



The University of Malta
& Students with Disability

2007

This document was written and edited by Dr Mary Anne Lauri (Pro Rector and Chair ADSC), Dr Marie Alexander and Dr Paul Bartolo in consultation with the members of the ADSC and its working groups, University of Malta

ACCESS-Disability Support Committee (ADSC):

Pro Rector Dr Mary Ann Lauri (Chair), Dr Marie Alexander, Dr Paul A. Bartolo, Mr Benny Borg Bonello, Mr Joe Camilleri, Prof Joseph Falzon, Prof Frederick Fenech, Ms. Lisa Padovani, Chev. Charles Sciberras, Prof Frank Ventura, Prof Angela Xuereb, Mr Alfred Zaffarese and Ms Amy Zahra.

In consultation with representatives of the Education Division, Mr George Borg, Mr J Raymond Camilleri and Mr Peter Vassallo.

Sensory, Physical and Medical Impairment Working Group:

Dr Marie Alexander, Mr Joe Camilleri and Ms Vicki Gauci.

Dyslexia Working Group:

Dr Paul A. Bartolo (Chair), Dr Carmel Cefai, Prof Joseph Falzon, Ms Ruth Falzon, Dr Christine Firman, Dr Victor Martinelli, Ms Liza Padovani, and Prof Frank Ventura.

ICT in Examinations Working Group:

Dr Paul A. Bartolo (Chair), Mr Joe Camilleri, Mr James Cilia, Mr Stanley Debono, Mr Alfred Zaffarese.

We are grateful to **Ms Carmen Bezzina** for her help with collating important information regarding access arrangements and **Ms Marchita Mangiafico** for her hard work and endurance throughout the many drafts of the document as secretary of the ADSC committee, the various sub-committees and working groups.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
AND
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY**

Copyright © The University of Malta, 2007
Msida, Malta

ISBN 978-99932-0-566-1

These guidelines for access arrangements were developed on the basis of two existing documents, namely, “Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements-Guidelines” of the Ministry of Education, Malta (2002) and the “Access Arrangements and Special Considerations: Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations 1 September 2006- 31 August 2007” of the Joint Council for Qualifications, UK (2006). Substantial sections were reproduced from the second document with the kind permission of the Joint Council for Qualifications. The document also reflects the experience of the ADSC and the MATSEC Board in the processing of applications for access arrangements for MATSEC and University Examinations. The document was approved by the Senate of the University of Malta. Written and produced by the ACCESS – Disability Support Committee under the chairmanship of Mary Anne Lauri Ph.D. (London), C. Psychol.

Printed by the Printing Unit, University of Malta

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1 The University of Malta and Disability	2
Part 2 The ACCESS – Disability Support Committee and The ACCESS – Disability Support Unit	4
Part 3 Guidelines For Access Arrangements for Examinations	6
1 Introduction	6
2 The Purpose of Access Arrangements	9
3 General Guidance on Access Arrangements	10
3.1 Selection of course and examination syllabus	10
3.2 What is the degree of the functional impairment affecting the examination(s)?	10
3.3 Are all examinations equally demanding or does the candidate require different arrangements for different examinations?	10
3.4 Why is it necessary to compile a history of the arrangements made in the school or other institution?	10
3.5 Why is it necessary to consider the arrangements made throughout the course of study?	10
3.6 What steps should be taken before applying for access arrangements?	11
4 Principles which are Applied by the ADSC to Reach Decisions about Access Arrangements	12
5 Barriers to Examinations	12
6 The Range of Access Arrangements which may be Made	13
6.1 General Principles	13
6.2 Time Allowance	13
6.3 Means of Access to Questions	14
6.4 Personal Assistance	15
6.5 Examination Venues	15
6.6 Means of Presenting Responses	15
6.7 Coursework	15
6.8 Exemption	15
6.9 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar	16
7 How to Apply for Access Arrangements	17
8 Guidance on Particular Impairments	18
8.1 Candidates with Mobility Impairment	18

8.1.1	Physical Access to Examination Venues	18
8.1.2	Personal Assistant	18
8.1.3	Scribe	18
8.1.4	Time Allowance	18
8.1.5	Supervised Rest Periods	20
8.1.6.	Means of Presenting Responses	20
8.1.7	Coursework / Project Work	21
8.1.8	Oral Examinations	22
8.1.9	Practical Examinations and Assessments	22
8.2	Visually-Impaired Candidates	23
8.2.1	Time Allowance	23
8.2.2	Rest Breaks	24
8.2.3	Means of Access to Questions	24
8.2.3.1	Unmodified enlarged paper	24
8.2.3.2	Modified enlarged paper	24
8.2.3.3	Braille paper	25
8.2.3.4	Tactile enhancement	25
8.2.3.5	Reader	25
8.2.3.6	Low vision aids and technological devices	25
8.2.3.7	A key for colour identification	25
8.2.3.8	Use of colour	25
8.2.4	Means of Presenting Responses	25
8.2.4.1	Handwriting	26
8.2.4.2	Word-Processing	26
8.2.4.3	Braille	26
8.2.4.4	Scribe	26
8.2.5	Coursework	26
8.2.6	Practical Examinations and Assessments	26
8.2.7	Additional Considerations	26
8.3	Hearing-Impaired and Deaf Candidates	28
8.3.1	Time Allowance	28
8.3.2	Means of Access to Questions	28
8.3.3	Means of Presenting Responses	29
8.3.4	Coursework	29
8.3.5	Oral Examinations	30
8.3.6	Practical Examinations	30
8.3.7	Mental Arithmetic Tests	30
8.4	Candidates with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	31
8.4.1	Barriers to Accessing the Examination that Candidates with SpLD might Experience	31
8.4.2	Access Arrangements for Candidates with SpLD	32
8.4.2.1	Extra Time	32
8.4.2.2	Readers	33
8.4.2.3	Word Processors	33

8.4.2.4	Scribes	35
8.4.3	Guidelines for the Assessment of the Candidate's Learning Difficulties	36
8.4.3.1	General Principles	36
8.4.3.2	Literacy Attainment	37
8.4.3.3	Reading Skills	37
8.4.3.4	Writing Skills	37
8.4.3.5	Other Relevant Information	38
8.4.3.6	Completing the Report of the Assessment	38
8.4.3.7	Psychological Assessment by a Qualified Psychologist	39
8.4.3.8	Assessment by a Specialist Teacher	39
Appendix 1	ADVISORY NOTES	
1.1	Documentation Required when Making Requests for Examination Arrangements	42
1.2	Notes on the Use of Readers	43
1.3	Notes on the Use of Communicators for Hearing-Impaired Candidates	46
1.3.1		46
1.3.2	Recording	46
1.3.3	Speaker	47
1.3.4	Total Communicators	48
1.4	Notes for Teachers of the Deaf Supporting Hearing-Impaired Candidates in Coursework	50
1.4.1	General Principles	50
1.4.2	General Guidance on the Planning and Execution of Coursework Assignments	50
1.4.3	Guidance on Written Work	51
1.5	Notes on the Use of Practical Assistants	52
1.6	Notes on the Use of a Scribe	54
1.7	Notes on the Production of a Transcript	56
1.8	Notes on the Use of Prompters	58
1.9	Guidelines on the Use of Word Processors and Processor Controlled Devices	60
1.9.1	General Principles	60
1.9.2	Implementation Arrangements	61
1.9.3	Further notes on use and preparation of assistive technology	62
1.9.4	Generic matching of assistive ICT solutions to impairment types	63
1.6.5	Application of the above principles	63

APPENDIX 2 APPLICATION FORMS	65
2.1 Further guidance on how to complete the application forms for access examination arrangements	66
2.2 Form I – Application form for all MATSEC candidates except Hearing-Impaired and Deaf Candidates and candidates with SpLD	67
2.3 Form II – Application form for Hearing-Impaired and/or Deaf MATSEC candidates	70
2.4 Form III – Application form for MATSEC candidates with SpLD	74
2.5 Application form for access arrangements for University Students	82

INTRODUCTION

This document is divided into three parts.

The first part is an outline of the University's outlook on disabled students vis á vis tertiary education.

The second part is intended as an overview of the support that can be made available to disabled students both in terms of qualifying to start a University course as well as to follow the various course components. It looks at the work of the ACCESS –Disability Support Committee and the ACCESS – Disability Support Unit and details how the disabled student should apply for support as soon as s/he completes secondary school and applies for a course of study at the Junior College as well as in subsequent years when s/he completes the sixth form course and then applies for a course of study at the University. It looks at provisions that can be made to facilitate disabled students' life on campus.

The third part is made up of the guidelines that are followed by the ADSC to provide disabled students with access to examinations both at SEC and MATSEC level as well as University examinations at the various levels for certificates, diplomas and degrees.

In the guidelines, the MATSEC Board and other University Examination Authorities and the ACCESS-Disability Support Committee (ADSC) will be referred collectively as Examination Authorities.

These guidelines were developed on the basis of two existing documents, namely, “Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements- Guidelines” of the Ministry of Education, Malta (2002) and the “Access Arrangements and Special Considerations: Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations 1 September 2006- 31 August 2007” of the Joint Council for Qualifications, UK (2006). Substantial sections were reproduced with slight adaptations on the basis of the experience of the ADSC and the MATSEC Board in the processing of applications for Access arrangements for MATSEC and University Examinations.

¹ The *ACCESS – Disability Support Committee* will be referred to as ADSC in the document.

PART 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA AND DISABILITY

The University of Malta recognizes the rights of all disabled persons to access education at all levels, to be provided with appropriate support throughout the duration of their course of studies and to be assessed in fair ways that take the effects of their impairment/s into account. For this reason the University has appointed the ADSC to study requests made by disabled students and staff and to make recommendations to Council and Senate regarding the ways that accessibility, in its widest sense, can be achieved for each group and individual. The University intends not only to comply with legal requirements in the area of equal opportunities for disabled persons, but will do all in its power to improve the quality of life of disabled students and staff on campus.

The University of Malta recognizes the need to adapt its campuses and resources to allow full access wherever this is possible. In fact, for some time now it has been working towards providing greater physical accessibility on campus. It accepts that adaptations need to be made wherever obstacles or barriers exist that make it difficult or impossible for disabled students to follow a course although they are otherwise able to. In the same way, the University of Malta recognizes the need to remove obstacles or barriers, including attitudinal barriers, that make it difficult or impossible for disabled staff to carry out their duties.

The University of Malta recognizes the fact that there are candidates who have coped with the learning demands of a course but for whom the standard arrangements for the assessment of their attainment may present a barrier which could be removed without affecting the validity of the assessment. This applies both in the case of candidates with known and long-standing disabilities as well as in the case of candidates who are affected at or near the time of assessment.

These assessment barriers can usually be removed through some modifications of the regular arrangements. These resulting arrangements will be referred to in this document as **access arrangements**. Wherever necessary, the ADSC will study each instance drawn to its attention in order to make recommendations for a final decision by the Senate based along the guidelines set out in this document.

Access arrangements for examinations are approved by the ADSC committee before an examination or assessment takes place and are intended to allow the candidate's attainment to be demonstrated by giving the student full access to the examination.

The provision of access arrangements and special considerations are made so that the attainment of candidates can be assessed validly and reliably. Such provision is not intended to alter the assessment demands of the qualifications. It is the responsibility of the candidate at University level and the Head/Principal at sixth form and at secondary school level to ensure that any request on behalf of a candidate is based on firm evidence

which proves that a serious barrier to assessment of attainment exists.

Part 3 of this document describes both the principles and procedures that must be taken into account when making requests for access arrangements and for special consideration as these are the principles and procedures on which the ADSC makes its decisions.

PART 2

THE ACCESS – DISABILITY SUPPORT COMMITTEE AND THE ACCESS – DISABILITY SUPPORT UNIT

The ACCESS – *Disability Support Committee* is a joint Council and Senate appointed committee chaired by the *Pro-Rector for Students and Institutional Affairs*. The committee reflects the University of Malta's commitment to creating an environment that is as fully accessible as possible for all students and staff. The role of the committee is to ensure that the ACCESS – Disability Support Unit is given the facilities to support disabled students and to deal with all matters related to disabled persons' access. As stated earlier in this document, the term 'Access' is applied in its widest sense and is therefore not restricted to physical access but includes access to means of communication and to information, as well as encompassing the removal of attitudinal barriers.

There is a coordinator who runs the ACCESS – *Disability Support Unit*. The office is gradually being equipped to provide more comprehensive support services to persons with sensory and physical impairments. The office adjoining that of the coordinator serves the needs of disabled students throughout the day. The equipment includes a scanner to facilitate access to printed texts either on campus or in the student's home, a Braille printer, software for enlarging print as well as access to Internet services.

The equipment available so far reflects the needs of students who have followed or are currently following University courses. The ADSC monitors the needs of students and attempts to meet these needs by investing in specialized equipment wherever it is required and ensuring that the required human resources are made available to the disabled student. It is the policy of the University - through the ADSC and the ADS Unit - to cater for every disabled student throughout his/her course. Naturally, the student needs to approach the ADSC as early as possible to enable it to ensure that his/her needs are met when the student arrives to start his/her course at the start of the academic year. This can be done once the student has decided to follow a sixth form course, preferably before the end of secondary school.

Access arrangements include various measures taken to enable the disabled student to start, follow and complete a course of study successfully. They may include a time extension for course completion, the waiving of particular entry requirements as for mature students, as well as resources on campus. Every student will have very specific requirements depending on the nature and severity of his/her impairment/s. Students need to supply the ADSC with adequate information and certification to enable it to put

the required access arrangements into place. It must be kept in mind that these access arrangements are not intended to waive course objectives and examination criteria. The disabled student must show evidence that s/he is able to follow the course with benefit.

