



## CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

### GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL REGISTRARS AND SCHOOL AUTHORITIES APPLYING FOR SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS ON BEHALF OF CANDIDATES

The Caribbean Examinations Council has produced this document to assist Local Registrars and Principals in preparing applications for candidates requiring Special Assessment Arrangements in examinations.

1. The Council endeavours to ensure that each candidate is allowed to demonstrate his/her ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could disadvantage a candidate with special needs, by preventing him/her from demonstrating his/her level of attainment, special assessment arrangements may be authorized.
2. Special Assessment Arrangements may be requested by candidates affected by a long-term or permanent physical disability or illness, a sensory impairment, a learning disability such as dyslexia, or temporary disability at the time of assessment.
3. Requests for Special Assessment Arrangements must be submitted and supported by the Principal in the case of a school candidate, and the Local Registrar in the case of a private candidate. The Council is responsible for the consideration and approval of such applications.
4. All completed application forms (EXA 51) for Special Assessment Arrangements, any special inquiries and requests for advice, must be sent to the Registrar at the Council's Headquarters **through the Local Registrar's Office**.
5. Local Registrars are required to ensure that in all cases, the Supervisor submits, with each paper written by the candidate, a Special Report Form containing all of the details, including the actual time taken. The Examining Committees may be asked to review the candidate's work based on the report submitted.

#### **A. REGULATIONS FOR THE ASSESSMENT, EXAMINATION AND CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES**

The Council's guidelines on special assessment arrangements are as follows:

##### **1. Candidates with long-term/permanent disabilities**

- (a) Applications for Special Assessment Arrangements should be made by **31 January** in respect of the May-June sitting, and **31 October** in respect of the January sitting.

**NB:** Candidates requesting Braille or enlarged print question papers must submit their requests by **15 October** in respect of the May-June sitting, and **15 September** in respect of the January sitting.

**Applications must be made on the prescribed form EXA 51.**

- (b) The Registrar, in deciding what special arrangements should be made for the candidate, will consider the recommendations of the Principal and take cognizance of any special arrangements granted to the candidate during the teaching and assessment programme conducted by the institution.

## 2. Endorsement

If a Special Assessment Arrangement is approved by the Registrar, then the candidates' Preliminary Results slips and certificates may be endorsed with a statement. This will take the form of an asterisk or appropriate symbol against the subject(s) concerned and the following statement on the reverse of the certificate:

*Certain aspects of the assessment for this award were amended or restricted to meet the particular needs of this candidate. Details of these changes are available from the Registrar on request.*

Exceptions will be made in the cases of candidates who are manifestly disabled, for example, blind.

## 3. General Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements

The Council must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment. The Special Assessment Arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's disability when demonstrating his/her level of attainment. Therefore, the special arrangements must not give the candidate an unfair advantage. The arrangements are intended to enable candidates to demonstrate their level of attainment and should not:

- reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the credibility of the award; or
- mislead the user of the certificate about the candidate's level of attainment.

It is important to ensure that, **before sitting the examination**, the candidate has had practice in the use of any special assessment arrangements which are requested.

The Special Assessment Arrangements applied for should be the same as those provided to the candidate in the school's internal examinations.

## 4. Documentation

Before making an application for Special Assessment Arrangements, it is advisable to consult an external advisory service (eg medical doctor, psychologist) for documentation of the candidate's condition since all requests must be supported by evidence from a qualified practitioner.

**Documentation supporting requests for Special Assessment Arrangements must be current, that is, psychological evaluations must have been administered within the last four years and medical certificates must be applicable to the period for which the request is being made.**

Documentation must:

- be submitted on paper bearing a letterhead, signed and dated;
- state the title, name and professional credentials of the person(s) who evaluated the candidate;
- state specifically the nature of the disability, and the tests/techniques and resulting scores used in the diagnosis;
- describe the functional limitations arising from the disability;
- include recommendations for specific Special Assessment Arrangements.

## **B. IDENTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR WHOM SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS MAY BE REQUESTED**

Candidates for whom applications are made are likely to have experienced difficulties in at least one of the areas given below. Please note that these are guidelines for making recommendations on whether a candidate needs special assessment arrangements. The Council will require information about the candidate to support a request for Special Assessment Arrangements. This information should provide details on the precise nature of the candidate's difficulty and its effects on the candidate's performance. In the case of candidates with reading and writing difficulties, it is expected that an educational psychologist has been involved in the identification of the candidates' difficulties.

