources out loud, but it also helps them correct their own mistakes. These options are not usually suitable for deaf children, so it is helpful for professionals to be aware of the read aloud option.

4.10   Scribes

Scribes are not generally appropriate or widely used for HI candidates unless it arises from reasons other than their HI. A small number of candidates have been permitted to respond in BSL and their responses be transcribed into English, but this is not commonly accepted by all boards, and would be likely to require a video transcript in addition should it be permitted.

See JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments[14] Appendix 2 for memory aid for a scribe. This explains what a scribe can and cannot do in an exam. Candidates should be made familiar with these rules in advance of their first exam, e.g. during internal school tests or mock exams.

4.11   Supervised rest breaks

Some candidates may find the amount of reading, writing and processing involved in a timed examination very tiring. It may be appropriate to allow them supervised rest breaks. Any time taken for a rest break should be added to the end of the exam, so that candidates are not disadvantaged. A rest break is not the same as extra time because the candidate cannot use this time to answer questions. In some cases a combination of extra time and rest breaks may be appropriate.

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[14] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/cap/aao---useful-information/

5.   Access arrangements for candidates with vision impairment

Listed below are the main access arrangements that are likely to be suitable for candidates with vision impairment. This list is not exhaustive, and any candidate with a disability is entitled to have their needs addressed on an individual basis.

5.1   Modified papers

Modified papers in accessible formats are an essential access arrangement for many candidates with vision impairment. The awarding bodies recognise and provide a range of 'standard' formats in the hope that these will meet the needs of most candidates. These formats are:

- **Coloured/enlarged paper** – centres should submit an application on AAO to open papers 90 minutes early and to copy them onto coloured or A3 paper as required. No changes may be made to the content or layout of the original paper.

- **Modified Large Print paper** – these papers are intended for candidates who cannot read a standard examination paper. The layout and presentation of the standard paper is modified to remove elements of visual complexity without changing the demands of the assessment. Pictures and diagrams are often re-drawn to make them more visually accessible. In some cases, pictures may also be replaced or supplemented with a written description. In some questions, 3D diagrams may be replaced with models. Modified large print papers are only produced when orders are made by the deadline. They are not produced automatically. Modified large print papers are provided in the following standard formats:

  - 18 point bold on A4 paper
  - 24 point bold on A4 paper[15]
  - 24 point bold on A3 paper
  - 36 point bold on A3 paper (may not be available in all subjects)

  - Tactile diagrams with print labels for use with modified large print papers

  - Non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper

- **Braille paper** – Including tactile diagrams with braille labels; – the standard format is contracted Grade 2 in Unified English Braille. Questions are modified according to the same principles described above for modified large print papers. Uncontracted braille is available on request. To request uncontracted braille papers, the centre should select Grade 2 braille from the drop-down box on Access Arrangements Online. They should then contact the exam board with their order number to request uncontracted papers.

Modified large print and braille papers should be produced in line with Best Practice Guidance for Modifiers and Producers[16] published by the UK Association for Accessible Formats.

5.2   Electronic papers

Electronic PDF files of standard print papers are available via Access Arrangements Online and may be suitable for some candidates with a mild vision impairment who prefer to read papers on screen. Centres may also be able to request electronic versions of modified enlarged papers to be read on screen, but these cannot be ordered via AAO, and should be requested directly from the awarding organisation concerned.

It is important to note that examination papers in electronic formats will not necessarily be fully accessible when zoomed or read with screen magnification software or a screen reader.

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[15] This specification was added in 2018
[16] This guidance is available on the UKAAF website at www.ukaaf.org Centres should consult it to make sure they are producing their own internal assessment materials in a similar format wherever possible.

UKAAF has developed minimum standards and guidance on producing exam papers in accessible PDF format, [17] but it is important to note that awarding organisations are at different stages in implementing this in practice. Centres should therefore contact the awarding organisation concerned to check details for individual papers and request samples for students to practise with.

5.3   Individually modified papers

Centres should be aware of the standard range of modified papers and to encourage their students to work with these wherever possible. If none of the standard formats meets the particular needs of a candidate then the centre should make a more detailed case for the format they require, based on evidence of the candidate's individual needs and normal way of working. Under the Equality Act 2010, candidates with vision impairment have a legal right to have their needs met on an individual basis, but a balance has to be drawn by the awarding organisation between the candidate's needs and what is considered to be reasonable in terms of time, cost and the security and integrity of the examination.

5.4   Extra time - 25% or more

Many candidates with vision impairment will need extra time to complete an examination. This is because vision impairment commonly affects an individual's speed of information processing, which may be unrelated to their cognitive ability. For example, it may take a candidate longer to read the text or to have it read to them. They may need more time to locate specific information in a modified paper in large print or braille. Extra time may also be required if a candidate writes slowly or dictates his or her answers to a scribe.