The coordinator who runs the ADS Unit, usually meets students before they start their course. This enables her/him to get a clear picture of their requirements and to advise them on various kinds of support they can get from other sources. This is particularly important for disabled students who reside in Gozo. The ADS Unit coordinator can be contacted by email or phone or by calling in person at her/his office facing the Messengers' Lodge on the ground floor of the Old Humanities Building:

ACCESS – Disability Support Unit
Room 109, Old Humanities Building
University of Malta
Telephone: 23402557
Email: adsu@um.edu.mt

PART 3

GUIDELINES FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATIONS

1. Introduction

These guidelines are intended to help applicants understand both the thinking behind the way arrangements are made to enable disabled students to access examinations, as well as the range of arrangements made to enable access to MATSEC and University examinations. The access arrangements mentioned in this document are based on applications that the ACCESS-Disability Support Committee (ADSC) and the former Special Needs Committee have dealt with. **They are by no means to be considered as an attempt to exclude applicants who may have other impairments not specifically mentioned in this document. Each application is considered on its own merits.**

- 1.1 An attempt has been made to cover as much ground as possible. However, it must be borne in mind that some applicants have more than one impairment. On the other hand, it must also be noted that an applicant with a particular disability does not necessarily qualify for all arrangements listed as possible arrangements for candidates with that particular disability. Certification is important and evidence beyond that of the professional may also be necessary where the history of the impairment may be relevant.
- 1.2 Whilst the ADSC considers that it has an important role in providing candidates with the arrangements that best suit them, it considers it necessary to ensure that candidates who do not qualify for particular arrangements do not get them. Candidates, as well as certifying professionals and heads of schools, colleges and departments or institutes must take the application very seriously.
- 1.3 The ADSC is pleased that disabled candidates are encouraged by the situation and do apply to sit for examinations which assess the attainment they have reached. This means that the number of candidates applying for access arrangements has increased considerably in recent years. Whilst the ADSC considers it a right to access examinations and courses of study, it recognizes that some examination access arrangements may increase the organizational and financial implications on the examination authority and must not be taken lightly. Access arrangements must only be requested when they are really needed. Moreover, in fairness to all candidates, the ADSC considers it its responsibility to sift out requests based on real need for equal treatment from others that are based on the desire to gain advantage. The ADSC takes these requests very seriously and will not concede to requests that are not fully justified.

Submitting a false claim for access arrangements in examinations could be regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage, which would be an academic offence that would be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Procedures of the University of Malta.

- 1.4 The ADSC recognizes that SEC examinations are intended as certification for secondary education. Matriculation examinations, on the other hand, constitute the qualifications for further education and degree or diploma or certificate examinations may be the key to a variety of professions which assume certain knowledge and ability to enable the professional's safe conduct. Thus, the same access arrangements may not be possible at all examination levels. It should be recognized that whereas some arrangements may be acceptable at SEC level they may need to be modified at Matriculation level and for degree level.
- 1.5 Access arrangements are intended to provide the candidate with the necessary assistance to access the assessment, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment and must not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage.
- 1.6 This means that the assessment criteria cannot be compromised, that is, the candidate must be able to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills that form part of the assessment criteria for that particular examination. Thus, in a written language examination, e.g Maltese and English where the candidate is expected to demonstrate the skill of reading and writing, even candidates with dyslexia cannot have the paper read to them as this is a skill that the candidates must demonstrate in the assessment.
- 1.7 The assessment criteria (drawn up by the examining authorities) are laid down in the syllabus under the heading of assessment objectives or assessment evidence. These detail what the candidate must know and can do in order to achieve the qualification. There are four main objectives:
 - Knowledge
 - Understanding
 - Application of knowledge and understanding
 - Skills
- 1.8 Some types of impairment affect the candidate's ability to demonstrate one or more of these objectives. In some cases, an alternative route is available in the syllabus and advice can be sought as to how to approach the subject. In some cases, no alternative can be found, because the impairment relates to a fundamental part of the assessment. In these cases, the candidate may not score enough marks to justify entering for an examination.
- 1.9 Requests for access arrangements must be submitted along with all the relevant documentation. The ADSC has the responsibility for the consideration of such requests and for a decision regarding access arrangements for individual

candidates. In the case of SEC and Matriculation examinations, requests should be attached to the application sent to the MATSEC Support Unit and must be received on or before the advertised deadlines. Any application reaching the MATSEC Support Unit after the advertised date(s) will not be accepted.

- 1.10 The very significant increase in the number of requests for exam arrangements means that the ADSC is now no longer in a position to consider such requests after the closing dates. It will, however, consider all requests made by or on behalf of candidates whose situation has changed considerably since the closing dates (e.g. resulting from an accident or other unforeseen circumstances).

Therefore the deadlines for access exam arrangements, including that for late applications, will not be extended. Candidates who miss applying before the closing date and cannot offer sufficient justification, will either have to apply to sit the examination without access arrangements, or to wait till the following year. This regulation will apply for the 2009 examinations.

All specific enquiries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for access arrangements must be sent to:

MATSEC Support Unit
University of Malta
Msida MSD2080
Tel: 2340 2240

2. THE PURPOSE OF ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access arrangements are intended to remove barriers (See section 5 below) and equalize opportunities for candidates who might not otherwise be able to demonstrate their attainment during assessment.

The Examination Authorities recognize the fact that there are candidates who may have acquired the knowledge, understanding and skills required by particular examinations but are, then, prevented from demonstrating their attainment due to an impairment, learning difficulty or other obstacle in accessing the examination questions or expressing their response.

The Examination Authorities are therefore prepared to make the necessary access arrangements, wherever possible, for such candidates to allow them to demonstrate their attainment. Access arrangements are made on the basis of an application with full certification.

3. GENERAL GUIDANCE ON ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 *Selection of course and examination syllabus.*

The selection of the most appropriate course and examination syllabus is an important first step in considering how best to meet the needs of candidates with a permanent or long-term impairment. Schemes of assessment vary within subjects and between subjects and some syllabus requirements present fewer problems for candidates with disabilities than others. Whenever possible, the various syllabuses available should be studied and the specialist teacher consulted so that the selection made will be the most suitable for the candidate.

3.2 *What is the degree of the functional impairment affecting the examination(s)?*

Thought should be given as to whether the particular impairment is the only limiting factor. For example, some students with physical impairments may also experience sensory difficulties or associated cognitive problems. These can be overlooked and yet their presence can compound the difficulties of the student in an examination setting. If candidates have multiple disabilities, consideration should be given as to whether all the possibilities for meeting their assessment needs have been examined.

3.3 *Are all examinations equally demanding or does the candidate require different arrangements for different examinations?*

Consideration should be made regarding whether the candidates' needs are for the same arrangements for all examinations. Different subjects and different methods of assessment can make very different demands on candidates. Candidates' needs for access arrangements must be identified with regard to specific examination papers and/or other forms of assessment.

3.4 *Why is it necessary to compile a history of the arrangements made in the school or other institution?*

The arrangements made for candidates for producing work in the classroom and for assessments conducted by their school or other institution may be the most suitable arrangements for the examination, provided that they do not give the candidates an unfair advantage over other candidates or compromise the integrity of the examination.

3.5 *Why is it necessary to consider the arrangements made throughout the course of study?*

It is important that candidates have had experience of, and practice in, the use of any access arrangements which are requested in order to prevent them

from being disadvantaged by the use of equipment or other conditions which they are not acquainted with.

3.6 *What steps should be taken before applying for access arrangements?*

Whenever students experience barriers or difficulties accessing learning at school and examinations, they should seek advice from competent persons. Before making an application for access arrangements, candidates (or their parents or heads of school) should:

- * compile a history of all the arrangements made in the past and include grades/marks of assessments/exams;
- * consult a specialist, organization or other external advisory services available;
- * consider whether the degree or effect of the particular disability is likely to alter by the time of the examination;
- * consider whether the assessment objectives of the subject/s concerned can be met given the impairment of the candidate.

4. PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE APPLIED BY THE ADSC TO REACH DECISIONS ABOUT ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 The nature of the access examination arrangements will be determined according to the assessment needs of the individual candidate taking into account also the severity of the impairment.
- 4.2 The access arrangements made must not disadvantage the candidate or give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.
- 4.3 Arrangements must be such that they do not mislead users of the certificate about the candidate's attainment. Students with learning difficulties studying at the University of Malta, who make use of the access examination arrangements other than extra time, will have their transcript endorsed.
- 4.4 Arrangements should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment and must not compromise the integrity of the examination.

5. BARRIERS TO EXAMINATIONS

Access examination arrangements may be needed for:

- candidates with a permanent or long-term impairment, for example,
 - mobility impairment;
 - visual impairment;
 - hearing impairment;
 - specific learning difficulty;
 - candidates with other disabilities/impairments;

- candidates with a temporary impairment or indisposition at the time of the examination(s), for example,
 - injury resulting from an accident;
 - a condition resulting from illness;

6. THE RANGE OF ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MAY BE MADE

6.1 General Principles

6.1.1 Account will normally be taken of the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom. However, it should be noted that some arrangements that are appropriate for learning situations may not be acceptable for examination purposes.

6.1.2 The kinds of access arrangements which can be considered are listed below (see 6.2 to 6.9). You should refer to the Guidelines on Particular Impairments in section 7 below for information on how these arrangements might apply in the case of particular disabilities. Heads of School or Departments should make sure that teachers/lecturers of candidates with particular disabilities read these notes so that they are aware of the different ways in which needs are normally met. It should also be noted that the kinds of access arrangements which are appropriate for a particular subject may not be appropriate for other subjects.

6.1.3 Some types of impairment affect the candidate's ability to demonstrate one or more of these objectives. In some cases, an alternative route is available in the syllabus and advice can be sought as to how to approach the subject. In some cases, no alternative can be found, because the impairment relates to a fundamental part of the assessment. In these cases, the candidate may not score enough marks to justify entering for an examination.

6.1.4 Access arrangements are different for different disabilities and different degrees of the particular impairment. They are made to enable the candidate to access the examination which s/he would not otherwise access. They apply only when the impairment puts the candidate at a disadvantage. Nevertheless, arrangements cannot be expected to make up for the impairment. Where subjects are not accessible to a candidate for other reasons (e.g. intellectual ability) arrangements that would reduce the assessment objectives cannot be considered.

6.2 Time Allowance

6.2.1 Additional time, according to need, may be allowed in most subjects and types of examination. Additional time will not normally be permitted (a) in an examination component where performance of a task in a limited time is itself an assessment objective or (b) where a candidate's ability to demonstrate attainment within the allotted time is not normally affected by his or her impairment.

6.2.2 An additional allowance of up to 25% of the total examination time at SEC level and an additional allowance of up to 15% at Matriculation and University level should meet most needs. Where an additional time allowance of more than 25% at SEC or 15% at Matriculation or University is requested, the ADSC will study the individual request. However, it should be borne in mind that too much time may be counter productive.

6.2.3 Supervised breaks or rest periods may be given within the examination centres, in or outside the examination room. The duration of the break will not be deducted from the time allowed for the examination component. During the break the examination paper is removed.

Permission may be given, according to the candidate's impairment/s, for additional time as well as rest breaks. This, however, is rare.

6.3 **Means of Access to Questions**

6.3.1 Modifications may be made to the examination paper, specifically,

- The visual presentation of the examination paper may be changed;
- Aids and devices may be allowed;
- The carrier language for non-language focused subjects may be modified or the use of alternative communication may be allowed.

6.3.2 Modification is carried out by a specialist in the area of impairment involved in collaboration with the representatives of the examining authority.

6.3.3 Reading of questions to candidates may be allowed if access to the paper is not possible through other means, except where reading is an assessment objective.

6.3.4 Use of sign language or appropriate alternative communication of questions (except where reading is an assessment objective) is allowed in exceptional circumstances, if this is the usual method of communication in the classroom and full access to the examination cannot be achieved by other means.

6.3.5 Additional means of amplification may be used by hearing-impaired candidates where the examination cannot be adequately accessed.

6.3.6 Flashcards may be used for hearing-impaired/Deaf candidates in examinations which are orally conducted but where oral skills are not being assessed.

6.3.7 Use of audio recordings of question papers may be permitted in exceptional circumstances if no other means can be found of supporting the candidate.

6.3.8 Enlarged paper, use of Braille or other means may be used for candidates with visual impairment

6.4 **Personal Assistance**

6.4.1 A personal assistant may be allowed in the case of disabled students who cannot otherwise access the examination.

6.4.2 Use of a prompter may be allowed.

6.5 **Examination Venues**

6.5.1 The examination venue must be fully accessible in a dignified manner to all candidates, including wheelchair users.

6.5.2 In exceptional circumstances, examinations may be taken outside a candidate's examination centre e.g. in hospital, provided that security can be guaranteed by the examining authority and that the supervision requirements of the examining authority concerned can be met.

6.6 **Means of Presenting Responses**

Responses may be made in ways other than writing if the candidate's impairment makes writing difficult. Use may be made of other systems. Use may also be made of a scribe where responses cannot be communicated through other means.

6.7 **Coursework**

6.7.1 If a syllabus requires that coursework should be completed within a specified period during the course, or places a limit on the duration of particular assignments, additional time may be permitted provided that this does not jeopardise the publication of results at the agreed time.

6.7.2 Students who may need to apply for the above, must apply beforehand. All applications must be fully supported by relevant documentation.

6.7.3 Requirements will vary between examination syllabuses, therefore early consultation with the ADSC is strongly recommended.

6.8 **Exemption**

It is not considered to be in the interests of candidates to be exempted from part of the assessment but, if a candidate is unable to fulfill an assessment objective and an exemption is made, there will be a pro-rata adjustment to marks, if the missed component does not constitute more than 25% of the marks, and the certificate will be endorsed.

