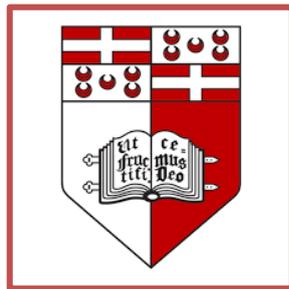


**ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS  
SUPPORT ASSISTANTS  
(AASAs) HANDBOOK**



***MATSEC  
SUPPORT UNIT  
UNIVERSITY OF  
MALTA***

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## **Foreword**

This handbook has been designed to help you understand MATSEC's examination procedures. The instructions within are based upon the rules and regulations set by the MATSEC Examinations Board and the Access Disability Support Committee (ADSC). They outline your role as Access Arrangements Support Assistants (AASAs) and highlight the kind of tasks that are expected of you.

Both the Training Seminar and this handbook will help you prepare for this important role. We hope that you find this handbook useful and informative.

In case of further queries, please do not hesitate contact us

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## **AASAs duties**

### **Examination Room**

Check that the examination room is set up accordingly. Ensure that the cards with candidate numbers are placed on the relevant desks. Make sure that the candidates will be spread out comfortably away from each other – remember that there are fewer access arrangements candidates in each room (max 8-10). Make sure desks are clear and curtains open to allow enough light in the room.

In the case of a computer lab, check that computers are switched on and ready for use.

### **Exam Material**

When candidates enter the examination room, you shall remind them that only exam-related material can be used i.e. identity card, time-table, access arrangements letter, writing instruments etc. Ideally mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 Players, and any other electronic equipment, and books, note-books and any other unauthorised material should not be brought into the examination venue. If any of the above items are brought into the examination venue, then they should be placed in a closed bag; all mobiles and electronic equipment should be switched off. Bags should be placed where instructed by the AASAs/invigilator.



**NO MOBILE PHONES, IPODS,  
MP3/4 PLAYERS.**

**NO PRODUCTS WITH AN  
ELECTRONIC  
COMMUNICATION/STORAGE  
DEVICE OR DIGITAL FACILITY.**

### **Candidates' Personal Belongings and Bags**

During examination, all candidates' personal belongings and bags must be closed and stored away from the desks as instructed by the AASAs/invigilator in a way that they do not obstruct any aisle or entrance/exit. No bags are allowed under or beside the desk.

### **Attendance**

Verify the candidates' identity after they are seated. Candidates with examination access arrangements should present the letter sent by the ADSC. Make sure the candidates assigned to your room are present and verify they are in the correct place according to the arrangements given. Take note of those absent.

### **Late arrivals and Early Leavers**

You shall not allow candidates into an examination room after the first half hour of the examination. Candidates should not be allowed to leave the examination venue during the first hour and during the last quarter of an hour of the regular examination time.

### **Confidential Pupil Information**

You will have access to and be trusted with confidential information regarding the candidate and his/her conditions/disabilities. This information should remain strictly confidential and should not be disclosed in any way.

### **Examination Papers and Script**

Prior to the commencement of the examination, make sure you have the exam papers secure and handy so that as soon as the supervisor gives the go ahead for the exam to start, you swiftly distribute the examination papers to all candidates. Make sure you distribute the right type of paper to the right candidate. For example, visually impaired candidates might have an enlarged examination paper with modified font size. You are to provide the candidates with one or more examination booklets as required.

If during the examination, candidates claim there is an error in the examination paper, you must not pass any judgement, pass remarks or make any decisions. Notify the supervisor immediately who will in turn notify MATSEC. The candidates will be informed about MATSEC's official reaction and decision. If there is indeed any type of error, an *erratum notice* will be issued by MATSEC that will be communicated throughout all examination venues.

### **During the Examination**

During the examination, you are expected to attend to the needs of the candidates. For this reason, you are not allowed to engage in any other activity such as reading, chatting, using the mobile etc. Once you enter the examination centre, mobile phones and any other electronic equipment should be strictly switched off and closed in a bag. Such equipment cannot be switched on again until you leave the examination centre.

If any candidates put their hand up for attention during any part of the examination, you are expected to go and assist them as best you can. You are not allowed to help them answer the questions (see instructions on pages 11-15 according to your role in the examination venue). If you are unsure how to deal with their query, then please seek advice from the Supervisor.