For a candidate with vision impairment. it should not be necessary to provide evidence of their reading speed and comprehension when applying for extra time. The amount of extra time requested should be based on evidence of the candidate's normal way of working using the access arrangements and the type of material in the examination concerned. Extra time typically varies between 25-50% of the time allowed for the standard paper, but extra time over 50% may be applied for examinations involving large amounts of text or complex diagrams if sufficient evidence of need is presented.

Note: Applicants be aware that extra time in excess of 100% is likely to be counter-productive in terms of fatigue. There may be some tests or examinations where extra time is not allowed because completing a task in a set time is one of the skills being assessed.

5.5   Supervised rest breaks

Some candidates may find the amount of reading, writing and processing involved in a timed examination very tiring. In these cases it may be appropriate to allow them supervised rest breaks. Any time taken for a rest break should be added to the end of the examination, so that candidates are not disadvantaged. A rest break is not the same as extra time because the candidate cannot use this time to answer questions. In some cases a combination of extra time and rest breaks may be appropriate.

5.6   Readers, including computer readers

Candidates who are unable to read independently or quickly enough in an examination context may need the support of a reader. For a candidate with vision impairment it should not be necessary to provide evidence of their reading speed and comprehension when applying for this arrangement. As well as reading the text of questions, a reader may help a candidate with vision impairment to identify diagrams, graphs and tables, but must not explain or clarify the questions or text, or advise on timing or the choice or order of questions. In general, readers are not allowed in sections of papers which are testing reading, as candidates cannot be granted marks for a skill that they are unable to demonstrate, and they are not permitted to decode music notation. The person appointed to facilitate an access arrangement must not normally be the

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[17]http://www.ukaaf.org

candidate's own subject teacher or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher or teaching assistant is used, a separate invigilator must always be present.

The follow more recent arrangement relating to readers was introduced:

Readers may decode symbols and unit abbreviations in maths and science examinations for candidates who require this arrangement to access the assessment, reflecting the candidate's current and normal way of working within the centre.

Under the same arrangements as those which apply to a reader, a candidate who uses a computer reader as his or her normal way of working should be able to use the computer to read text in an examination. Ideally the awarding organisation would supply the paper in a suitable electronic format for this purpose. Where this is not possible, it may be necessary to ask permission to open the paper 90 minutes early in order to scan it and set the computer reader up.

One important point to note is that a computer reader is permitted in exams testing reading, while a human reader is not. The difference is explained by the fact that a candidate accessing the paper through use of a computer reader is working independently, whereas a candidate with a human reader is not.

5.7   Scribes

A candidate with a vision impairment who is unable to write, type or braille independently or at sufficient speed may benefit from dictating his or her answers to a scribe, who will write word-for-word as the candidate dictates. A scribe must strictly follow the candidate's instructions to draw or add to maps, diagrams and graphs. There may be limitations to the use of a scribe in modern foreign language papers and also in English, where full marks for spelling and punctuation may not be available unless the candidate dictates all his or her responses in full.

5.8   Technology

In principle, any technology that is part of a candidate's normal way of working is permissible in an examination. This could include optical or electronic magnifiers, e-book readers, or computers or braille notetakers used for word processing. There are fairly extensive rules outlined by JCQ concerning the use of any type of word processor, summarised as follows.

- There must be no student's work or any other subject content on the machine.

- Spell check, grammar check, automatic facilities such as auto-correct and predictive writing software must be rendered inoperative.

- There must be no network link to intranet or internet.

A computer with screen reader software may be used in place of a human reader, but the same rules[18] apply regarding making application for a reader. As noted in section 5.2 (Electronic papers), centres wishing their candidates to access papers via ICT should check that the approach they intend to use will work with the formats available from the Awarding Organisation.

5.9   Practical assistant

The use of a practical assistant always requires approval from an awarding organisation to avoid the risk that the candidate may be credited with marks for work done on their behalf. The use of a practical assistant can be summarised as follows:

- **Written examinations:** A practical assistant may be needed for written examinations to, for example, guide the candidate to the correct passage of text on a page, or to hold a ruler in the correct place for a

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[18] See: https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

line to be drawn. Blind candidates may require a practical assistant to record the position of points or lines indicated on a tactile graph by means of pins and elastic bands.

- **Practical examinations:** Generally speaking, a practical assistant is unlikely to be permitted in assessments testing practical skills. However, if the practical assistant will be carrying out only minor tasks, it may be appropriate to ask for this arrangement. For example, there may be safety issues related to a candidate with a vision impairment being involved in the practical assessments for a science examination. In such situations a candidate would be credited with all the marks except those given for skills which have been performed by the practical assistant. The person appointed to facilitate an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment(s), i.e. reader, scribe practical assistant, must not normally be the candidate's own subject teacher or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher or teaching assistant is used, a separate invigilator must always be present.