6.9 **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

6.9.1 In examinations where spelling, punctuation and grammar form part of the assessment, all candidates will be assessed under the agreed assessment criteria.

6.9.2 If, in exceptional circumstances, for example, for a candidate with a severe physical impairment or a candidate with a broken arm, permission is given for the use of a scribe, candidates will from time to time in the course of the examination be asked to dictate spelling (especially technical terms) and punctuation. Reliable alternative evidence, where available, will be used as examples of the candidate's written work under controlled conditions. In such cases, special consideration procedures will be applied to enable an assessment to be made; otherwise the certificate will be endorsed.

7. HOW TO APPLY FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 In normal circumstances, the candidate him/herself in the case of University examinations or the Head of School or College for SEC and Matriculation candidates is responsible for applying for, and recommending, the appropriate access examination arrangements. **Supporting certification from the relevant professionals must accompany the request.** Private candidates for SEC and Matriculation may apply in their own name also with supporting certification. Any documentation and certification considered relevant should be included with the application. (See appropriate forms in Appendix 2)
- 7.2 The ADSC should be approached as early as possible to discuss possible arrangements but it must be noted that the condition of a candidate may change before the examination takes place. No assumptions, based on previous experience or hearsay, should be made about the kind of arrangements which may or may not be made. The ADSC considers applications on an individual basis whilst adhering to the published guidelines for examination arrangements.
- 7.3 A formal request for access arrangements is to be submitted to the ADSC via the examining authority by not later than the date specified by that authority. The request must be accompanied by adequate certification as specified under section 8 on Particular Impairments.
- 7.4 Applicants must provide medical or other appropriate evidence to the satisfaction of the examining authority and the ADSC.
- 7.5 Under normal circumstances the Examination Authorities must receive historical evidence of the candidate's needs and an indication of how the school meets these needs. The school will be expected to establish that the candidate's needs have been recognised over a period of time and that the arrangements requested for the examination actually reflect needs resulting from the candidate's impairment.

8. GUIDANCE ON PARTICULAR IMPAIRMENTS

You should read this guidance in conjunction with the General Guidance Principles on Access Arrangements in sections 3 and 4 above.

8.1 CANDIDATES WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT

8.1.1 Physical Access to Examination Venues

The examination venue will be fully accessible and in such a way as to ensure the mobility impaired candidate's dignity. This often simply means assigning the candidate to an examination room on the ground floor of an examination venue.

Reserved parking close to the examination hall may be requested, especially if candidates are over 18, have a severe mobility impairment and drive their own car.

8.1.2 Personal Assistant

When required, the candidate's personal assistant can be on call. It may be sufficient for the personal assistant to be just outside the examination hall throughout the examination and to assist the candidate whenever necessary.

8.1.3 Scribe

Where a candidate has difficulties with hand movements a scribe may be provided. In such situations extra time may be necessary.

8.1.4 Time Allowance

8.1.4.1 Time allowance will be considered where a candidate's impairment slows down his/her responses in the required medium. In the majority of instances, the needs of most candidates will be met by an additional allowance of up to 25% of the total examination time. In exceptional circumstances candidates may apply for additional extra time if they consider it to be necessary but should remember that too much time can be counter-productive. Furthermore, candidates should bear in mind the following important points:

8.1.4.2 The average speed of communication of the candidate (by hand-writing, typing, using a manual / electric / electronic machine, computer, word processor, scribe, voice-synthesiser, etc) in comparison with non disabled candidates.

8.1.4.3 When and how quickly the candidate tires and how this affects communication.

This is important in determining whether a period of rest during the examination would be helpful.

- 8.1.4.4 Whether pain or muscular spasm occurs or increases with time. It should be established, prior to application, how best this may be prevented or resolved. Candidates with conditions such as arthritis may have increased pain and stiffness if the weather is cold, whilst those with cerebral palsy will experience more spasms in times of stress or when surprised by unexpected announcements or noise from outside. The aim should be to minimise these problems but extra time may still be necessary for certain individuals.
- 8.1.4.5 Whether reading speed is much slower than that of other candidates because of the impairment. This often occurs if students have co-ordination problems (e.g. cerebral palsy or other conditions affecting parts of the nervous system or when processing difficulty slows down the reading).
- 8.1.4.6 Whether diagrams are required and whether they cause particular difficulty for candidates with perceptual problems or whose hand /eye co-ordination is weak. Young people with muscular dystrophy and similar conditions may find lifting and positioning rulers and other equipment very tiring and time consuming due to muscular weakness. It may be that provision other than extra time (e.g. scribe or practical assistance) will be better for these candidates. Looking at the frequency of diagrams in past papers will help in estimating how much extra time should be requested.
- 8.1.4.7 Whether the candidate finds difficulty in turning pages or in manipulating the paper or other equipment. It may be appropriate to request an extra time allowance for this but investigation of other arrangements (e.g. practical assistance) might be needed.
- 8.1.4.8 The number of examinations the candidate is taking and the distribution of these in the timetable. When a candidate is likely to become excessively fatigued because of a number of examinations being close together, this should be brought to the attention of the examining authority. If there are two examinations on the same day a candidate may need more time for the second paper. In exceptional circumstances the candidate may be allowed to start the morning paper earlier and the afternoon paper later provided s/he will not be allowed to leave the examination room until 30 minutes after the official time of the start of the examination.
- 8.1.4.9 Extra time may be needed for the completion of practical tasks.
- 8.1.4.10 If a scribe is used, extra time will be needed.
- 8.1.4.11 Candidates with writing problems will also need extra time in assessments where a written response is required following an aural or a practical test.

8.1.4.12 A very severe mobility impairment may mean that a candidate can only access the examination using a computer. However where the candidate's keyboarding speed is as low as two to three words per minute other access arrangements may need to be considered.

8.1.5 **Supervised rest periods**

Supervised rest periods up to 25% of examination time (either in or outside the examination room) may be helpful to candidates with particular impairments. All rest periods are supervised and the candidate should not have contact with persons or material which could be of advantage. The examination paper is removed until the candidate resumes the examination.

It is important to consider when and how quickly the candidate tires and how this affects communication. This is important in deciding whether a period of rest during the examination would be helpful.

8.1.6 **Means of presenting responses**

8.1.6.1 Use of mechanical or technological aids may be allowed for candidates who are unable to write, have difficulty in writing or need support during the examination. If the student uses small adaptive equipment (such as typing sticks, writing splints, arm supports) they should bring their own, provided their use has been approved by the ADSC. Larger equipment such as adapted tables will be supplied provided they have been requested.

Use must not be made of spell-checks, thesauri or similar electronic devices, whether part of word-processing software or otherwise.

8.1.6.2 Use may be made of a scribe if responses cannot be communicated through other means.

8.1.6.3 Dictation of responses (onto tape or other means) may be permitted in exceptional circumstances. A transcript must be provided by a competent body authorized by the examining authority.

8.1.6.4 In practical examinations or tests, use may be made of a practical assistant or helper to ensure the candidate's safety and to support the candidate by assisting with those elements of the tasks which are not the focus of the assessment.

8.1.6.5 The most appropriate method of answering should be the one which will enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her attainment as quickly and fluently as possible. The following methods are all possible subject to the fulfillment of the examination criteria:

Handwriting

Typewriting

Word-Processing (no use of spell-check, thesaurus, etc)
Dictation to a scribe
Dictation on tape or other audio-equipment (exceptional)
Other technological aids
Sign language (exceptional)

- 8.1.6.6 If a word processor is used, the material should be saved and/or printed at short intervals. Printing of material does not affect time allowance. There should be back-up equipment available in case of mechanical breakdown.
- 8.1.6.7 If the equipment is noisy enough to disturb other candidates, the candidate will need to be accommodated in a separate room with an invigilator. A separate room with an invigilator will also be required when a scribe is used or when extra space is needed to accommodate bulky equipment.
- 8.1.6.8 A transcription should be made of material recorded on tape or other means and both the transcription and the tape must be handed in to the examining authority as would be the case with the regular examination paper.
- 8.1.6.9 Students with co-ordination difficulties, shaky hands or poor hand / eye co-ordination may find it impossible to record answers in grids provided for multiple choice questions. They may find difficulty in completing tables and other areas of the paper where there is limited space for the answer. An enlarged grid or the use of software and technological aids may be of assistance. A scribe may be used to draw labelling lines or to join points on a graph at the direction of the candidate.
- 8.1.6.10 Candidates who, because of motor or perceptual problems, find it difficult to manipulate question and answer books may find it helpful to have the books taken apart and the separate sheets arranged on a larger than normal working surface. If a computer is being used questions should also be provided on the computer.

Question and answer books which have been taken apart should be re-assembled and stapled when the papers are collected. Permission to adopt this procedure should be obtained prior to the examination

8.1.7 **Coursework / Project Work**

The candidate who can only work slowly, may be allowed extra time in order to complete all the assignments by having a later deadline or fewer assignments, provided that the work will be sufficient evidence of the assessment objectives and that the results can still be published in time.

8.1.8 **Oral Examinations**

8.1.8.1 If the candidate is able to attempt oral examinations, s/he may request to make the testing environment as relaxed as possible.

8.1.8.2 Augmentative speech equipment may be used if this is the candidate's normal method of communication provided that the assessment criteria can be applied. If a substantial proportion of the assessment criteria cannot be met it may be in the candidate's interest to request exemption from the oral component. In this case, there will be a pro-rata adjustment to marks and the certificate will be endorsed (Section 6.8 above).

8.1.9 **Practical Examinations and Assessments**

The guiding principle in practical assessments must be safety at all times. Candidates must neither endanger themselves nor endanger other candidates.

8.1.9.1 If a set task is not suitable for the candidate and beyond his or her physical capabilities, the candidate may request to be set an alternative task to demonstrate his or her attainment in the skill being assessed. This may be difficult to implement at SEC and Matriculation and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

8.1.9.2 The Examination Authorities should be contacted as early as possible about the possibility of using a practical assistant working to the direction of the candidate for examinations involving practical components or practical coursework.

8.1.9.3 If a candidate is unable to use standard equipment, a request may be made to use alternative equipment.

8.2

VISUALLY-IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

You should read this section in conjunction with the General Guidance on Access Arrangements in section 3 and 4.

These notes relate to candidates with visual impairments that are not fully correctable by spectacles or other forms of vision aid. They do not refer to Visual Perceptual Difficulties.

8.2.1 Time Allowance

The needs of most visually-impaired candidates will be met by an additional allowance of up to 25%. Additional extra time may be considered necessary but too much time can be counter-productive. It is important to bear in mind the following important points in making a request for additional extra time:

- 8.2.1.1 Many visually-impaired candidates work more slowly than their fully sighted peers, for two main reasons
- (a) additional time taken to access written information
 - (b) additional time taken to present responses.

The extent to which individual candidates will be affected by these factors will depend on the severity of their sight loss, their level of skill in managing it, the nature of the examination paper concerned and the means by which they present their responses.

- 8.2.1.2 The inability to scan the page quickly or to comprehend diagrams readily may make additional time necessary for many visually-impaired candidates. (This will be the case for those working with enlarged as well as modified papers).

- 8.2.1.3 Examination papers requiring candidates to work with complex maps, figures, tables and diagrams are likely to cause particular difficulties, as are those involving large amounts of reading and cross-referencing

- 8.2.1.4 If a visually-impaired candidate uses specialist equipment (e.g. closed circuit television, low vision aids) to access the paper, this may also affect his or her speed of working.

- 8.2.1.5 The means of presenting responses may also affect a candidate's speed of working. It is important to assess the candidate's speed of working in the chosen means of presenting responses and noting, in particular, speed of handwriting, typing or braille, the extra time involved in using a reader or dictating to a scribe, and the extra time taken to check through answers at the end of the examination.

8.2.2 **Rest Breaks**

Extensive time allowances may create a situation where rest breaks are necessary, or where alternative measures are required to avoid timetable clashes. In exceptional circumstances the candidate may be allowed to start the morning paper earlier and the afternoon paper later provided s/he will not be allowed to leave the examination room until 30 minutes after the official time of the scheduled start of the examination.

8.2.3 **Means of Access to Questions**

Modifications may be made to the visual presentation of papers for visually-impaired candidates whose impairment is not corrected by spectacles or other forms of vision aid. It is very important to identify the correct type of paper for the individual candidate (particularly in the case of enlarged / modified papers for partially-sighted candidates). This can only be done by assessing individual needs against the different types of paper available. Some candidates may require most papers in one format but some in another, depending on their level of sight and the nature of the paper concerned. Some may even require papers in more than one format (e.g. enlarged and modified print). However, material should only be requested if it has been shown to be necessary. A request for any variation to the standard modifications must be clearly justified.

8.2.3.1 **Unmodified enlarged paper**

This is the standard paper enlarged on a photocopier from A4 to A3, thus enlarging the whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation. This is most likely to be suitable for candidates with a minor visual impairment for whom increasing the size of the text is sufficient to provide access.

8.2.3.2 **Modified enlarged paper**

This involves the paper being modified on the advice of a specialist teacher of the visually-impaired to simplify visual complexity and layout. Modified papers are then re-printed in 18 point bold print on A4 paper with modified diagrams incorporated and later enlarged further onto A3 paper if necessary. This is generally suitable for candidates with a serious visual impairment for whom a variety of aspects in the visual presentation of the original printed paper may cause difficulty of access.

The modification is normally undertaken by the Examination Authorities well in advance of the examination day.

8.2.3.3 **Braille paper**

This involves a similar process of modification to that outlined above, with

the paper then being produced in braille by a specialist agency.

8.2.3.4 **Tactile enhancement**

Tactile diagrams and graphs may also be provided.