### **Misconduct and Disruptive Behaviour**

You should be very alert to any form of misconduct and disruptive behaviour. Such behaviour includes copying, shouting, chatting during examinations, running in corridors etc. This behaviour has to be reported to the supervisor and an irregularity report should be written about the incident.

### **Food and Drink**

No food is allowed in the examination room except when specified in the access arrangement letter due to specific conditions.

### **End of Exam**

Once the examination has finished you will collect all the examination papers from the candidates ensuring it contains the candidate number (index no.) and that no part of an examination booklet is torn off. Make sure no examination booklet or part thereof is taken outside the examination room. Place the papers in index number order. Once this is complete, place the papers as well as the attendance sheets in the envelope provided.

### **Dress Code**

You should dress smartly and appropriately in order to command respect. Quiet shoes should be worn as these do not disturb candidates. You **must** wear your name badge at all times at the examination centre. If you lose it, please contact the MATSEC Support Unit and report the loss immediately.



### **Relation to Candidates**

You shall declare if:

- you are related to a candidate by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree inclusive; or
- you have been, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, guardians of a candidate; or
- you have been, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, teachers of any of the candidates in the subject of examination or a closely related subject; or
- you have given, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, private tuition in the subject of examination or a closely related subject.

*(Conduct of the matriculation and secondary education certificate examinations [s.L.327.66 ]*

### **Illness**

If you cannot attend due to illness or any other emergency on the day of your duty, please call at the Examinations Department as soon as possible to enable arrangements for somebody else to work in your absence. The telephone number is 2598 2960.

### **Time Keeping**

You are to arrive at least half an hour before the commencement of the exam. You are expected to remain after the exam has finished to complete your full duties.

### **Declaration Form**

Any information on the declaration forms is vital to MATSEC. Please make sure you fill up the forms properly and correctly.

## Declaration Form

Name of AASS: \_\_\_\_\_ ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Role:      Reader      Prompter      Communicator      Scribe

Candidate's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate's number: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Paper: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate started exam at: \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate finished at: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

How frequent was the support requested by the student? Please tick as appropriate:

Frequently     

Rarely     

Never     

I declare that I have followed all the instructions by MATSEC/ADSC as set out in the '*Guidelines to MATSEC Examinations Access Arrangements 2011*'

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

## **Common Conditions that Candidates present with**

### **Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)**

Candidates with Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD) have difficulty in allocating attention, regulating motor activity, and controlling behavioural impulses.

### **Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

Candidates with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) may be academically able, but will have difficulties with examinations because of one or more of the following factors: they feel anxious; they do not understand why they need to sit an examination; they do not understand examination questions; they have sensory issues and may not cope well with, for instance, strip lighting, noise, strong smells, invigilator walking about or a large exam hall; and they have difficulty staying 'on task' ([www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)).

### **Developmental Coordination Disorder (DSD) Dyspraxia**

Candidates with dyspraxia have difficulty with thinking out, planning and carrying out sensorimotor tasks despite adequate teaching, a stimulating environment and with a generally within average cognitive ability. Candidates with dyspraxia may also have other difficulties to varying degrees.

### **Deaf or Hearing Impaired**

Candidates are considered 'hearing-impaired' if their impairment precedes the acquisition of their spoken language(s) or if it severely affects their use of language. For the purposes of these guidelines, 'Deaf' candidates are those hearing-impaired candidates who make use of sign language for educational purposes.

## **Mental Health Difficulties**

Mental health difficulties comprise a broad range of problems with different symptoms. They are generally characterised by disorders of one or more of the following: thought processes, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others; these must be of sufficient severity to affect the candidate's functioning.

## **Mobility Impairment**

Candidates with a physical and/or mobility impairment include those who have difficulty using one or more of their limbs, or lack the strength to walk or grasp. The use of a wheelchair, crutches, walker or other aids may be utilised to enable mobility.

## **Neurological Disorders (including Epilepsy)**

Neurological disorders affect the central and peripheral nervous system – i.e. the brain, spinal cord, cranial nerves, peripheral nerves, nerve roots, autonomic nervous system and neuromuscular junctions. These include epilepsy, cerebrovascular conditions including stroke, chronic migraine, multiple sclerosis, neural infections, brain tumours, trauma to the nervous system and congenital conditions.

## **Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)**

Candidates with SpLD are likely to experience difficulties in:

- *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 would be a particular problem where the speed of reading is so slow that candidates lose the sense of what they read.
- *Spelling*: This would include candidates with spelling difficulties that slow down their work rate or leads them to use alternate words which are easier to spell.