- **Colour naming:** In some examinations, for example geography and science, the recognition of colours may be central to the focus of the assessment. Where a candidate is visually impaired and/or colour blind, a practical assistant should be allowed to name colours for them as long as this is compatible with the assessment objectives of the qualification.

5.10   Separate accommodation

Some access arrangements, for example the use of a reader or scribe, may necessitate the provision of separate accommodation. Candidates with vision impairment who require specific forms of lighting to maximise their access to examinations may also need to be accommodated separately. The 2022-23 JCQ regulations reference *sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room* e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates. For deaf candidates, separate invigilation on their own is advised as being in a smaller room with other candidates who can have this arrangement in place may present distractions to the deaf learner. Separate accommodation will in turn require separate invigilation.

5.11   Transcripts

Where a candidate's handwriting is illegible, his or her answers may need to be transcribed before being sent off for marking. It is important to note that a centre is also required to transcribe any answers written in braille into print before sending them off for marking. This means that the centre must have someone with the relevant expertise on hand to carry out this transcription in the limited time allowed.

6. Access arrangements for candidates with multisensory impairment

Many of the access arrangements described above for learners with deafness and vision impairment may also be appropriate for students with multisensory impairment. The list is not exhaustive and any candidate with a disability is entitled to have their needs addressed on an individual basis.

7. Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. The JCQ website[19] describes Special consideration as follows:

> Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. This means that there will be some situations where candidates should not be entered for an examination. This is because only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded. To make larger adjustments would jeopardize the standard of the examination. There are minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence. All examinations measure what a candidate knows and can do. The overall grade(s) awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination(s). The grades awarded do not necessarily reflect the candidate's true level of ability if attainment has been considerably affected over a long period of time. Where long term circumstances have prevented the candidate from reaching the competence standards, it may not be possible to make an adjustment.

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[19] http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Appendix A - Sample specialist reports

These reports are taken from examples provided by colleagues working in the field, to whom we are most grateful. They are intended as examples of real practice and to illustrate the fact that there is no single right or wrong approach to 'painting a picture of need' for individual candidates. We have anonymised and in some cases made minor edits to the text for the sake of clarity, while attempting to leave the content and meaning unchanged.

A1.   Student A (Deaf)

Background

This candidate has special educational needs arising from a permanent, congenital, bilateral deafness. He is a profoundly deaf student who uses British Sign Language (BSL) as his first language. This has resulted in delayed language acquisition and has a significant effect on communication and literacy and his access to the curriculum. He has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, he is in a Resourced School and has daily access to teachers of the deaf, communication professionals, and deaf adults. He has limited reading skills (shown by word reading and reading comprehension texts). He has a small vocabulary of English words and the number of unknown new words can render texts meaningless. He can follow meaning over shorter sentences but can lose the meaning over longer texts. BSL has a very different structure from linear English. A lot of information is conveyed by body movement and facial expression as well as in the signs. Information can be consecutive and moderated by each different feature of BSL which is hard for deaf children to then translate into English. His free writing is influenced by the structure of British Sign Language (BSL); it can be grammatically incomprehensible and difficult to follow without mediation.

He has a communication professional interpreting into BSL to access the curriculum in each lesson. The communication professional interpreting also supports him by helping him put his ideas and thoughts into written English. All tests are done in a separate room in the resource base.

He has 'back up' lessons in the resource base where the ToD emphasises the spelling and meaning of vocabulary (as these have to be fingerspelled in any tests or examinations).

The communication professional interpreting receives/opens any test or examination papers early to prepare a clear interpretation of the paper whilst fingerspelling all technical vocabulary. All technical words are highlighted to remind the Communication Professional interpreting to fingerspell those words.

Access Arrangements (all exams except English)

- Communication professional
- Early opening
- 25% extra time
- Separate room

A2.   Student B (Deaf)

Background

B has a profound, bilateral, sensorineural hearing loss; he was fitted with a cochlear implant at the age of three and a half. He wears a Nucleus N5 on the right side consistently. He has a Roger transmitter with an ear level receiver for educational use.

B has full time support at school (20 hours from a statement of special educational needs) to support his learning needs due to profound deafness and severe linguistic and literacy delay.

B has a significant language and literacy delay as evidenced by the test scores below and has had special arrangements in exams and assessments throughout his school life.

Test results for Student B

B's language and literacy are tested on an annual basis by his ToD in school.

British Picture Vocabulary Scales
This test provides an estimate of receptive vocabulary.