8.2.3.5 **Reader**

A reader may be necessary for some types of paper where the candidate is required to refer back regularly to the text, even if he or she is competent in print or braille reading. Reading of questions to candidates may be allowed if access to the paper is not possible through other means, except where reading is an assessment objective.

8.2.3.6 **Low vision aids and technological devices**

Use of low vision aids and technological devices may be allowed to enable candidates to access ordinary or modified papers in exceptional circumstances if no other means can be found to support the candidate.

8.2.3.7 **A key for colour identification**

In the case of a candidate with colour blindness, a key to identify different colours may be used where appropriate (e.g. OS map questions). The candidate may be requested to provide a sample of such a key prior to the examination to assess its suitability.

8.2.3.8 **Use of colour**

Some candidates may benefit from the addition of colour to a paper to highlight certain features. This request must be clearly justified. Window Eyes screen reader or Zoom Text magnifying screen reader software may be used.

8.2.4 **Means of Presenting Responses**

It is important to provide candidates with the means to present answers by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, where use of such methods would not invalidate the assessment objectives of the examination concerned. The points given below concerning the methods available should be borne in mind.

8.2.4.1 **Handwriting**

If the candidate chooses to write, it is important to ensure that the candidate's work maintains legibility throughout the examination.

Specialist pens and/or writing paper, special desks and/or lamps may be used provided that prior request is made.

8.2.4.2 **Word-Processing**

It may be possible to use QWERTY or Braille input, possibly with large character display or speech output. Computers, word processors or electronic typewriters may also be used.

(Refer to Notes on the Guidelines on the use of Word Processors and Processor Controlled Devices in Appendix 1.9)

8.2.4.3 **Braille**

Where responses in Braille are allowed, a transcript is commissioned by the Examination Authorities. If a specialist device (e.g. Braille word processor) is to be used, prior arrangements need to be made and advice for technical support need to be sought from the Foundation for IT Accessibility (FITA).

8.2.4.4 **Scribe**

The use of a scribe may be necessary even for a candidate who is competent in presenting responses in print or Braille, in papers requiring specialist codes, symbols or language (e.g. some science and modern foreign language papers). (Refer to the Notes on the Use of a Scribe for further information, in Appendix 1.6)

8.2.5 **Coursework**

It may be necessary to consider that a visually-impaired candidate requires different coursework assignments from other candidates to take account of the more limited access to reference materials. If coursework tasks involve large amounts of independent reading and research, a visually-impaired candidate may request to:

- (a) undertake a reduced amount of coursework provided that evidence of attainment in each of the relevant assessment objectives is still possible
or
- (b) complete it over a longer period if this does not jeopardise the ability of the examining board to publish results at the agreed time.

8.2.6 **Practical Examinations and Assessments**

A request may be made for some modification to practical tasks to make them accessible to a visually-impaired candidate, instead of or in addition to using a practical assistant. The acceptability of such a request will depend on the assessment objective(s) being tested.

8.2.7 **Additional Considerations**

A request may be made for the use of **specialist equipment** in examination

situations, e.g. task lighting, talking thermometer or calculator, specialist stationery. In most cases it will be the responsibility of the candidate or school to provide such items.

Any other access arrangements that may be necessary on the day of the examination should be identified well in advance, e.g.

- a large desk to accommodate specialist equipment;
- a special elevated desk;
- a separate room to overcome problems of noise created by the use of equipment, a reader or a scribe
- additional invigilation as a result of time allowances or use of a separate room
- supervised rest breaks.

A visually-impaired candidate who cannot see the central clock should be provided with **regular time checks** throughout an examination.

8.3 HEARING-IMPAIRED AND DEAF CANDIDATES

You should read this guidance in conjunction with the General Guidance on Access Arrangements in section 3 and 4.

For the purposes of these guidelines candidates are considered ‘hearing-impaired’ if their hearing-impairment precedes the acquisition of their spoken language(s). ‘Deaf’ candidates are those hearing-impaired candidates who make use of Sign Language for educational purposes.

8.3.1 Time Allowance

The needs of most hearing-impaired candidates will be met by an additional allowance of up to 25%. Additional extra time may be requested if considered necessary but it must be noted that too much time can be counter-productive. It is important to bear in mind the following important points.

8.3.1.1 A candidate may need additional time in an orally-administered assessment which requires written answers because s/he will not be able to lip-read or receive signed communication and write at the same time. Where diagrams or illustrations have to be explained, additional time may also be needed.

8.3.1.2 In aural tests a lip-speaker or sometimes a signing communicator may be requested to present the material on an audio tape. (See Appendix 1.3 for further information).

8.3.2 Means of Access to Questions

8.3.2.1 Except for the text / stimulus material in English or Maltese, or the text in the Modern/Foreign language examinations, or literary texts and source material, when understanding of the original material is specifically being assessed, question papers may be modified for hearing-impaired candidates. Modification includes the simplification of language and the use of some code-switching. Modifications can be made to the carrier language (i.e. the general vocabulary and syntax) but not to terminology (i.e. vocabulary specific to the subject).

8.3.2.2 Modification is carried out by a teacher of the deaf in collaboration with the representatives of the Examination Authorities.

8.3.2.3 Modification is carried out in advance of the examination day.

8.3.2.4 Where the language of the questions has not been modified and a communicator has been requested, the communicator may use some signed communication for the carrier language but not for the technical language.

8.3.2.5 A request may be made for the signing of questions for candidates who are normally taught through signing if access to questions is not possible through other means. The sign language interpreter or communicator may use the method of signed communication appropriate to the candidate. Although some re-phrasing will be inevitable because of the change to a visual language with a different grammar, such re-phrasing must not give the candidate an unfair advantage. Flash cards are used for technical terms, to avoid divulging the meaning of the terms. The technical terms may be finger spelt. However, this could be too time-consuming and lead to unnecessary inaccuracy.

8.3.2.6 For aural tests, special amplification may be used or tests may be read to enable candidates to lip-read. In addition to lip-speaking the content of the tape in an aural test, the presenter may fingerspell the initial letter of words which are easily confused. e.g. deux francs and neuf francs.

8.3.2.7 In aurally conducted mental arithmetic tests, the use of flashcards showing numbers may be used.

8.3.3 **Means of Presenting Responses**

8.3.3.1 Where examinations do not require answers in complete sentences, note-form may be acceptable.

8.3.3.2 Incorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar should not be penalised in examinations where it is the knowledge of the subject that is assessable and where spelling, punctuation and grammar do not form part of the assessment objectives.

8.3.3.3 In exceptional cases, where signing is the medium used in the candidate's education, the signing of responses may be permitted provided the language (including spelling, punctuation or grammar) does not form part of the assessment objective. The candidate must also write the responses. In such instances, the signing is recorded and a transcript by a sign language interpreter is commissioned by the examining authority. The examiners will use the transcript of the signed responses to assist them with the understanding of the written responses.

8.3.4 **Coursework**

8.3.4.1 In an everyday teaching situation some hearing-impaired pupils have a teacher of the deaf working alongside the classroom teacher to aid communication and understanding and to ensure that the hearing-impaired pupil can take part in the lesson.

For these candidates, a teacher may perform the same function during any classroom-based assessments. The teacher must confirm that steps were taken to ensure that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and

to present a written declaration that the candidate's work was conducted under the required conditions. Full details must be recorded of the nature of any assistance given to a particular candidate beyond that given to the teaching group as a whole but within the parameters laid down by the syllabus.

8.3.4.2 Candidates who have difficulty with speech may be permitted to use augmentive speech equipment in oral examinations but may not be able to meet all the assessment criteria using such equipment. In such exceptional cases the certificate may be endorsed (as outlined in 6.8 above).

8.3.5 **Oral Examinations**

8.3.5.1 If candidates are able to attempt oral examinations, arrangements may be made to make the testing environment as relaxed as possible.

8.3.5.2 If candidates are unable to be assessed for part or all of an oral or aural examination where oral or aural communication is an assessment objective, e.g. Maltese, English or modern foreign languages, an exemption may be made, and there will be a pro-rata adjustment to marks. In these cases the certificate will be endorsed (as outlined in 6.8 above).

8.3.6 **Practical Examinations**

A request may be made for a communicator to clarify written instructions.

8.3.7 **Mental Arithmetic Tests**

In mental orally conducted arithmetic tests in which a candidate has to lip-read numbers, a request may be made for numbers to be presented visually, either on flashcards or with large numbers written on a blackboard or a whiteboard as the examiner says the question.

8.4 CANDIDATES WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (SpLD)

Reference should be made to section 3 and 4 above for more information regarding the purpose of access arrangements and and section 8.4.3 below for assessment guidelines.

8.4.1 Barriers to accessing the examination that candidates with SpLD might experience

The range of learning difficulties is extensive and some of the implications for assessment are not obvious, such as speed of processing and organization of ideas. Therefore, Examination Authorities require candidates to be assessed by a suitably qualified person to ensure that the access arrangements that are approved provide the candidate with the necessary assistance to access the assessment but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage.

Candidates with SpLD are likely to experience difficulties in some of the areas given below:

- **Reading Accuracy:** This would include candidates who are unlikely to be able to read the examination material with sufficient accuracy to avoid making mistakes which will affect the understanding of what they read.
- **Reading Speed:** This will be a particular problem where the speed of reading is so slow that the candidate loses the sense of what s/he reads.
- **Spelling:** This will include candidates with spelling difficulties that significantly slow their work rate and result in candidates who use alternative words which are easier to spell or candidates who are unlikely to achieve any score in the marking of spelling and whose written work may be incomprehensible to the examiner.
- **Handwriting Speed:** Candidates whose handwriting speed is so slow that it presents a particular problem should be trained to communicate the information required by questions as briefly as possible wherever this is appropriate. Where such a strategy is not sufficient, access arrangements may need to be sought.
- **Handwriting Legibility:** This may relate to writing under time pressure and in such cases the previous section will apply. There are, however, candidates whose scripts are illegible despite their being allowed to write more slowly.
- **Other Difficulties:** As well as the preceding areas of difficulty, some candidates have other specific problems, e.g. attention and concentration, clumsiness and disorganisation of such severity as to prevent a candidate from demonstrating attainment. Such difficulties as these and others are often found to be associated with neurological dysfunction.

8.4.2 Access arrangements for candidates with SpLD

Access arrangements are made on the basis of an individual candidate's needs. Consideration must be given to whether the proposed access arrangement is effective and suitable for the candidate's particular learning difficulty, but the arrangement must not affect the integrity of the assessment. If a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time and never uses the extra time which has been made available, it is not an effective adjustment and therefore may not be an appropriate one to request. Similarly, if a candidate requests the use of a word processor but cannot type comprehensible prose, it is not an effective adjustment to give him or her. S/he might require a different arrangement. Request for Access arrangements for SpLD must be accompanied by an assessment preferably by an educational psychologist or specialist teacher or by a suitably qualified psychologist and must be approved by the Examination Authorities before the examination.

Candidates with a SpLD (dyslexia) who are awarded Grade 3 or better at SEC level in English Language will not qualify for arrangements such as a reader or non-penalisation of spelling errors when taking MATSEC subjects at Advanced and Intermediate level. Extra time will only be provided if justified after a reassessment by a psychologist. A Grade 4 in SEC English Language will entitle such a candidate to 50% of the extra time allotted normally, to spelling concessions in non-language subjects but not to the provision of a reader.

8.4.2.1 Extra time

- (a) For candidates with SpLD, up to 25% extra time may be allowed by the Examination Authorities subject to the relevant rules and assessment requirements.
- (b) For candidates with SpLD, extra time is normally allowed on the basis of evidence that the candidate's reading skills in English (accuracy or speed) have been measured on a recognized test conducted by an educational psychologist or specialist teacher or a suitably qualified psychologist and the standardized score is at the **below average** range for the relevant age-group.
- (c) No extra time will be permitted in subjects where reading or writing are not a substantial part of the examination such as in technical drawing.
- (d) No extra time will be permitted in examinations testing the time in which a practical skill is performed, such as mental arithmetic, keyboarding, sports, musical performance, or expressive arts, where the timing may be a crucial part of the assessment.
- (e) Candidates who are allowed a reader in non-language examinations, but are not allowed a reader in language examinations, may be granted up to a maximum of 30% in all in additional extra time in language examinations.
- (f) Where timing is regarded as an essential element of performance, such as in

some science subjects, candidates may be granted only up to 10% or 15 % extra time.

8.4.2.2 **Readers**

- (a) A reader is a responsible adult who reads the questions to the candidate. This may involve reading the whole paper to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read.
- (b) A reader is not a scribe but the same person may act as both reader and scribe as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.
- (c) A reader will be allowed in certain subjects where a candidate has a significant impairment. For candidates with SpLD, it means where the candidate's reading skills in English (accuracy) have been measured on a single word reading test conducted by a specialist and the standardized score is equivalent to less than the 10-year age equivalent level.
- (d) A reader will not be allowed in papers testing reading, such as Maltese, English, Modern Foreign Language reading papers, some Classical specifications requiring the candidate to read in Greek or Latin or in subjects testing reading Literature or combined Language/Literature specifications
- (e) The reader is responsible to the Head of Centre and must be appointed by the Examining Authorities and be capable of reading the material involved.
- (f) The reader should not be the candidate's own subject teacher or assistant. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used as a reader.
- (g) The provision of a reader should reflect the candidate's normal way of working, except in cases of temporary injury to the eyes.
- (h) The Centre is responsible for ensuring that if a candidate and reader are not accommodated separately, other candidates cannot overhear what the reader is saying and are not disturbed by their presence. If the candidate and reader are accommodated separately, a separate invigilator will be required.
- (i) If several candidates require only occasional reading assistance, they may be accommodated as a separate group with a reader and an invigilator.
- (j) Centres whose candidates are not permitted a reader may wish to accommodate candidates separately so that they may read aloud to themselves, particularly where this is their normal way of working. Candidates not permitted a reader may be accommodated separately.