- *Speed of writing by hand*: Some candidates with very slow speed have difficulty completing written assessment tasks within the usual timeframes.
- *Handwriting Legibility*: Some candidates may be unable to write legibly under time pressure; other candidates produce scripts that are illegible despite being allowed time to write more slowly.

### **Speech Impairment**

A speech impairment refers to an impaired ability to produce speech sounds and may range from mild to severe. It may include an articulation disorder, characterised by omissions or distortions of speech sounds; a fluency disorder, characterised by atypical flow, rhythm, and/or repetitions of sounds; or a voice disorder, characterised by abnormal pitch, volume, resonance, vocal quality, or duration.

### **Visually Impaired**

Candidates are considered visually-impaired when they have significant limitations of functional visual capability that cannot be adequately corrected by conventional means, such as spectacles, refractive correction or medication.

## **The role of the practical assistant**

- 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, more clarification may be requested. However, this must not lead the candidate in any way nor must the assistant attempt to interpret the candidate's wishes;
- 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);
- must not give factual help to the candidate or offer any suggestions;
- 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;
- must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to dismissal from duties;
- must immediately refer any problems during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **The role of the prompter**

- should sit near enough to be able to observe the candidates and draw their attention back to the task;
- should observe the candidates' behaviour and not their work;
- will advise the candidates about the method of prompting before the commencement of the exam;
- should draw back the candidate's attention to the task by using a light tap on the candidate's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, the desk;
- should not read the question paper (aloud or silently) nor should they read the candidates' answer paper;
- 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;
- must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to dismissal from duties;
- must immediately refer any problems during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **The role of the 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 read back, when requested, what has been written in the answer;
- must, if requested, give the spelling of a word which appears on the paper but otherwise spellings must not be given;
- 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;
- must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to dismissal from duties;
- must immediately refer any problems during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the Examination MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **The role of the reader for the visually-impaired**

- should read, as often as requested, the questions and the answers already written;
- must only read the instructions of the question papers and questions but not explain or clarify;
- 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;
- must, if requested, give the spelling of a word which occurs in the question paper - otherwise spellings must not be given;
- should be prepared for periods of inactivity during an examination;
- 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;
- must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to dismissal from duties;
- must immediately refer any problems during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **The role of the scribe**

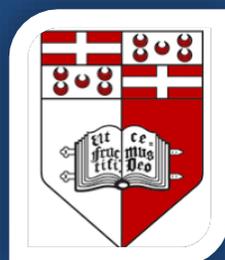
- must write down answers exactly as they are dictated;
- must ask candidates to dictate punctuation. At the end of language examinations, the candidate must spell every seventh word letter by letter. Terminology should always be spelt by the candidate;
- must at the candidate's request read back what has been written;
- must draw or add to maps, diagrams and graphs strictly in accordance with the candidate's instructions;
- 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;
- must neither give factual help to the candidate nor offer any suggestions;
- must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to dismissal from duties;
- must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **A transcript**

- may be produced by a scribe;
- may be a full copy written on a spare answer booklet or a partial copy where only certain words need clarification;
- must be produced under the supervision of someone appointed by the MATSEC BOARD;
- the original script must be photocopied and the words written clearly above the candidate's writing but not in red or in pencil;
- may be helpful to enlarge the photocopy to A3. The transcript may be handwritten or typed;
- must be completed and securely attached to the front of the examination script together with a copy of the ADSC letter of agreement to the transcript;
- The cover sheet must be signed by the teacher or interpreter preparing the transcript and countersigned by the Head of Centre;
- must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the Head of Centre;
- must complete the declaration form provided by the MATSEC Board for each of the candidates after every examination.

## **Candidates using a PC**

- may be accommodated separately from others for examinations;
- must have access only to those facilities which have been agreed to in advance in writing, including type of processor and devices;
- owned by themselves (after an approval and arrangement by ADSC) may be required to pass on the equipment to the MATSEC Board in advance of the examination for the necessary preparations;
- must ensure that the computer is working correctly at the time of examination;
- must frequently save their work. Where available, an auto save facility can achieve this;
- will have their examination responses printed at the end of the examination, and the print out signed by the candidate and the invigilator;
- may be provided with the examination paper in accessible format (MS word/PDF) on pen drive accompanying the other examination papers;
- must be familiar with the ICT being provided;
- must immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the Head of Centre.



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