BPVS	Dec 13 II	Nov 14 II	Nov 14 III	Dec 15 III
Chronological age	12-01	13-01	13-01	14-01
Raw score	84	83	103	104
Standardised score		69	70	<70
Age equivalent	8-02	8-01	7-03	7-05
Percentile		2	2	<2

*Nov 14 BPVS II and III administered (change in score due to revised version of test)

Student B's raw score was not enough to generate a standardised score, recorded as less than 70, the minimum possible score. His age equivalent score of 7-05 is nearly seven years behind his chronological age and his very low percentile ranking (below the 2nd percentile) gives a clear indication of his continuing difficulties in this area and lack of year on year progress.

Edinburgh Reading Test
The appropriate level of the test was administered for B's chronological age.

Edinburgh Reading Test	3	4	4
Date	Nov 13	Nov 14	Dec 15
Chronological age	12-01	13-01	14-02
Raw score	14	14	20
Quotient		70	70
Reading age		--	--
Percentile		2	2

Student B found this test very difficult to access. He was only able to attempt the first two sections of this test, which examined 'skimming', the ability to extract required information without reading the passage too closely and the next section on 'vocabulary' which tests understanding of the meanings of words, and he was only able to correctly identify a few words. He found the subsets on 'reading for facts', 'points of view' and 'comprehension' too difficult to access, and therefore the test was stopped. He was unable to gain an age equivalent score. However, it can be said that it was considerably less than the minimum score on the test, corresponding to a raw score of 39. His standardised score of 70, the lowest possible standardised score on the test, on the 2nd percentile, gives a clear indication of his reading difficulties. In order to have a language modifier it is necessary to gain a score of 69 or less. The ERT stipulates that all scores below the minimum are given a standardised score of 70. The Gray Oral Reading Test 5 (below) was therefore administered.

Gray Oral Reading Test 5 (GORT 5)

This test examines oral reading abilities consisting of rate, fluency, accuracy and comprehension.

GORT 5 CA 14-2	Rate	Accuracy	Fluency	Comprehension	Oral Reading (Overall)
Raw score	28	14	42	15	
Age equivalent	9-3	7-0	7-9	6-9	
Percentile	9	2	5	1	2
Reading Index					68

Student B's scores on the subtests are all substantially behind his chronological age. He scored best on reading rate, an age equivalent score of 9-3, due to the fact he read very quickly, around 8-00 for fluency, and around 7-00 for accuracy and comprehension, his weakest score. His overall oral reading score lies on the 2nd percentile with an oral reading index of 68. These scores fall into the 'very poor' descriptive term on the test and clearly demonstrate his weakness in this area.

CTOPP 2 Speed of Processing Test

Last year, Student B registered the second lowest possible score in the 12th and 22nd percentile bracket (SS 82-89) on a speed of processing test (Rapid Naming Test DST). This year, Student B completed two sections of the CTOPP 2 test; Rapid Digit Naming (RDM) and Rapid Letter Naming (RLM). His composite score was 73, corresponding to a ranking on the 3rd percentile, demonstrating his continuing weakness in processing speed.

GCSE/GCE EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

(Including Controlled Assessment Tests)

To:	Exams Secretary & SENCo	Date:	December 2015
Re:	Student B		

Audiogram
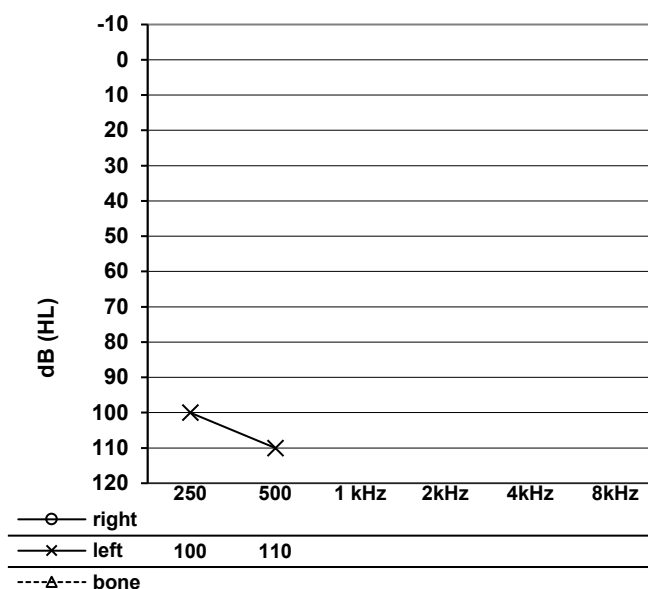
Student B has a long term and substantial hearing impairment. This hearing loss is profound, bilateral, and sensorineural in nature. The hearing impairment has significantly impacted on this candidate's language and literacy acquisition and development of cross curricula literacy skills.