8.4.2.3 **Word Processors**

- (a) The Examination Authorities will consider each application in relation to the assessment objectives of the subjects for which the candidate will be entered. The object of access examination arrangements is to provide access and thus enable candidates with impairment to demonstrate their attainment in relation to the assessment objectives of a syllabus. This principle applies to the use of

computers in the same way as it does to other types of access arrangements. It is the performance of the candidate which must be assessed and the use of the computer must not create a misleading impression of that performance or confer an unfair advantage over other candidates.

- (b) It is anticipated that candidates who are able to produce work for assessment by handwriting or drawing will do so. This means that:
 - i. The word processor must be used only by those candidates whose disability/ learning difficulty either impairs their hand written communication or renders their handwriting illegible as evidenced by a relevant report by an appropriate professional; and
 - ii. The special arrangement requested for assessments and examinations will reflect the candidate's usual method of working.
- (c) It is in the best interest of candidates to establish at an early stage whether or not examination arrangements can be made.
- (d) When considering an application for examination arrangements which will involve more than a PC being used as a basic computer, the Examination Authorities will need full details of the hardware and software requested for use by the candidate.
- (e) The Examination Authorities reserve the right to seek independent advice concerning the operation of word processors/processor controlled devices used by the candidates in order to help them determine what examination arrangements should be made.
- (f) The word processor must not have any predictive text software or automatic spell checkers, grammatical checking or thesauri and must not give access to other applications such as calculators and spreadsheets.
- (g) Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a word processor/processor controlled devices are used, the Examination Authorities may:
 - i. allow the candidate's request on the understanding that there will be an endorsement on the certificate that modifications in the examination requirements were made to enable the candidate to be assessed in the skill;
 - ii. suggest alternative examination arrangements;
 - iii. refuse the request.
- (h) Candidates must have access only to those facilities which have been agreed to in advance in writing, including type of processor and devices. If an arrangement involves the use of equipment owned by the candidate, the Examination Authorities may require that the equipment be passed on to the authorities in advance of the examination for the necessary preparations.
- (i) The examination paper can be provided in accessible format (MS word/PDF) on CD Rom accompanying the other examination papers.

8.4.2.4 **Scribes**

- (a) A scribe will be allowed in very exceptional circumstances in certain subjects when a candidate's impairment has a significant effect on his writing. Scribes should only be requested for candidates who cannot produce written communication by any other means e.g. by word processor. For examination purposes, this would be interpreted as those whose free writing cannot be read by others, is grammatically incomprehensible or is produced so slowly that answers could not be fully recorded even with the extra time allowed.
- (b) A scribe will not be allowed in subjects testing written communication skills, including Maltese and English, unless the candidate can dictate words letter by letter. The candidate is asked from time to time to spell out words taken at random from his dictation; these are written in red by the scribe. In non-language subjects, e.g. biology, geography, the candidate is asked to spell out words of a technical nature. If separate marks are awarded for spelling and punctuation, these cannot be credited to a candidate using a scribe. Marks may be awarded for punctuation if this is dictated, and the fact is noted on the scribe cover sheet.
- (c) The scribe is responsible to the Head of Centre and must be appointed by the Examination Authorities and be capable of recording the material involved.
- (d) The scribe should not normally be the candidate's subject teacher or assistant. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used as a scribe.
- (e) The provision of a scribe should reflect the candidate's normal way of working, except in cases of temporary injury to the writing hand or arm.
- (f) The candidate may require the scribe to read back part of what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the answer given.
- (g) A copy of the Scribe Cover Sheet must be completed and securely attached to the script, together with a copy of the ADSC's letter giving permission for this arrangement. You should delete or cover your Centre's name and address from the letter. No other documentation must be attached. A Cover Sheet must also be attached to any coursework/portfolio work completed with the aid of a scribe and the work must be sent to the moderator in addition to the sample requested. The Cover Sheet must indicate whether graphs and diagrams were completed by the candidate or the scribe. The Cover Sheet must be signed by the scribe and countersigned by the Head of Centre or the Examinations Officer.

If the scribe is requested and permitted but not used in the examination, the Scribe Cover Sheet must be attached to the script with "Scribe not used" written across it. Otherwise the candidate's marking is likely to be affected.

8.4.3

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE CANDIDATE'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

8.4.3.1 **General principles**

- (a) The School must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by a qualified Psychologist or Specialist Teacher. Before arranging for the candidate to be assessed by a qualified Psychologist or a Specialist Teacher, the School should complete Section A of the appropriate form (see **Appendix 2.4** of this document) relating to the history of need and the history of provision.
- (b) There must be at least one psycho-educational assessment by an educational psychologist or other suitably qualified psychologist in the educational history of the candidate. If not, then s/he should seek assessment by a psychologist before the examination.
- (c) If the candidate has been assessed by a suitably qualified psychologist before and diagnosed as having specific learning difficulties, only an update of the candidate's literacy skills is required for the purpose of making a request for access arrangements. This update must be undertaken not more than two years before the closing date of applications for the examination.
- (d) The update assessment of literacy skills may be carried out by an educational psychologist or a specialist teacher or a suitably qualified psychologist.
- (e) The update should consist of those tests which are relevant to support the application. For instance, if the candidate requires reading assistance but does not have writing problems, there is no need to carry out tests on writing skills.
- (f) Once the specialist has completed the tests and established that the candidate has learning difficulties, s/he should complete Section B and C of the form, recommending the arrangements which will be required on the basis of the information given by the school and taking into account the requirements of the specifications in the subjects being entered and the normal working practice of the candidate in school.
- (g) It is advisable to consult with subject teachers about the criteria being assessed in the subject at the start of the course. The school may include a candidate on a course in the full knowledge that the candidate may not be able to fulfill the requirements of the assessment. It is important for the candidates and parents to be made fully aware of the extent to which it is advisable to enter the candidate for the qualification. It is not always possible to arrange equal access for a candidate whose impairment affects a skill, knowledge, understanding or competence which is being tested in a particular assessment and who will be unable to demonstrate the assessment criteria required by the specification.

8.4.3.2 **Literacy Attainment**

- (a) Please state when/if learning difficulties affecting literacy were diagnosed and by whom.

- (b) Recent editions of nationally standardised tests, available through test publishers, which produce standardised scores, must be used and the candidate's chronological age should be less than the 'ceiling' of the test. In exceptional circumstances (i.e. when an age-appropriate test is too difficult for a candidate) one designed for and standardised on a younger group may be used. **The reason for this should be stated.**
- (c) Results must be given as Standardised Scores. Forms will be returned if standardised scores are not provided.
- (d) Age-equivalent scores must also be given. This is particularly necessary where a request is being made for a reader as this is only allowed for those candidates whose score on a single word reading test is below the 10-year level.

8.4.3.3 **Reading Skills**

- (a) Reading accuracy must be assessed using an individually administered, untimed test of single word reading.
- (b) Reading speed: candidates with a history of reading difficulties, whose reading accuracy (at single word level) is within normal limits for his/her age may, nevertheless, read slowly and/or need to re-read text many times in order to absorb its meaning. A timed test of reading which includes comprehension questions should therefore be administered to assess the candidate's need for extra time.
- (c) The provision of a reader will depend on whether the candidate's reading impairment in accuracy has a substantial effect on his or her ability to read the questions. The effect will be considered substantial if the candidate's standardised scores in tests of accuracy of untimed single word reading fall below the 10-year age equivalent level.

8.4.3.4 **Writing Skills**

- (a) Where a candidate's writing is potentially illegible, a transcript of the candidate's responses may be produced.
- (b) A transcript may be used where a candidate's handwriting is illegible or so difficult to read that it would be beneficial for an examiner to be able to refer to a transcript of the candidate's work for clarification.
- (c) A transcript is a copy of the candidate's script which is made after the examination has taken place. It may be produced with or without the participation of the candidate.
- (d) A transcript may be a full copy written on a spare answer booklet or a partial copy where only certain words need clarification. In this case, the original script must be photocopied and the words written clearly above the candidate's writing but not in red, green or purple ink or pencil. It may be helpful to enlarge the photocopy to A3.

- (e) The transcript may be handwritten, typed or word processed.
- (f) A word processor or a scribe may be very rarely permitted where a candidate cannot produce written communication by any other means. For examination purposes, being unable to produce written communication means that the candidate's free writing cannot be read by others, is grammatically incomprehensible or is produced so slowly that answers could not be fully recorded even in the extra time allowed.
- (g) Level of illegibility of handwriting must be certified by an Occupational Therapist. Moreover, samples of the candidate's scripts produced under examination conditions, and preferably copies of actual past examination scripts of the candidate - should be attached to the application form as evidence.
- (h) For candidates with SpLD, the request for the use of a word processor or a scribe must also include a psychologist's statement indicating that the candidate has **severe dyslexia** with supporting evidence that must include:
 - i. A well documented history of the child's literacy difficulties from early childhood until adolescence. This must include an account of the support received by the candidate and the reason for lack of improvement in his or her handwriting.
 - ii. Evidence that the candidate experienced difficulties in at least one aspect of reading and writing in all the languages he/she has taken at school.
 - iii. The candidate's writing skills scores must be below the 9-year level.
- (i) Please comment on the candidate's free writing under timed conditions. If using a word processor is the candidate's normal mode of working, this should be the arrangement requested.

8.4.3.5 **Other relevant Information**

The specialist may wish to include additional information relating to the candidate's performance particularly when required to demonstrate attainment in stressful situations, and where extra time may be required by a candidate who has otherwise normal levels of literacy. This information may include cognitive deficits in for example working memory, phonological processing, sequencing problems etc.

8.4.3.6 **Completing the Report of the Assessment**

The assessment must be completed and the report signed by an appropriately qualified person within two years before the closing date of application for the examination. The status of the person must be specified. The report must be submitted with the application from the Head of the School for access arrangements. The ADSC can advise on the acceptability of a teacher's specialist qualification.

8.4.3.7 **Psychological Assessment by a Qualified Psychologist**

- (a) Most assessments are carried out by Educational Psychologists. There are cases where a Clinical or Occupational Psychologist might have been medically responsible for the candidate and their reports will also be accepted.
- (b) It is preferable for the reports to be submitted to the Examination Authorities on the pro-forma (form 3) of the ADSC included in Appendix 2 Early learning milestones are not required on the form, although a full report for parents may have included such details. Processing is considerably more efficient and faster if the pro-forma is used. Where Psychologists use an electronic version, the wording of the form must not be changed.
- (c) If a Psychologist is signing the form, assessments must have been carried out by the Psychologist, or by another qualified Psychologist whose work must be appropriately attributed by the Psychologist signing the assessment.
- (d) Psychologists must not sign off assessments carried out by a teacher.

8.4.3.8 **Assessment by a Specialist Teacher**

- (a) The Specialist Teacher is required to establish that the results of tests in reading and writing present evidence that the candidate has a learning difficulty because it is clear that he or she is performing well below the expected attainment at the candidate's chronological age.
- (b) The Specialist Teacher must hold one of the qualifications which has been approved by the ADSC. The holder must be qualified to work as a teacher/tutor in a secondary school or college or college of further education.
 - The course must be sufficiently detailed and of sufficient length to enable the holder of the qualification to teach and assess secondary aged pupils with learning difficulties successfully and without supervision. Additionally, knowledge and skill in assessment **must be** adequately observed, assessed and accredited, as detailed below:
 - **Assessment of understanding of the theoretical bases underlying standardised tests.** Specifically this must include:
 - The concept of validity
 - The concept of reliability
 - Standard deviations and the normal curve
 - Standard scores, quotients, (per)centiles and age equivalent scores
 - The concept of a significant discrepancy between scores (statistical)
 - Either standard error of measurement or confidence intervals for test scores.
 - **Assessment of attainment:** specifically training in and experience of objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed and

spelling, all of which have appropriate test ceilings for assessing MATSEC candidates. Appropriate methods of assessing writing speed should also be covered.

- **Diagnostic assessment:** specifically training in and experience of administering and interpreting such tests. An extensive range of diagnostic tests and their interpretation must be covered.

Appendix I

Advisory Notes

Appendix 1.1

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED WHEN MAKING REQUESTS FOR EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

All requests for examination arrangements related to disability need to provide the following documentation.

- (i) A statement regarding the candidate's disability and a description of the severity of the disability describing the functional implications.
- (ii) Professional evidence regarding the extent to which the candidate is disadvantaged because of the disability. This needs to be made by the appropriate professional. Thus an assessment report by a qualified speech and language pathologist/communication therapist is required where speech and/or language disorders are reported, a medical report is required where the disability is one of mobility or where a neurological disorder is reported and a psychologist's report is required where the disability involves autism or a specific learning difficulty.
- (iii) A statement by the head of the school or department regarding what access arrangements have been made to enable the candidate to overcome his or her disability in school/department work and assessment.
- (iv) For some disabilities (e.g. dyslexia) the candidate needs to provide historical evidence of the disability. The candidate's needs would normally have been recognised over a period of time and the arrangements requested for the examination should reflect past and present needs.
- (v) Professional evidence referred to in (ii) above should include the results of relevant assessments. Such evidence must include the information requested on the appropriate form e.g. the common Psychological Assessment Report/Specialist Teacher's Assessment Report or Report by appropriately qualified Teacher. Any assessment used as evidence must have been conducted by an appropriate professional and the report prepared within the two years prior to the examination.