Special Assessment Arrangements may be requested by candidates who are affected by one or more of the following:

- Specific learning difficulty, for example, dyslexia
- Sensory impairment, for example, hearing impaired, visually impaired
- Medical condition, for example, epilepsy
- Emotional/behavioural difficulty, for example, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Mental health problems
- Physical disability
- Temporary illness or injury at the time of assessment.

## **C. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MAY BE REQUESTED**

### **(a) Additional Time**

Additional time is usually restricted to 15 minutes for each hour of the examination (25 per cent more time). For periods of less than one hour, the additional time would be given on a pro-rata basis.

An allowance of more than 30 minutes for the entire paper may be permitted if the professional advisory service considers it necessary. It should be borne in mind that too much extra time in an examination may be tiring to the candidate and thus counter-productive.

**(b) Rest Periods/Supervised Breaks**

Extra time in the form of rest periods and/or supervised breaks either in or out of the room may be permitted in special circumstances. Candidates are **not** permitted to read, write notes or continue working during a rest period; and the candidate's script and examination paper must be turned face down on the desk.

**(c) Assistance**

Candidates may require assistance from an **Amanuensis (Scribe)\***, a **Reader\*** or **Practical Assistant\***. Where such examination assistance is provided, an extra 15 minutes in the hour is permitted and separate accommodation must be arranged.

The Assistant must be appointed by the Local Registrar in consultation with the Principal and must not be the subject teacher, a relative or a family friend, caregiver, or any other person with whom there may be an apparent or perceived conflict of interest. The Assistant must be able to read and write in a manner appropriate to the examination content. For example, he/she must be able to pronounce technical terms and/or write special symbols correctly.

Hearing impaired candidates may be allowed an **Interpreter for the Hearing Impaired\***, someone to sign instructions and/or questions, if this is the usual method of communication in the classroom and access to the examination cannot be achieved by any other means.

**It should be noted that assistance will not be provided if the validity of the assessment would be compromised. For example, the use of an Amanuensis (Scribe) will not be approved for the Visual Arts Production examinations.**

**\*Guidelines governing the use of these Assistants are detailed on pages i - vii of the Appendix.**

**(d) Modified Question Papers**

Visually-impaired candidates may be provided with modified question papers:

- enlarged-print question papers for the partially sighted;
- braille versions of the question papers for the blind (Braille Grade 2 only); and
- electronic versions of question papers (on compact disk) to facilitate the use of appropriate software (screen reader) for the visually impaired. Candidates should advise CXC in advance of the type of screen reader used as well and the type of computer used eg, PC or Macintosh.

N.B: Blind candidates may also be allowed the assistance of a Reader/Amanuensis if they are not proficient in Braille.

**(e) Modified Stationery**

Modified stationery and answer booklets, if approved, may be provided, for example:

- enlarged print graph paper
- enlarged print mathematical tables.

**(f) Presentation of Responses**

Candidates may be permitted to use a **Computer** (Word Processor), solely as an alternative to handwriting. The relevant guidelines are on page (vii) of the Appendix.

The use of other mechanical or technological aids will be permitted for candidates who are unable to write or have difficulty in writing, if this is the usual method of written communication. Use must not be made of a thesaurus, spell checker or similar electronic device, whether part of word processing software or otherwise.

Permission will not be granted if the request is made on the grounds that a candidate has untidy writing.

**(g) Separate Accommodation**

Separate accommodation must be provided for candidates who require assistance from a reader, scribe or reader/scribe. An Invigilator must be assigned to the room. Under exceptional circumstances, for example, medical reasons, separate accommodation may also be granted to a candidate.

**(h) Furniture**

Specially-adapted furniture may be approved, if required.

**(i) Referral of Scripts to SAC**

Candidates who have specific learning disabilities or who have a hearing impairment may have certain of their examination scripts referred to the Subject Award Committee. The purpose of referral is to ensure that no undue penalty has been imposed by a marker who has no knowledge of the candidates' difficulties. Only those scripts which require the candidates to produce significant amounts of extended writing will be referred.

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