Teacher of the Deaf Report

Form 8 Section A

The candidate has persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text and without access arrangements would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessments.

The candidate's processing ability is considerably slower which has an adverse effect on the candidate's ability to complete the papers within the time allowed so is eligible for an additional time allowance (25%).

Student B has a statement of special educational needs which allows for 20 hours of teaching assistant support for his profound hearing loss and severe language delay. Student B finds it difficult to access the content of lessons and complete required work without additional time for processing information and further explanation from a teacher, teaching assistant or teacher of the deaf. He is supported both in class and one to one by a teaching assistant and teacher of the deaf to facilitate his access to the curriculum.

Any listening/pre-recorded tasks are completed with a live voice, familiar to Student B, to enable him to use lip reading clues to support listening.

These arrangements reflect Student B's normal way of working. Without these access arrangements he would be at a considerable disadvantage when compared to non-disabled peers.

Form 8 Section B

I would advise that Student B should receive the following special arrangements for her GCSE examinations and school based assessments.

- Reader (familiar voice)
- Modified language papers
- Language modifier
- Read aloud facility
- Separate invigilation
- Additional time allowance of 25% (up to 50% where LM is not applicable eg reading section of English Language)
- Live speaker for pre-recorded aspects of exams to be taken in a small room with good acoustics

The candidate has used the access arrangements, both in lessons and in internal assessments/exams and this is his normal way of working.

The following strategies have been in place in school throughout KS3:
- Consistent TA support
- In class support to modify language and explain and clarify concepts
- Regular teacher of the deaf support (three sessions per week)
- Regularly reviewed IPM
- Small group work
- Pre and post tutoring
- 1:1 support to facilitate language acquisition and development
- Live speaker for listening tasks
- Reader for tasks
- Read aloud facility
- Modified exam papers
- Additional time allowance for internal exams/assessments
- Language modifier in internal exams/assessments

Form 8 Section C

The candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to read. Results from linguistic, literacy and speed of processing assessments are given below:

Reader/LM/Modified Papers?

Does the candidate comprehend continuous text or sentence at a level which is below average (SS84 or less)? **YES**

Give the candidate's results on assessments of reading text or sentences with comprehension.

Name of test	GORT5
Test ceiling	23-11
Date of administration	16.12.15
Centile (reading comprehension)	1
Centile (overall)	2
Oral Reading Index	68 (very poor)

Vocabulary Age

Does the candidate have a standardised score on British Picture Vocabulary Scales which is below average (SS84 or less)? **YES**

Name of test	BPVS III
Test ceiling	16-11
Date of administration	16.12.15
Standardised score	<70
Percentile	2

Extra Time

Does the candidate read continuous text at a speed which is below average (SS84 or less)? **YES**

Name of test	GORT5
Test ceiling	23-11
Date of administration	16.12.15
Centile (reading rate)	9
Centile (overall)	2
Oral Reading Index	68 (very poor)

Is the candidate's cognitive processing (e.g. phonological, auditory or visual processing, or working memory) in the below average range? (SS 84 or less)

Name of test	CTOPP
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	16-11
Which type of processing does this test?	Speed of processing
Speed of processing Rapid Digit naming/ Rapid Letter Naming	Composite score 73 Percentile ranking 3
If you have further below average scores for processing that you have not entered in this or other sections of this form please record them in 'Other relevant information' section on page 8	

Extra time is vital for Student B, especially in examinations and assessments, to allow time to process text and ensure that he is able to achieve his potential.

Other Relevant Information

For candidates requiring a **Language Modifier or extra time up to 50%** a standardised score of 69 or less is required in relation to reading comprehension and/or vocabulary.

Student B has a standardised score of 68 on GORT 5, and a standardised score of <70 on BPVS III, therefore I would advise that he should have a Language Modifier for exams and assessments.

If I can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact me.

[Signature]
Teacher of the Deaf

A3.   Student C (Hearing Impairment)

Table of results

BPVS

Date	Raw Score	Standardised Score	Percentile	Chronological Age	Age Equivalent
November 2015	116	74	4	14:06	8:07
October 2014	81	66	1	13:04	7:11
November 2013	79	69	2	12:06	7:09
May 2012	47	51	Below 2	11:00	4:07

ERT

Date and test	Raw Score	Standardised Score	Percentile	CA	Reading Age
May 2015 Test 3	48	NA		13:11	<9.06
January 2015 Test 2	41	NA		13:09	8:10
November 2013 Test 2	30	NA		12:06	8:00
October 2011 Test 1	59	NA		11:00	Below 6:03

Exam access arrangements have been advised for Student C. These currently include:

- Modified language papers
- A reader whose voice should be familiar and understandable to Student C
- Separate invigilation as Student C will need to have the whole paper read to her
- Additional time allowance of 25%
- A language modifier
- The speaking components of any exam to be taken in a small room with good acoustics

These access arrangements should be in place for school-based exams and assessments and should be part of student C's normal way of working in school.