Appendix 1.2

NOTES ON THE USE OF READERS

- 1.2.1 Permission for the use of a reader must be requested from the ADSC prior to the examination or the commencement of coursework. The use of a reader should not give a candidate an unfair advantage nor should it disadvantage the candidate. The use of a reader must not modify the assessment requirements for the subject being examined or specific syllabus requirements of the Examination Authorities. In some cases the understanding of the written word may be the skill being examined. Additional time will be permitted for the use of a reader and will normally be up to 25% of the prescribed duration of the examination.
- i) A reader is a responsible adult who is able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and who, in the case of a scientific, mathematical or technical subject should ideally have a working knowledge of that subject.
This may involve reading the whole paper to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read.
 - ii) A reader is not a scribe but the same person may act as both reader and scribe as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.
 - iii) A reader will be allowed in certain subjects where a candidate has a more significant impairment. For candidates with SpLD, this means where the candidate's reading skills in English (accuracy) have been measured on a single word reading test conducted by a specialist and the standardized score is equivalent to less than the 10-year age equivalent level.
 - iv) A reader will not be allowed in papers testing reading, such as Maltese, English, Modern Foreign Language reading papers, some Classical specifications requiring the candidate to read in Greek or Latin or in subjects testing reading such as Literature or combined Language/Literature specifications
 - v) The reader is responsible to the Head of Centre and must be a person appointed by the Examination Authorities and capable of reading the material involved.
 - vi) The reader should not be the candidate's own subject teacher or assistant. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used as a reader. In exceptional circumstances the approval of the ADSC is required.
 - vii) The provision of a reader should reflect the candidate's normal way of working, except in cases of temporary injury to the eyes.
 - viii) The Centre is responsible for ensuring that if a candidate and reader are not accommodated separately, other candidates cannot overhear what the reader is saying and are not disturbed by their presence. If the candidate and reader

are accommodated separately, a separate invigilator will be required.

- ix) If several candidates require only occasional reading assistance, they may be accommodated as a separate group with a reader and an invigilator.
- x) Centres whose candidates are not permitted a reader may wish to accommodate candidates separately so that they may read aloud to themselves, particularly where this is their normal way of working.

1.2.2. A reader:

- **must** read accurately
- **must** only **read** the instructions of the question papers and questions but **not** explain or clarify
- **must** repeat instructions given on the question paper only when specifically requested to do so by the candidate
- **must** abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to the disqualification of the candidate
- **must not** advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, nor the order in which questions should be answered
- **may** enable a visually impaired candidate to identify diagrams, graphs and tables but must not give factual information nor offer any suggestions, other than that information which would be available on the paper for sighted candidates
- **may** read back, when requested, what has been written in the answer
- **may**, if requested, give the spelling of a word which appears on the paper but otherwise spellings must not be given.

1.2.3. A reader for the visually-impaired:

- (a) should read, as often as requested, the questions and the answers already recorded;
- (b) must give information regarding time elapsed and remaining; is permitted to help a candidate using tactile maps, diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information which the print / amended print copy would give to a sighted candidate;
- (c) must, if requested, give the spelling of a word which occurs in the question paper or in the coursework material - otherwise spellings must not be given; should be prepared for periods of inactivity during an examination; must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

- 1.2.4. **It should be noted that failure to comply with the regulations given in 1.2.2 and 1.2.3. above could result in the candidate being disqualified.**

If the candidate considers that the arrangements made do not, for any reason, enable the candidate to demonstrate his / her attainment in the examination, a request for special consideration should be submitted to the ADSC with an explanation of the difficulties experienced by the candidate.

Appendix 1.3

NOTES ON THE USE OF COMMUNICATORS FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED CANDIDATES

- 1.3.1. Arrangements for the use of a communicator will be made by the Examination Authorities, teacher of the deaf or local advisory service as appropriate.
- i) The communicator must be a qualified teacher of the deaf or be appointed by a qualified teacher of the deaf.
 - ii) A separate communicator should be available for each candidate, if possible. The number of candidates per communicator should never exceed three.
 - iii) The examination for the hearing-impaired candidates should take place in a separate room and therefore a separate invigilator is required.
 - iv) The communicator may go through the rubric with the candidate.
Re-interpreting is to be applied to carrier language, not technical language. Particular care should be taken when the language of the paper has already been modified by a teacher of the deaf.
 - v) The communicator may take the initiative in re-interpreting any special linguistic difficulties considered likely to confuse the candidate.
 - vi) The role of the communicator is mainly to be available to re-interpret when requested to do so by the candidate.
 - v) The means of communication used to re-interpret should be appropriate to the needs of the candidate, and may include:
 - use of spoken language
 - use of signs and sign language
 - use of writing.

Although some re-phrasing will be inevitable if questions are signed because of the change to a visual form of presentation, such re-phrasing must not give the candidate an unfair advantage and care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, where an understanding of these words is inherent in the answer

1.3.2 **Recording**

- i) Any words or phrases re-interpreted for the candidate should be underlined on the question paper which, if separate from the answer book should be attached to the candidate's answer book. Amended versions of the questions should be shown on the question paper.

- ii) A note of the communication method adopted should be made on the communicator's sheet and attached to the answer sheet.

1.3.3 **Speaker**

- i) The speaker presenting the aural components may be either a teacher of the deaf or other professional with appropriate communication skills working under the direction of the teacher of the deaf.
- ii) Wherever possible the candidate(s) should be familiar with the speaker.
- iii) Where this is not the case, for example, when a group of hearing-impaired candidates are being brought together into one centre for the examination, the speaker should have the opportunity to familiarise him / herself via a trial presentation.
- iv) The communicator should be a clear speaker (wherever possible communicators should not have beards and/or moustaches as these are likely to obscure the lip patterns).
- v) It is suggested that there should be no more than four hearing-impaired candidates to one speaker and these should be seated so as to gain maximum benefit from the speaker.
- vi) In situations where audio-recordings tapes are used, the speaker should be allowed access to these tapes at least one hour before the examination. This is to allow time for the preparation necessary for adequate communication. In order to comply with security requirements, it may be necessary to delay the start of the examinations for the candidates concerned and to place them under supervision whilst preparation takes place.
- vii) The Head of Centre and the invigilator should be informed if radio hearing-aid equipment is to be used by candidates wishing to listen to the recording while receiving simultaneous speaking.
- ix) The speaker should be told how much additional repetition is allowed, if necessary, to take into account any loss of concentration on the content as a result of the candidate's effort to 'hear' or to express answers orally or in writing. It must be noted that candidates cannot lip-read and write at the same time. The speaker should therefore pause at determined intervals to enable the candidates to take down notes where necessary before moving on to the next bit.
- x) A separate room and invigilator should be requested for hearing-impaired candidates receiving communication support so that the other candidates are not distracted.
- xi) If the content of the recording involves the use of two or more characters it is preferable, whenever possible, to use a separate speaker for each role. If this is not feasible then adequate alternative arrangements will have to be made.

1.3.4 Total Communicators

NB. Total communicators and sign language interpreters are not permitted for Modern Language Listening Tests

- i) The communicator presenting the aural component may be either a teacher of the deaf or other professional with appropriate communication skills working under the direction of the teacher of the deaf.
- ii) Wherever possible the candidate(s) should be familiar with the communicator and his / her method of communication.
- iii) Where this is not the case, for example, when a group of hearing-impaired candidates are being brought together into one regional centre for the examination, the candidate should have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the communicator via a trial presentation, e.g. carrying out a short mock examination beforehand.
- iv) Candidates who are more sign oriented should have an alternative means of assessment which should follow the same principles as the oral/aural one; spoken Maltese, signs or a mixed mode (spoken Maltese and signs) may be used to communicate. Where the use of sign language is allowed, a sign language interpreter acceptable to the Deaf candidate should assist.
- v) The sign language component of the total communication should be delivered with receptive skills of the candidate in mind but at the same time should follow the transcript or recording as accurately as possible. Sign language cannot be used for language or literature examinations.
- vi) It is suggested that there should be no more than four hearing-impaired candidates at a time to one communicator.
- vii) It is probable that extra time will be needed to convey the information through total communication and it will certainly be necessary if the hearing-impaired candidate is expected to take notes and/or answer questions. The ADSC will automatically permit additional time for the use of a communicator, normally up to 25% of the prescribed duration of the examination but it is also recommended that the text be read paragraph by paragraph and, after each paragraph, the student should be allowed time to jot down notes.
- viii) The head of centre and invigilator should be informed if radio hearing-aid equipment is to be used by candidates wishing to listen to the tape while receiving simultaneous interpreting.
- ix) The ADSC may permit additional repetition, if necessary, to take into account any loss of concentration on the content as a result of the candidates effort to 'hear' or to express answers orally or in writing.
- x) A separate room and invigilator should be requested for hearing-impaired candidates receiving communication support so that the other candidates are not distracted.

- xi) If the content of the recording involves the use of two or more characters it is preferable, whenever possible, to use a separate communicator for each role. If this is not feasible then adequate alternative arrangements will have to be made.

Appendix 1.4.

NOTES FOR TEACHERS OF THE DEAF SUPPORTING HEARING-IMPAIRED CANDIDATES IN COURSEWORK

Where a hearing-impaired candidate normally has a teacher of the deaf working alongside the classroom teacher in an everyday teaching situation to aid communication and understanding and to ensure that the pupil can take part in the lesson, the teacher of the deaf may perform the same function during classroom-based assessment.

These notes are of a general nature only since each piece of coursework will have its particular and different requirements.

1.4.1 General Principles

- i) Teachers of the deaf may discuss the on-going work with candidates but may only respond to requests for guidance or advice; they must not direct the work being done.
- ii) Any assistance given to the candidate must not reduce the validity or reliability of the assessment and must not interfere with the assessment objectives of the assignment.
- iii) The candidate must not be given an unfair advantage over other candidates taking the same component.
- iv) Any guidance given to the candidate must be such that it does not mislead users of the certificate about the candidate's attainment.
- v) The teacher must confirm that steps were taken to ensure that the work assessed is solely that of the candidate concerned and present a written declaration that the candidate's work was carried out under the required conditions.
- vi) Teachers are required to indicate on the appropriate document supplied to candidates and schools the nature and amount of guidance or advice given to any candidate. Full details must be recorded of the nature of any assistance given to the group as a whole but within the parameters laid down by the syllabus.
- vii) Any assistance, as described in section 6 above, must be taken into account, according to the ADSC instructions, when the assessments are made.

1.4.2 General Guidance on the Planning and Execution of Coursework Assignments

- i) Teachers of the deaf should consult with the of Head of School or College/ Head of Department or Dean of Faculty in the first instance to find out
 - the instructions issued by the ADSC;

- the details of the task given out to candidates;
 - the general and specific advice / guidance given by the subject teacher to the class.
- ii) Throughout the preparation of coursework, the teacher of the deaf should liaise closely with the class teacher or lecturer.
- to find out the on-going advice given to the class at each stage of the project / assignment
 - to check that the candidate's work is progressing satisfactorily.
- iii) A teacher of the deaf may feel that certain candidates may need additional guidance on structuring a project and organising their time. In such cases it can be helpful to break the task down into manageable stages, setting short-term targets with deadlines throughout the major assignment until completion.
- iv) Teachers of the deaf may ensure that candidates understand what is expected of them in response to section headings such as 'evaluate your final solution' 'draw conclusions from your study' 'develop your ideas'
- v) If a candidate is required to produce a folio item, the teacher of the deaf should ensure that the candidate's folio contains work in each section.
- vi) The teacher of the deaf should ensure that the candidate is presenting the work in the appropriate format.
- vii) Additional time may be requested for the completion of coursework.

1.4.3 **Guidance on Written Work**

- i) Any advice must be confined to the rough draft stage of an assignment and comply with the General Principles in Appendix 1.4.1. above.
- ii) Advice should be given only at the request of the candidate. The teacher of the deaf must not indicate errors in or correct a candidate's written work.
- iii) Whilst a teacher may ask questions of a candidate in order to provoke him / her into giving further consideration to the form of an assignment, care must be taken not to indicate what changes could or should be made.
- iv) A number of projects lend themselves to the presentation of material in photographic or pictorial form. For some sections of a project, a candidate whose language is particularly weak may be advised to produce annotated illustrations with a few accompanying sentences of explanation or argument, thus minimising the amount of written work required.

Appendix 1.5.

NOTES ON THE USE OF PRACTICAL ASSISTANTS

Permission for the use of a Practical Assistant must be obtained from the ADSC concerned prior to the relevant assessments.

The use of a Practical Assistant should not give a candidate an unfair advantage, nor should it disadvantage the candidate. The object of the exercise is to enable a true assessment of the candidate's knowledge, understanding and skills to be determined.

The use of a Practical Assistant must not modify the assessment requirements for the subject being examined or the specific syllabus requirements. In some cases, for example, the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be the skill being examined and in these cases the candidate will not be eligible for the marks concerned unless s/he demonstrates the necessary attainment.

In examinations where the practical component is assessed by an external examiner, the use of a practical assistant will lead to an endorsement of the certificate. Additional time will be permitted for the use of a practical assistant and will normally be up to 25% of the prescribed duration of the examination. A practical assistant is a helper who, in practical assessments, will ensure a candidate's safety and/or transmit visual observations and/or carry out some or all of the tasks at the candidate's instructions. Candidates may be eligible to use practical assistants if they suffer from disabilities or indispositions that prevent them from carrying out the practical tasks themselves.

