

Special Assistance for Examinations/Tests Procedure

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Category: Academic	Date Created: September 1997
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Purpose

To ensure that students are not unfairly disadvantaged by reading and writing difficulties that affect their ability to complete a test or examination.

Scope

This procedure applies when a student may have a reading/writing difficulty that affects their ability to complete an examination or test.

Unless technical skill is being tested (e.g. typing speed), students who have an injury that affects their ability to write or operate a keyboard may apply for, and be granted, special assistance.

Students who are sitting national tertiary examinations administered by NZQA or other professional body will be covered by the policy of the relevant group.

Students requiring special assistance for examinations/tests must have their needs assessed on a case-by-case basis by a suitably-qualified UCOL staff member ('assessor'), approved by the Executive Director Student Success (or their delegate); that is, a person who is qualified to assess the reading and/or writing ability of students seeking special assistance. In most cases this will be the Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or Learning Advisor on the campus.

This assessment is to be carried out at least four-weeks prior to the examination, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This gives time to assess the student and, depending on the outcome of the assessment, make appropriate arrangements to ensure the student can participate in the upcoming test/examination.

Students from non-English speaking backgrounds will not be given assistance in examinations/tests simply on the basis that they have difficulty reading and writing English. In this instance, these students will need to seek permission from their Faculty to use an approved paper-based (non-electronic) translation dictionary.

The following assistance may be approved:

- Extra time – 15 minutes for each hour of the test/exam
- Assistance provided by a reader
- Assistance provided by a writer

- Assistance provided by a reader/writer/sign language interpreter¹
- Use of an approved English translation dictionary (no specialist dictionaries – e.g. medical – are allowed).

The Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or their equivalent (e.g. Learning Advisor (Disability)) will select the person who will provide assistance. The reader/ writer will not be known to the candidate and will not have specialist knowledge that relates to the examination/test. However, in some cases, the Disability/ Accessibility Coordinator will take individual circumstances into account when appointing a reader/writer; e.g. if a student is blind and the reader requires subject knowledge to interpret a technical diagram for the student.

Students requiring special assistance during an examination/test will be accommodated in a manner which does not disadvantage other students undertaking the examination/ test.

Responsibility

Lecturers, Programme Leaders, Heads of School, Disability/Accessibility Coordinators, Learning Advisors, and any other approved ‘assessors’ are responsible for ensuring that these procedures are followed.

Procedure

1. The Programme Leader or student contacts a UCOL Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or Learning Advisor (or their delegate) regarding the need for special assistance for a UCOL examination or final assessment.
2. The student meets with the Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or Learning Advisor and is assessed for special assistance.
3. If a recommendation is made for special assistance, the procedure is discussed with the student, and the Programme Leader is notified of the outcome.
4. The Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or Learning Advisor organises the required special assistance.
5. The reader/writer is required to read the Special Assistance for Examinations/Tests procedure and the Conduct of Examinations Procedure.
6. Two copies of the examination/test and relevant instructions are forwarded to the Disability/Accessibility Coordinator or Learning Advisor prior to the examination/test. These are given to the appointed reader/writer to take to the test/examination.
7. Students requiring assistance in examinations will be placed in a separate room at the time of the examination and will be supervised by their reader/writer.
8. The assessment is conducted and the completed test/examination is forwarded to the Programme Leader.

Related Documentation

- [Assessment and Moderation Policy](#)
- [Conduct of Examinations and Assessments Procedure](#)

¹ A reader/writer/sign language interpreter is a person employed by UCOL to provide reading, writing and/or sign language assistance for a candidate in an examination/test.