A4.   Student D (Deaf)

To:	Exams Secretary & SENCo	Date:	8.12.15
Re:	Student D	DoB:	10.4.01

Audiogram

		250	500	1 kHz	2kHz	4kHz	8kHz
—o—	right	120	120	120	120	120	
—x—	left	130	120	120	120	120	
---△---	bone						

dB (HL) axis: -10, 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 110, 120
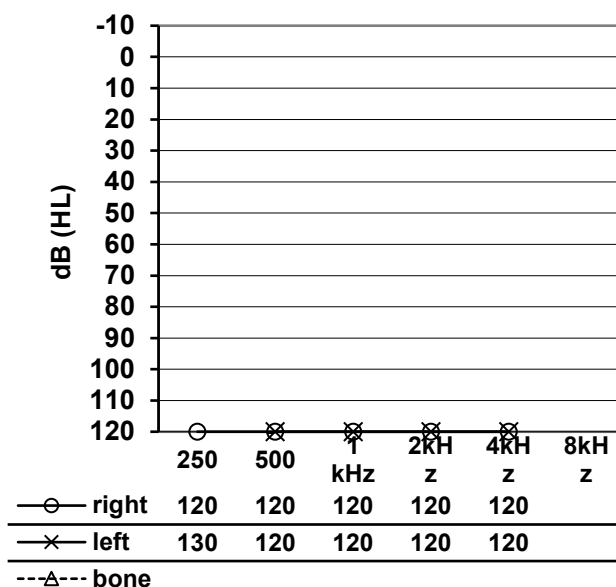
Student D has a long term and substantial hearing impairment. This hearing loss is profound, bilateral, and sensori-neural. The hearing impairment has significantly impacted on this candidate's language acquisition and development of cross-curricular literacy skills.

Teacher of the Deaf Report

Form 8 Section A

The candidate has persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text and without access arrangements would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessments.

The candidate's word processing ability is considerably slower which has an adverse effect on the candidate's ability to complete the papers within the time allowed so is eligible for an additional time allowance (usually 25%).

Comments from subject teachers indicate that Student D finds it difficult to complete work without the benefit of additional time/further explanation and clarification from a TA (other support)/small group work/support in accessing the lesson content.

The normal way of working for Student D incorporates support in lessons to help facilitate access. This support has been provided in most lessons. Any listening tasks have been completed with the benefit of live voice to enable the candidate to use lip reading clues to support listening. The proposed arrangements reflect Student D's normal way of working and without these arrangements he/she would be at a disadvantage when compared to non-disabled peers.

This candidate has an EHC Plan.

Form 8 Section B

I would advise that Student D should receive the following special arrangements for her GCSE/GCE/examinations and school-based assessments:

- Language modifier (can also act as a reader)

- Modified language papers

- Early opening of papers to consider possible modifications

- A reader whose voice should be familiar and understandable to Student A (preferably female voice as this is easier for Student A to understand).

- Read aloud

- Separate invigilation as Student D will need to have the whole paper read to her

- Additional time allowance of 25%

- The speaking components of any exam to be taken in a small room with good acoustics.

The candidate has used the access arrangements as described, both in lessons and in internal assessments/exams and this is her normal way of working.

The following strategies have been in place in school throughout KS3/KS4:

- In-class support to modify language

- Regular Teacher of the Deaf support

- Small group work

- Pre and post tutoring

- 1:1 support to facilitate language acquisition and development

- Live speaker for listening tasks

- Read aloud

- Reader for internal exams/assessments

- Modified exam papers

- Additional time allowance for internal exams/assessments

- Language modifier in internal exams/assessments

Form 8 Section C

The candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on her ability to read. Results from linguistic assessments are detailed below:

Reading Comprehension and Reading Speed

Reader/LM/Modified Papers?

Does the candidate comprehend continuous text or sentence at a level which is below average (SS84 or less)? **YES**

Give the candidate's results on assessments of reading text or sentences with comprehension.

