

Procedures for Consideration of Additional Examination Arrangements in Respect of Disability

- 1.1. These procedures are prescribed by the Senate, in accordance with the Academic Regulations and College Examination Regulations
- 1.2. They cover additional assessment and examination arrangements for individual candidates registered as students of the College who have physical, mental or sensory impairments (whether temporary or permanent) or specific learning difficulties.
- 1.3. Imperial College, in alignment with the Equality Act (2010), accepts the Social Model of Disability. This means that in preference to a focus on individual impairments, it is more appropriate to address the social barriers or difficulties which disabled people face. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty upon Higher Education institutions to anticipate the needs of disabled students in general as well as being responsive to the needs identified for individual disabled students.
- 1.4. These procedures are designed to make appropriate additional assessment and examination arrangements for disabled students including those with specific learning difficulties. The following principles inform the procedures:
 - a. Additional assessment and examination arrangements enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her true abilities in the prescribed tests.
 - b. Such arrangements will not give a misleading impression of the candidate's attainment.
 - c. Any additional provisions made shall not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.
 - d. Additional assessment and examination arrangements shall be in respect of how the test is conducted, and shall not alter *what* is being tested (i.e. specific practical or cognitive skills and knowledge).
 - e. In a registrable qualification, all standards required for fitness to practice shall be adhered to.

2. Submission of Applications to Registry

- 2.1. Applications should reach Registry at least six weeks before a candidate's first examination, except in the case of accidental injury or acute illness, when the application should be submitted as soon as possible after the event.
- 2.2. All applicants must ensure Registry is provided with the appropriate supporting documents to accompany the application. The student should allow sufficient time to obtain this in order to comply with the deadline.

- 2.3. A prospective student with a disability or specific learning difficulty should be encouraged to declare this at the time of application to the College. This will allow consideration to be given to (a) whether the College can meet the applicant's needs to undertake and complete the programme (taking into account the College's obligations under relevant legislation), taking into account the applicable competence standards, and (b) whether, in the case of professional registrable qualifications, the applicant meets the requirements for 'fitness to practise' in those professions. The procedure for this is set out in <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/secretariat/college-governance/charters-statutes-ordinances-and-regulations/policies-regulations-and-codes-of-practice/fitness-to-practise/> on the College website.
- 2.4. On acceptance to a programme of study, an applicant who has declared a disability including a specific learning difficulty will be sent a letter from Registry. The applicant will be invited to contact the Disability Advisory Service to discuss additional assessment and examination arrangements and any other reasonable adjustments which may be required during the course of their studies.
- 2.5. The application for additional examination arrangements should clearly outline the additional arrangements that are being requested as well as why these are necessary and appropriate, and must be accompanied by any supporting documentation, including appropriate medical certification or SpLD diagnostic report.
- 2.6. In the case of a physical impairment or mental health difficulty which results in disability, or in the case of injury or illness, the application must be accompanied by appropriately dated original copies of certification from a registered healthcare practitioner. Such documents must attest to the nature and severity of the disability, injury or illness. This certification should also specifically state how the injury or disability will adversely affect the student's ability to perform in an examination.
- 2.7. In the case of specific learning difficulty (i.e. dyslexia, dyspraxia DCD, AD(H)D, etc.), the application must be accompanied by a full diagnostic assessment report from a qualified educational psychologist or specialist teacher covering the information specified in Appendix A. This report should be submitted at least six weeks before any examination for which the applicant wishes to apply for additional arrangements. If the above diagnostic assessment report predates the student's 16th birthday, or lacks the information specified in Appendix A, a new one should be obtained.
- 2.8. Circumstances will occasionally arise where students are forced to apply for these additional arrangements after the deadline of six weeks has passed. It should be noted that it may not be possible or practicable to process such late requests in time for an examination. Implementation at late notice will depend entirely on the nature of the request. In such cases, the students should make an application for mitigating circumstances.

