

Access arrangements for Exams and Assessments



Children and young people (CYP) with a hearing loss may need some adjustments to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by this.

- Progress should be monitored closely, and a **'normal way of working'** established which enables the CYP to reach their full potential.

Exam Conditions

Students with a hearing loss are vulnerable to mishearing generally but crucially important instructions and timings may be missed. Hearing aids which are most effective at short distances and amplify all sounds mean that listening in a large reverberant room with background noise may not be appropriate.

Exams should be taken in a quiet room so that the student is near and has access to the lip patterns of the invigilator with additional visual support for instructions and reminders. E.g. Start and finish times.

Modern Foreign Languages

- Ensure the CYP is making full and effective use of their hearing aids or cochlear implants if they have them.
- If they have a radio aid ensure this is used effectively.
- CYPs with hearing loss rely on lip patterns and facial cues to support their listening. They should have **access to a live speaker for listening assessments.**

It is important that this established as the **'normal way of working'** for the duration of their GCSE courses. This could be achieved by the teacher reading listening assessments to the whole class routinely rather than relying on the recording.

Extra Time

Hearing loss and wearing hearing aids requires a greater processing load when compared to hearing peers, **students with a hearing loss will benefit from extra time in exams to allow for this – usually 25%**. This will depend on the young person, their degree of hearing loss and other factors. During their GCSE course and ideally throughout secondary school, it should become apparent which students require extra time and again this should be established as **'the normal way of working'** for that pupil.

Rest breaks may also be appropriate for some candidates.

The Teacher of the Deaf will be able to support the young person and school in establishing this is necessary and recommend this in their Pupil Profile or Annual Report in order to evidence this for the exam boards (**Form 9**) on an individual basis.

PLEASE NOTE: These above recommendations are not exclusive. Many candidates may need additional adjustments, particularly those with an EHCP or who have BSL as a first language and need the support of a CSW. These will be established with the school, teachers the student and the Senco and highlighted by the Teacher of the Deaf in their annual report or pupil profile on an individual basis.

Information from the NDCS can be found here: <https://www.ndcs.org.uk/advice-and-support/all-advice-and-support-topics/education-and-learning/exam-access-arrangements>

REFERENCES

The advice above and in each students' pupil profile or Annual report is supported by the JQA exam board guidance:

'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment 2025/26'
'Overview of evidence requirements for access arrangements (Effective from 1 September 2025)'
'25% extra time infographic'

All found here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>

REFERENCES continued...from Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment 2025/6'

'Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.'

See Section 4.1.3 and all of Section 4.2 (p31 onwards)

5.1 (p38) ...the SENCo must have trialed and exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks... before making an application for 25% extra time'

**5.2.3 : where a candidate has complex needs (sensory needs) (page 44)
relates to 25% extra time**

'Substantial impairment – evidence of need...

'appropriate evidence of need (as below) **must** be available at the centre for inspection. **Form 8 is not required and must not be used. Standardised scores are not required'**

... 'So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo **must** complete Form 9 to:

- detail the candidate's current difficulties to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in examinations, summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff;
- confirm that **25% extra time is the candidate's normal way of working;**
- provide evidence from teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning.

Form 9 will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability:'

.....
• **'a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service;**'

...
Where a candidate with an existing Form 9 progresses from GCSE to GCE qualifications (and other Level 3 qualifications) they will need to complete a new Form 9.

5.12 LIVE SPEAKER FOR PRE-RECORDED EXAMINATION COMPONENTS (PAGE 75)

Specifically 5.12.1 – **'normal way of working'**

5.12.2The SENCo should consult a specialist teacher when considering arrangements for candidates with a sensory impairment i.e. a Qualified Teacher of Deaf Children and Young People

5.12.5 **The live speaker should, wherever possible, be the candidate's subject or specialist teacher.** However, an invigilator must always be present in the examination room.

5.12.6 **Ideally a live speaker should work with one candidate.** The centre must always consider the candidates' abilities as lip/speech readers when requiring them to share a live speaker. There must never be more than six candidates to one live speaker and candidates should be seated to gain maximum benefit from the live speaker

...
5.12.8 **Additional repetition is allowed, if necessary, to take into account persistent loss of concentration or to enable the candidate to process the information more easily. 25% extra time may be needed due to the additional repetition** and the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties in following speech at normal speed. (See Chapter 5, paragraph 5.2.3.)'

6.6 (page 99) refers to Language Modifiers It is unlikely that a student in a mainstream setting would qualify as these *'should be a rare and exceptional arrangement'*. The exam boards' argument being that all papers including A levels are already modified with the exception of subject specific terms and vocabulary.

8.5 (p114) Relates to 'alternative rooming arrangements' and 'access to mobile phone for medical purposes' e.g. white noise