Name of test	GORT5
Test ceiling	23.11
Date of administration	8.12.15
Centile	2
Oral Reading Index	68 (very poor)

Vocabulary Age

Does the candidate have a standardised score on British Picture Vocabulary Scales which is below average (SS84 or less)? **YES**

Name of test	BPVS
Test ceiling	16.11
Date of administration	11.11.15
Standardised score	74

Extra Time

Does the candidate read continuous text at a speed which is below average (SS84 or less)?
YES   (GORT 5)

Name of test	GORT5
Test ceiling	23.11
Date of administration	8.12.15
Centile	2
Oral Reading Index	68 (very poor)

Is the candidate's cognitive processing (e.g. phonological, auditory or visual processing, or working memory) in the below average range? (SS 84 or less)

Name of test	CTOPP
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	16.5.15
Which type of processing does this test?	Speed of processing
Speed of processing Rapid Digit naming/Rapid Letter Naming	Centile: <1
If you have further below average scores for processing that you have not entered in this or other sections of this form please record them in 'Other relevant information' section' on page 8	

Other Relevant Information

For candidates requiring a **Language Modifier or extra time up to 50%** a standardised score of 69 or less is required in relation to reading comprehension and/or vocabulary.

Student D has a standardised score of 68 on GORT 5 and a centile of <1 on the CTOPPS 2 speed of processing test therefore I would advise that she would benefit from having a language modifier.

If I can be of further assistance do not hesitate to contact me.

[Signature]

Teacher of the Deaf

A5.   Student E (Vision Impairment)

Student E is registered as being sight impaired and has been known to the Sensory Support Service since 2005. He has a diagnosis of Stargardt's Disease - a form of juvenile macular degeneration which causes progressive vision loss. This condition is characterised by loss of central vision, blurred vision for both near and distance, decreased colour vision and blind spots. There are also difficulties with light/dark adaptation.

Student E struggles to read small print or distinguish small detail and has very reduced colour vision. He requires print in a minimum of font size 16 and all unnecessary visual distraction removed. His distance vision is also significantly reduced at 6/60.

Student E's speed of visual processing is considerably reduced, as is his ability to quickly scan pages, lines of text and pictures for detail. He cannot read print which is over a coloured background.

This level of impaired vision substantially impacts Student E's learning and access to all curriculum and assessment materials is significantly compromised.

Student E requires modified large print papers for all examinations together with up to 25% additional time for their completion.

He will also require a practical assistant, use of IT, a scribe and a reader.

He may also require rest breaks during longer assessments.

This reflects normal school practice for Student E and without these special arrangements he would be at a substantial disadvantage.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

[Signature]

Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired

A6.   Student F (Vision Impairment)

To Whom It May Concern,

Student F has a diagnosis of congenital Leber's Amaurosis and is registered as being blind. He has no functional vision apart from some light perception, which he uses well for mobility purposes.

Student F uses a laptop with JAWS speech software, a Braillenote Apex braille laptop and/or a Perkins brailler to read and record his work and for all assessments. As is usually the case with braille readers, Student Fs reading speed is significantly slower than print users and he requires additional time to complete tasks.

Student F requires braille papers for all examinations together with up to 100% additional time for their completion. He will also require a practical assistant, use of IT, a reader, scribe and rest breaks. This reflects normal school practice for Student F.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

[Signature]

Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired

Sensory Support Services

A7.   Student G (Vision Impairment)

Student G has bilateral colobomatous microphthalmia and is registered as severely sight impaired. This eye condition affects the optic discs and macula in both eyes. Student G has extremely limited vision and a visual field loss in both eyes.

- Distance vision - **3/60**

- Near vision **– font 32**

- Visual field loss – Student G has an upper and right visual field loss; also has a restricted visual field on left side.

- Poor contrast sensitivity

Equipment used on daily basis:

Student G uses a range of low tech and high tech equipment; uses a Windows Laptop; touch types all work; a Magnilink distance camera to access board work; Zoom Text magnification software; text to speech functions; a Pebble magnifier; an iPad and a range of low tech equipment.

Special access arrangements GCSEs

- The centre should order A3 36 point bold modified large print exam papers. Student G also qualifies for up to 100% extra time for all GCSE examinations due to severe vision impairment.

- Student G will need to record answers through daily medium of the touch typing on a laptop.

- Student G will also need to use assistive magnification technology to access exam papers and will require a reader and a scribe.

- Student G will need rest breaks due to visual fatigue and a practical assistant in subjects that necessitates this under the JCQ guidelines.

- Student G needs to use all their specialist low and high tech equipment to give equitable access to all GCSE examination papers.

- Student G will need to work in a separate room for all examinations.

Signed

[Signature]

Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired

A8.   Student H (Vision Impairment)

Background information

Student H became unwell in September 2012 and she has not attended school since. Her symptoms included extreme tiredness, headaches and a loss of vision. Student H has been diagnosed with chronic fatigue and can only concentrate and work for short periods of time interspersed with rest periods. She has been unable to walk and has needed to be in a wheelchair although over the last few months she has been learning to walk again. She is now able to walk around the house.