- i) A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the candidate and carry out his/her instructions accurately. The Assistant should ideally have a working knowledge of the subject concerned.
- ii) A practical assistant must be acceptable to the Examination Authorities and is responsible to that Authorities.
- iii) The practical assistant should not normally be the candidate's own teacher in the subject. On no account may a relative of the candidate be used as a practical assistant.
- iv) A candidate should, wherever possible, have adequate practice in the use of a practical assistant. Where assessments take place periodically throughout the course, applications should be made to the ADSC, at the beginning of the course, so that, where provision is agreed, practice may be given before the assessments take place.
- v) The need for a practical assistant may not arise until immediately before or during an examination. The Examination Authorities should provide a practical assistant, alternative accommodation and supervision and ensure that as far as possible the regulations governing the use of practical assistants are observed.

- vi) Candidates who are using a practical assistant are accommodated separately from other candidates. The examiner responsible for the assessment of practical skills must be present in addition to the practical assistant.

- v) During a practical assessment a practical assistant:
 - (a) must not give factual help to the candidate or offer any suggestions.
 - (b) must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, nor the order in which the questions should be done.
 - (c) must carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so will cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the candidate's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the candidate in any way nor must the assistant attempt to interpret the candidate's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the candidate this must be reflected in the marks awarded for the assessment;
 - (d) should not expect to assist the candidate throughout an assessment (there may well be parts of the assessment which the candidate can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills);
 - (e) must immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor. If in doubt, always ask the invigilator/supervisor.

- vi) **It should be noted that failure to comply with the regulations given in (v) above could result in the candidate being disqualified.**

If the candidate considers that the arrangements made do not, for any reason, enable the candidate to demonstrate his/her attainment in the examination, a request for access arrangements should be submitted to the ADSC with an explanation of the difficulties experienced by the candidate.

Appendix 1.6.

NOTES ON THE USE OF A SCRIBE

Permission for the use of a scribe must be obtained from the ADSC concerned prior to the examination or the commencement of coursework.

The use of a scribe should not give a candidate an unfair advantage nor should it further disadvantage the candidate.

The use of a scribe must not modify the assessment requirements for the subject being examined nor the specific syllabus requirements. In some cases the writing of answers by the candidate may be the skill being examined.

Additional time will be permitted for the use of a scribe and will normally be up to 25% of the prescribed duration of the examination.

A scribe is a person who, in coursework and/or in an examination, writes down, types or word processes a candidate's dictated answers to questions. Candidates are eligible to use a scribe if they suffer from long-term or temporary disabilities which prevent them from communicating by any other means. For candidates requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person can act as both.

- i) A scribe should be a responsible adult who is able to produce an accurate record of the candidate's answers; who can write legibly, type or word process and at a reasonable speed; and, in the case of a scientific, mathematical or technical subject, should ideally have a working knowledge of that subject.
- ii) A scribe is responsible to the Examination Authorities and the person who is to act as the scribe must be acceptable to that Authorities.
- iii) On no account may a relative of the candidate be used as a scribe.
- iv) A candidate should, wherever possible, have adequate practice in the use of a scribe. The ADSC and the Faculty (where applicable) should be consulted at the beginning of the course about any candidate who will require a scribe for the production of coursework so that the candidate may have adequate practice before undertaking the coursework tasks.
- v) The need for a scribe may not arise until immediately before or during an examination. The ADSC or the Faculty should provide a scribe, alternative accommodation and supervision and ensure that as far as possible the regulations governing the use of scribes are observed.
- vi) A candidate using a scribe must be accommodated in such a way that no other candidate is able to hear what is being dictated. The scribe may not also act as the invigilator.

- vii) During the examination or the production of coursework a scribe:
- (a) must neither give factual help to the candidate nor offer any suggestions;
 - (b) must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, nor the order in which the questions should be done;
 - (c) must write down, type or word process answers exactly as they are dictated;
 - (d) must write, type or word process a correction on a typescript or braille sheet if requested to do so by the candidate;
 - (e) must draw or add to maps, diagrams and graphs strictly in accordance with the candidate's instructions;
 - (f) may at the candidate's request read back what has been recorded;
 - (g) must not expect to write throughout the examination as the candidate may require supervised rest breaks during the working of the examination;
 - (h) must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator. If in doubt always ask the invigilator.

viii) **It should be noted that failure to comply with the regulations given in (vii) above could result in the candidate being disqualified.**

If the candidate considers that the arrangements made do not, for any reason, enable the candidate to demonstrate his / her attainment in the examination, a request for access arrangements should be submitted to the ADSC with an explanation of the difficulties experienced by the candidate.

Appendix 1.7

NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION OF A TRANSCRIPT

The purpose of a transcript is to aid the Examiner in the marking of a candidate's script. The Examiner will mark the candidate's script and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the candidate's responses.

The regulations below apply equally to the transcription of a candidate's answers in Braille or in Sign Language.

Permission to provide a transcript must be obtained from the ADSC prior to the examination or the commencement of coursework.

- i) The transcript must be produced under the supervision of the Centre Supervisor by a person acceptable to the Examination Authorities who is familiar with the candidate's handwriting or is fully competent in the braille code for the subject concerned or who is a sign language interpreter in the case of candidates using sign language.
- ii) The transcript must be produced in a separate copy of the question paper/ answer booklet or on lined or unlined white paper as appropriate.
- ii) The transcript may be handwritten, typed or word-processed as appropriate. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink must be used. Pencil must never be used.
- iii) The transcript must be produced immediately after the examination under secure conditions. The candidate must not be involved in the production of the transcript. In the case of candidates using sign language, the transcript must be produced during the examination itself.
- iv) A copy of the Transcript cover sheet, must be completed and securely attached to the front of the transcript together with a copy of the ADSC letter of agreement to the transcription but not the application for access arrangements or the supporting evidence. The cover sheet must be signed by the teacher or interpreter preparing the transcript and countersigned by the Centre Supervisor.
- v) Normally, the transcript will be of complete answers. In cases where only occasional words need to be transcribed, these may be written on a photocopy of the candidate's script or on an empty script. On no account must the candidate's original script be marked or annotated in any way.
- vi) In Maltese, English or modern foreign languages, the transcript must be a verbatim copy of the original script. Any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the candidate and must not be corrected.
- vii) If, however, in subjects other than Maltese, English or modern foreign

languages, the centre considers that some interpretation or translation is necessary, this should be discussed with the Examining Authority concerned well in advance of the examination. The candidate's school should be prepared to supply samples of the candidate's usual written work. Such translation or interpretation should be confined to the correct spelling of individual words or exceptionally some re-phrasing rather than an indication of what the candidate intended to write.

- viii) Any annotations by way of translation or interpretation must be written on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green, or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- ix) The transcript together with the document referred to under paragraph 6 above, must be securely attached to the back of the candidate's script and be included with the centre's scripts for dispatch to the examiner in the normal way. The production of the transcript must not delay the dispatch of scripts to the Examiner.
- x) The ADSC must not inform the marker of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

Appendix 1.8

NOTES ON THE USE OF PROMPTERS

Requests may be made to use prompters for candidates who have severe attention problems. Such candidates would normally be those with high incidence mild epilepsy or a neurological or cognitive disability affecting attention. For a number of candidates in this category, it may be sufficient for the invigilator to act as the prompter, provided that the number of candidates in the examination room is small enough to allow this. For candidates requiring a reader and a prompter, the same person can act as both.

Permission for the use of a prompter must be obtained from the ADSC prior to the examination or the commencement of coursework.

Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to requesting supervised breaks rather than a prompter.

The use of a prompter should neither give a candidate an unfair advantage nor should it disadvantage the candidate.

The use of a prompter must not modify the assessment requirements for the subject being examined nor specific syllabus requirements of the Course of Studies .

- i) A prompter must be acceptable to the Examination Authorities and is responsible to that Authority.
- ii) On no account may a relative of the candidate be used as a prompter.
- iii) Prompters should be sufficiently familiar with the candidate to recognise when his or her attention is no longer on the examination task and that s/he is not, for example, looking away from the paper whilst thinking.
- iv) Prompting in examinations is solely for the purpose of drawing the candidate's attention back to the examination task.
- v) The prompter should sit near enough to be able to observe the candidate and draw his or her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The prompter should not read the question paper (aloud or silently) nor should the Prompter read the candidate's answer paper. The observation should be of the candidate, not of his or her work. The candidate's attention should be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the candidate's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper). Verbal prompting should not be used. The method of prompting acceptable to both the candidate and the Examination Authorities should be agreed beforehand.

- vi) In the case of epileptic candidates where the problem is one of temporary absencing, the normal procedure to help that candidate will usually be allowed, though this will need to be agreed by the ADSC, as will supervised breaks if required after the absencing.
- vii) Under no circumstances may the prompter draw the attention of the candidate to part of the question paper or the candidate's answer paper.
- viii) The Examination Authorities must ensure that there are suitable arrangements for the proper supervision of the use of a Prompter.

The Examination Authorities may need to make arrangements for candidates using a prompter to be accommodated separately from other candidates. In such cases, an invigilator must always be present in addition to the prompter.

- ix) During an examination a prompter
 - (a) must not give factual help to the candidate or offer any suggestions;
 - (b) must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be done;
 - (c) should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the examination but should remain vigilant;
 - (d) must immediately refer any problems during the examination to the invigilator.
- x) **It should be noted that failure to comply with the regulations given in (ix) above could result in the candidate being disqualified.**

If the candidate considers that the arrangements made do not, for any reason, enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her attainment in the examination, a request for access arrangements should be submitted to the ADSC with an explanation of the difficulties experienced by the candidate.

Appendix 1.9

GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF WORD PROCESSORS AND PROCESSOR CONTROLLED DEVICES

1.9.1 **General Principles**

The Examination Authorities recognize that the use of computers by disabled candidates is educationally desirable and may on occasion provide the primary means of communication. The use of the term 'computer' in this document should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and audio or other modalities.

Some word processors and PCs with word-processing software are permitted generally for some parts of the examination assessment (e.g. most coursework). In such circumstances, an application for special arrangements is not necessary. If, however, there is any doubt about the acceptability of word-processed coursework or if it is intended to use the computer other than as a basic word processor, the candidate should consult the Examination Authorities.

In circumstances where arrangements are needed, the Examination Authorities will make every effort to respond positively to requests for candidates to use word processors and processor controlled devices, subject to the following principles and procedures:

- i) The Examination Authorities will consider each application in relation to the assessment objectives of the subjects for which the candidate will be entered. The object of examination arrangements is to provide access and thus enable candidates with disabilities to demonstrate their attainment in relation to the assessment objectives of a syllabus. This principle applies to the use of computers in the same way as it does to other types of access arrangements. It is the performance of the candidate which must be assessed and the use of the computer must not create a misleading impression of that performance or confer an unfair advantage over other candidates.
- ii) It is anticipated that candidates who are able to produce work for assessment by handwriting or drawing will do so. This means that:
 - (a) The word processor must be used only by those candidates whose disability/learning difficulty either impairs their hand written communication or renders their handwriting illegible as evidenced by a relevant report by an appropriate professional; and
 - (b) The access arrangement requested for assessments and examinations will reflect the candidate's usual method of working.

- iii) Before choosing an examination syllabus for a candidate with a disability who uses a word processor and/or processor controlled devices, the school presenting the candidate should consider whether the assessment objectives can be met fully if answers are presented in such a way. In some cases the syllabus may be designed to test particular skills (e.g. drawing by hand) which cannot be demonstrated if a computer is used. In cases of doubt, the Head of School should consult the Examination Authorities.
- iv) It is in the best interests of candidates to establish at an early stage whether or not examination arrangements can be made.
- v) When considering an application for examination arrangements which will involve more than a PC being used as a basic computer, the Examination Authorities will need full details of the hardware and software requested for use by the candidate.
 - (a) The Examination Authorities reserve the right to seek independent advice concerning the operation of word processors/processor controlled devices used by the candidates in order to help them determine what examination arrangements should be made.
 - (b) If the candidate has very specific needs for which very specific devices may be needed, the Examination Authorities will work towards an equitable solution in consultation with the candidate
- vi) The word processor must not have any predictive text software or automatic spell checkers, grammatical checking or thesauri and must not give access to other applications such as calculators, spreadsheets.
- vii) Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a word processor/processor controlled devices are used, the ADSC may:
 - (a) allow the candidate's request on the understanding that there will be an endorsement on the certificate that access arrangements were made to enable the candidate to be assessed in the skill;
 - (b) suggest alternative examination arrangements;
 - (c) refuse the request.

1.9.2 **Implementation arrangements**

- i) Candidates using PCs may be accommodated separately from others for formal assessments and examinations.
- ii) Candidates must have access only to those facilities which have been

agreed to in advance in writing, including type of processor and devices. If an arrangement involves the use of equipment owned by the candidate, the Examination Authorities may require that the equipment be passed on to the authorities in advance of the examination for the necessary preparations.

- iii) The examination paper can be provided in accessible format (MS word/PDF) on CD Rom accompanying the other examination papers.
- iv) The candidate must ensure that the computer is working correctly at the time of an assessment or examination.
- v) The frequent saving of work is strongly recommended. Where available, an auto save facility can achieve this.
- iv) A copy of the examination responses produced by the candidate must be printed at the end of the examination, and the print out signed by the candidate and the invigilator, for use in the candidate's assessment.

1.9.3 **Further notes on use and preparation of assistive technology**

- With regards to examination arrangements involving the use of ICT, the Examination Authorities should involve consultation with the following agencies: ITS, FITA, Inclusion and Special Education Network, and the Examinations Branch.
- Persons preparing the ICT resources to be used during examinations, must be familiar with the operation of the relevant software and devices. The above agencies can support implementation.
- The student with disability must be familiar with the ICT being provided. If assistive ICT solutions are not included in the list below, these must be evaluated. If these are approved, reasonable time must be given for the examination board to familiarise itself with the assistive ICT. In some occasions it may be that the student may need to familiarise him/herself with approved ICT tools.