Eye Condition

Student H was seen in December 2014 at the Eye Hospital and it was noted that she was photophobic (sensitive to light) but it was not possible to identify a cause of her reduced vision from an eye examination. She was also presenting with dizziness and the ophthalmologist suggested that this may be a side effect of medication. She has an appointment in early April at XXX Eye Hospital for electrodiagnostic tests.

Functional Vision (how Student H uses her vision)

Student H is extremely photophobic which means that she finds it difficult to tolerate any light. She has described looking at light as feeling 'like pins in my eyes'. She requires the curtains or blinds to be drawn and to wear dark wrap-around glasses.

Student H feels that there has been some improvement in her vision and she can make out the shape of objects that are close to her even though she cannot see the finer detail. This includes not being able to see facial expressions. Since December 13, Student H has been unable to read the largest letter equivalent to N48 on the Sonksen Near Chart at any distance but today she could just make out the letter O at this size but none of the other letters. She was also able to see text of 130 point bold on a yellow background on a computer. Although this represents an improvement it still means that functionally print of any size is not accessible.

Exam arrangements

Student H will require for her English GCSE:

- Extra time –25%

- Reader

- Scribe

- Rest breaks

- To plan her work on a dictaphone **OR** dictate plan to scribe **OR** write plan onto her iPad and listen back using Voiceover

Signed

[Signature]

Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired

A9.   Student J (Vision Impairment)

Dear Sirs

Ref: Student J DOB: [Redacted]

Student J is severely sight impaired and has no useful residual vision to access printed learning medium. Student J has come from Poland in the last year and has limited English language and literacy skills.

As Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired, I am responsible for monitoring Student J's progress, and advising her college of any additional requirements, to ensure she has access to all curriculum areas. Her current way of working to enable her to keep up with lesson delivery is for tasks to either be differentiated to allow her to complete it in time or if the lesson permits she is given extra time to complete tasks.

For the purpose of examinations Student J needs an uncontracted Grade 1 Braille exam paper, and would benefit from 100% extra time as she is considerably slower at accessing modified Braille medium. It would take her significantly longer to process tactile information such as diagrams. In addition to using Braille and tactile medium to access test papers, Student J is slower to read Braille in English and produce brailled responses in English.

Yours Faithfully

[Signature]

Qualified Teacher of the Vision Impaired

A10. Student K (Vision Impairment)

Dear Sirs

Ref: Student K   DOB: [Redacted]

Student K is severely sight impaired due to a diagnosis of Laurence-Moon-Beidl Syndrome which results in gradual deterioration of vision. He is under the care of YYYY (Consultant Ophthalmologist) at the XXXX Children's Hospital. Over the past year Student K has had a significant drop in vision and has had to come to terms with his vision loss and adapt to alternative means of accessing the school curriculum.

As Qualified Teacher of the Visually Impaired, I am responsible for monitoring Student K's progress, and advising his school of any additional requirements, to ensure he has access to all curriculum areas. For the purpose of examinations, Student K would benefit from at least 50% extra time as he is now much slower at accessing modified printed medium and it would take him significantly longer to process visual information such as diagrams, as it is a much more tiring process. He is starting to use a laptop with speech software to record his work, however because of the short time he has been using this equipment his word processing speed is too slow to complete larger amounts of text. For the purpose of examinations he would therefore need a scribe.

Student K's usual way of working in class would be to access learning resources in print size 36 and for examination purposes would need to access modified large print paper at print size 36.

Yours Faithfully

[Signature]

Teacher of the Vision Impaired

Appendix B – What is a disability?

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term
- judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions) to help better understand and apply this definition.[20]

Disability means 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'. Research suggests that about 6-7% of children are disabled.

'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial. 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months or is likely to do so.

The guidance from the Office for Disability Issues illustrates factors which might and might not reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day to day activities.

Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person's native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment
- persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating
- difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions.

Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include

- minor problems with writing or spelling
- inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document, which is in the person's native language without assistance
- inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours.

Is disability different from Special Educational Needs?

A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they need extra support because they find it harder to learn than the majority of other children or young people of the same age. Children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) do not necessarily have a disability, and some disabled children and young people do not have special educational needs. There is a lot of overlap between the two groups though, and students with sensory impairment are likely to be covered by both definitions.

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[20] See http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea-guide.pdf

Appendix C – Guidance on National Curriculum Assessments

Guidance on National Curriculum assessments is available for download as follows:

Year 1 Phonics check
[2022 Phonics screening check: administration guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)](publishing.service.gov.uk)

Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessment
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-tests-access-arrangements

Key Stage 2 National Curriculum assessment
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-2-tests-access-arrangements

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