1.9.4 Generic matching of assistive ICT solutions to impairment types

Impairment	Assistive ICT Solution
Low Vision – Blind	Window Eyes screen reader or ZoomText screen magnification software (individual condition/no headphones so invigilator has access to computer output). Large print alternative (A3 and more desk space).
Mobility	Input devices like BIG Keys keyboard, intellikeys keyboard or small keyboards to use a mouth stick. Vertical mice, touch pads, trackballs etc. Dragon Naturally Speaking or VIA Voice speech recognition software (individual conditions) Accessibility options, like sticky keys or mouse keys.
Hearing	For computer based exams, one must set accessibility options to complement audio prompts with visual feedback.
Hidden	A combination of the solutions shown elsewhere.
Communication	Augmentative Communication Aids, sometimes software based and sometimes being external devices.
Dyslexia	Read and Write Gold software to highlight text and produce speech synthesis of screen content.

1.9.5 Application of the above principles

The following examples, adapted from JCQ (2006), may help to clarify the application of the above principles:

1. *Candidates who have always used a word processor at home feel that their presentation will be more attractive and the writing speed much faster if they use a word processor in the examination. This is not their normal way of producing written work as their writing is clear and legible. They have mild dyslexia, but when assessed they were not found to require any specific assistance. The word processor is refused and they are required to handwrite their scripts.*
2. *Candidate who cannot write legibly because they have severe dyslexia apply*

to use a word processor in examinations. It is their normal means of producing written work because their teachers cannot read their writing. They are very proficient on the machine. They are allowed to use a word processor.

3. *A candidate taking a Design paper wants to use a word processor. Most of the paper involves drawing original designs by hand. Computer aided design packages are not allowed in this particular paper. The word processor is refused.*
4. *Candidates taking an ICT paper wish to use a word processor with a spell checker. The paper is testing their ability to proof-read a document. The spell checker is refused but they can use the word processor without this facility because it is their normal way of producing written work.*
5. *Candidates who has severe dyslexia have quite legible writing. However, they make many omissions and cannot order their ideas correctly. Their written scripts are legible but covered in crossings-out and omission marks. They request a word processor and, if the candidates provide valid evidence that they have severe dyslexia, this is granted because it allows for text to be corrected and answers to be correctly sequenced.*

Appendix 2
APPLICATION FORMS

Further guidance on how to complete the application form for Access Examination Arrangements

a)	In the box 'EXAMINATIONS FOR WHICH APPLICATION IS MADE', specify for the candidate concerned all the examinations for which access arrangements are being requested.
b)	In the box 'REASON FOR APPLICATION', state precisely the nature of the disability or indisposition, the severity where appropriate and the effects in relation to assessment.
c)	Specify any medical or other appropriate information / evidence enclosed with the application which will assist understanding of the request. Medical or other appropriate evidence will usually be required to verify the information given to the satisfaction of the ADSC.
d)	Requests for access arrangements for candidates with specific learning difficulties must be supported by evidence derived from psychological assessment. Such evidence must include the information requested on the appropriate psychological assessment form.
e)	In the box 'ACCESS EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS REQUESTED' specify, for each examination component, your recommendations for the access arrangements needed by the candidate. Be as precise as possible. Remember that it is your responsibility to recommend access arrangements appropriate to the candidate in view of his/her disability. You are advised, wherever possible, to consult a specialist advisory service or other external service on the most appropriate arrangements for the candidates concerned.
f)	In the box 'ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY MADE WITHIN THE SCHOOL' indicate any support which is usually available to the candidate in the classroom situation and for tests conducted at school. Specify for how long such arrangements have been made for the candidate.
g)	Complete the details of the 'DECLARATION'. The application must be supported by the Head of the School for it to be accepted by the ADSC. It is the responsibility of the Head of School, parent or guardian to request the access arrangements and to supply the information required on the form. Statements such as "see psychologist's report" are not sufficient.

It should be noted that:

- **The final decision rests with the Rector/Registrar after consultation with the ADSC**
- **Each application is treated with the strictest confidence**



**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
EXAMINATION BOARD**

Request for Access Arrangements during MATSEC Examinations

Form 1 - To be filled by all MATSEC Candidates except those with Hearing-Impairment and SpLD

Name of Candidate: _____

I.D. Card: _____ Special I.D. Card (where applicable) _____

Address: _____

_____ Tel No/s: _____

School: _____

_____ Tel No: _____

Disability/Impairment: _____

Examinations for which application is made:

Subject	Level Paper A/B	Access Exam Arrangements Requested	Remarks (for official use)

REASON FOR APPLICATION

Is medical/psychological evidence attached? Yes/No *

Is any additional information / evidence attached? Yes/No *

* Please delete as appropriate

ACCESS EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS REQUESTED (to be filled by Head of school)

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY MADE WITHIN THE SCHOOL DURING
COURSEWORK

Declaration (to be signed by the head of school, otherwise by parent or guardian in the case of a candidate not attending school)

I am satisfied that the information provided on this form is accurate.

Name (Head of School, parent or guardian) ***(Block Capitals Please)***

.....

Signed Date

For Office use only

The completed form must be sent to the Examination Authorities concerned

MATSEC Support Unit
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080

Section A (to be completed by the School)

This section should be completed by the School or by the Head of Services for Hearing-Impaired Students.

If candidate has previously been granted Access Arrangements by the Examination Authority, please specify:

How old was the candidate when his/her hearing-impairment was diagnosed?

Does the candidate have other impairments apart from hearing-loss?

What support does the candidate have (e.g. teacher of the deaf, sign language interpreter)?
Give details regarding number of weekly visits and duration of visits by the professionals supporting the candidate?

What is the candidate's mode of communication?

What amplification system does the candidate use? Give details.

What language(s) does the candidate usually use in class?

What examination arrangements are made for the candidate in school?

What examination arrangements are being requested?

Kindly attach an audiogram signed and dated by a qualified audiologist with this application

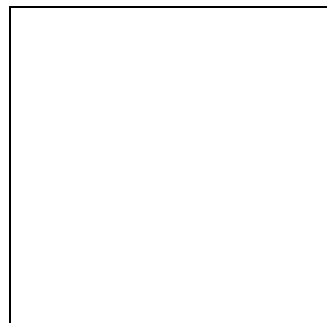
Declaration by Head of School

I hereby certify that all information provided is accurate and hence I fully support the application. The candidate has been attending the school for the past _____ years. I would also like to state that (write here if applicable):

Name: _____ Signature: _____
Head of School (Please print)

Date: _____

Official Stamp:





**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
EXAMINATION BOARD**

Request for Access Arrangements during MATSEC Examinations

Form 3 - To be filled by MATSEC candidates with Specific Learning Difficulties

Name of Candidate: _____

I.D. Card: _____ **Special I.D. Card (where applicable)** _____

Address: _____

_____ **Tel No/s:** _____

School: _____

_____ **Tel No:** _____

Disability/Impairment: _____

Examinations for which application is made:

Subject	Level Paper A/B	Access Exam Arrangements Requested	Remarks (for official use)

NOTE: Please read "Access Arrangements for Candidates with SpLD" before completing Form. The completed form should be sent to the Examination Authority conducting the examination. The School should complete this page and Section A, while Sections B and C should be completed by a Psychologist or Dyslexia Specialist.

Section A (to be completed by the School)

This section should be completed by the School before the candidate is assessed and the form should be sent to the specialist assessor in time for the appointment.

If candidate has previously been granted Access Arrangements by the Examination Authority, please specify:

History of Need

Does the candidate have a history of difficulties with the acquisition and development of literacy skills?

YES/NO

Please give brief details mentioning school records, reports, recent examination results, previous psychological assessments (please attach copy of latest report/s):

History of Provision

Have any learning support/assessment access arrangements been made available to the candidate?

YES/NO

a) List arrangements: _____

b) State when made (e.g. June 2006):

c) Date of latest examination results: _____
Please attach most recent examination results.

d) Do the results match the School's expectations for this candidate?

YES/NO

Comments _____

Declaration

I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is accurate and hence I fully support the application. The candidate has been attending the school for the past _____ years. I would also like to state that (write here if applicable):

Name: _____ Signature: _____
Head of School (Please print)

Date: _____

Candidate's name:

--

Section B (to be completed by a qualified specialist)

This section should be completed by a qualified specialist (i.e. an educational psychologist or a specialist teacher or suitably qualified psychologist recognized by ACCESS-Disability Support Committee – (ADSC)).

Please complete those sections necessary to support the application, i.e. sections on reading for reader applications. It is not permitted under any circumstances to delete sections or amend the wording on the form. Please insert n/a in sections not completed.

Reading Skills

If a test with a lower ceiling age than the candidate's chronological age has been used, please give the reason in the section, 'Other relevant information'.

1a. Reading Accuracy (English)

Is the candidate's untimed (single-word) reading accuracy in the **below average** range for his/her age (i.e. with a standardized score at least 1 standard deviation below the mean - less than 85 - or at a percentile rank less than 16)?

YES/ NO

Is the candidate's untimed (single-word) reading accuracy **below the 10-year age** equivalent level?

YES/ NO

Please give candidate's result on a Single-Word Reading test as a standardised score.

Name of test	
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	
Standardised score & Reading Age	

1b. Reading Accuracy (Maltese)

Is the candidate's untimed (single word) reading accuracy in the **below average** range for his/her age (i.e. with a standardised score at least 1 standard deviation below the mean - less than 85 - or at a percentile rank less than 16)?

YES/ NO

Please give candidate's result on a Single Word Reading test as a standardised score.

Name of test	
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	
Standardised score & Reading Age	

2. Reading Speed and Comprehension (English)

Does the candidate read and/or comprehend continuous text at a speed/level which is below average for his/her age (i.e. with a standardised score at least 1 standard deviation below the mean - less than 85 - or at a percentile rank less than 16)?

YES/ NO

Please give candidate's results on timed assessments of reading text with comprehension.

Name of test	
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	
Reading Speed wpm	
Reading Speed standardised score, if available & Reading Age	
Comprehension standardised score	

Writing Skills

3. Accuracy & Legibility

Is the candidate's spelling accuracy in the **below average** range? **YES / NO**

Does the candidate's spelling and/or handwriting render his or her free writing largely illegible (If yes a sample from an exam script should be provided)?

YES / NO

Is the candidate's free writing incomprehensible? **YES / NO**

Is the candidate proficient in the use of a word processor? **YES / NO**

Please give the results of a spelling assessment, stating how many errors were unrecognisable as the target word.

Name of test	
Test ceiling	
Date of administration	
Spelling standardised score & Spelling Age	
Errors unrecognisable as target word, expressed as a percentage of the whole assessment	

4. Does the candidate express him/herself in written form, more slowly than is average for his/her age?

YES/ NO

Free writing speed (wpm)	
Percentage of indecipherable words	
Free writing speed (wpm) when dictated to scribe/word-processed	
Quality of language - please comment	

Other relevant information

--

Section C (to be completed by a qualified specialist)

This section should be completed by a *qualified specialist (i.e. an educational psychologist or a specialist teacher or suitably qualified psychologist recognized by ADSC)*.

On the basis of this assessment, the following Access Arrangements for examinations are requested (Please be specific).

Author of this report

Name: _____ Signature: _____
(Please print)

Author qualification:

Are you:

A. Qualified Educational Psychologist? **YES/ NO**

If YES, list qualifications and affiliations here:

Qualifications: _____

Affiliations: _____

B. If the answer is NO, are you a qualified specialist teacher? **YES/ NO**

If YES, please fill in the information box below.

Specialist Qualifications held: _____

Name of awarding Body: _____

Affiliations: _____

C. If your answer to both of the above questions was “NO”, please explain how you deem your qualification(s) to be appropriate for the certification required.

Declaration

I certify that the above information is accurate and that I carried out all the assessments in Section B.

Name _____ Signature _____
(Please print)

Date _____

Please tick attached evidence :
Psychologist Report
Psychiatrist Report
Medical Certificate
Ophthalmologist Report
Audiologist Report
Nutritionist Report
Other

Access Arrangements Requested:

Access Arrangement	Required (Please tick)	Approved
Extra Time		
Extra Time above 25%		
Tapes / Cd's Floppy Disks		
Alternative accommodation/ venue away from centre		
Braille examination paper		
Sign Language Interpreter		
Colour naming		
Communicator		
Live Speaker		
Modified Enlarged Question Paper A4 to A3		
Modified Language Examination Paper (to discuss)		
Practical Assistant		
Reader		
Scribe		
Unmodified A3 question paper		
Voice activated computer		
Word Processor		
Supervised rest periods		
Relative on Call		
Books and papers to be taken apart		
Permission to use toilets frequently		
Prompter		
Spelling consideration		
Permission to eat		
Permission to keep hand towel		
Personal Assistant		
Handwriting consideration		
Other (Please specify)		

Access Arrangements already benefited by candidate previously.	
Extra Time	
Extra Time above 25%	
Tapes / Cd's Floppy Disks	
Alternative accommodation/ venue away from centre	
Braille examination paper	
Sign Language Interpreter	
Colour naming	
Communicator	
Live Speaker	
Modified Enlarged Question Paper A4 to A3	
Modified Language Examination Paper (to discuss)	
Practical Assistant	
Reader	
Scribe	
Unmodified A3 question paper	
Voice activated computer	
Word Processor	
Supervised rest periods	
Relative on Call	
Books and papers to be taken apart	
Permission to use toilets frequently	
Prompter	
Spelling consideration	
Permission to eat	
Permission to keep hand towel	
Personal Assistant	
Handwriting consideration	
Other (Please specify)	

Declaration (To be signed by the candidate)

I, the undersigned, am satisfied that the information provided on this form is accurate.

Name.....Signature.....

Date.....

For office use only

Application No.	
Case No.	