3. Procedure for determination of additional examination arrangements

- 3.1. All applications for additional examination arrangements, including supporting documentation, shall be made on behalf of the student by the relevant Departmental Disability Officer (DDO).
- 3.2. Where the DDO requires additional advice the Disability Advisory Service will inspect the applicant's evidence to determine as to whether or not there is sufficient basis for the application. The Disability Advisory Service may consult the Imperial College NHS Health Service or other professionals for specialist advice. Where necessary the Disability Advisory Service can support the student to obtain further evidence. The application will then be returned to the DDO for submission to Registry.
- 3.3. Each application shall then be processed by Registry, and the decision communicated to the student and DDO. The Registry may seek additional advice from the Disability Advisory Service before making a decision.
- 3.4. The Director of Student Support, may, at his/her discretion, reconsider a decision on an application from an individual candidate in cases where: (a) an applicant requests such reconsideration and provided evidence in support of his/her application which s/he was unable, or for good reason, unwilling to divulge before the Registry reached its decision; (b) where there is evidence of administrative or procedural error.
- 3.5. An appeal may be made in writing and lodged with the Academic Registrar within 14 days of the notification to the candidate of the decision by Registry. The Director of Student Support (or other person designated by him/her) shall consider the appeal and is authorised to vary any special arrangements approved by the Registry, if in his/her view, the decision by the Registry was not rational or reasonable.

4. Principles and guidelines for additional arrangements

- 4.1. The principles stated in paragraph 1.4 above shall guide Registry in making decisions about additional examination arrangements.
- 4.2. In practice, these principles mean that:
 - i. The original type of assessment prescribed (eg essays, SBAs, OSCEs, SAQs) shall be that undertaken by the candidate, albeit with additional arrangements. This may be replaced by an alternative assessment as a reasonable adjustment which tests for the same competencies and which meets the same academic standards, as determined by the relevant course director .
 - ii. Additional time is not normally allowed in tests where a direct observation of a candidate's professional abilities under realistic time constraints is being made (eg, OSCEs, clinical cases), as this is one of the competencies being assessed. Where appropriate, however, rest periods

may be built in to a practical examination schedule, or other practical assistance provided.

- iii. Additional examination arrangements to help a candidate with a specific learning difficulty shall normally be in the form of additional time. This allows the candidate more time to formulate an answer, physically reproduce this, check for sense and meaning, and if necessary copy out a revised final version. The use of word-processing facilities (PCs/laptops), and readers or scribes will be permitted in addition to extra time if recommended by the relevant professionals (see 2.7 above)

5. Notification of additional arrangements and record-keeping

- 5.1. Registry shall notify the candidate in writing of the outcome of an application for additional examination arrangements. Records of all additional examination arrangements shall be kept on file.
- 5.2. A request for additional examination arrangements on the basis of a permanent disability, including specific learning difficulty, shall be approved for the duration of the student's studies. In the case of fluctuating conditions (to be determined by the Disability Advisory Service), such provision shall be approved case by case and subject to annual review. In the case of temporary injury or illness, additional examination arrangements will apply for one examination only or for so long as stipulated in the medical evidence.

6. Guidance on Allowances Given

- 6.1. When a candidate's writing ability is impaired and s/he would benefit from extra time, this shall in the large majority of cases be at a rate of 10 - 20 minutes per hour, depending on the severity of impairment and the nature of the examination s/he is taking.
- 6.2. A visually-impaired candidate may well require a greater allowance of additional time, depending on the evidence of need submitted. Examination papers may be produced in Braille or enlarged form when required. Most registered-blind candidates may wish to type their answers or use an amanuensis, but there is precedent for the use of computers with screen reading software, voice-synthesizing word-processors or magnifying closed-circuit television.
- 6.3. A candidate shall be granted a specified amount of extra time which s/he may manage as s/he wishes according to the medical advice s/he has received, or shall alternatively be allowed 'stop-the-clock' rest breaks as required. Candidates may for example require to leave the examination room for a change of environment, in order to regain his/her concentration. In exceptional cases, the evidence will indicate that a candidate qualifies for both extra time and rest breaks.
- 6.4. Where a candidate is taken ill during an examination but is capable of continuing after treatment, any time lost may be added at the end of the examination. In addition, where justified and if suitable arrangements can be

made, further extra time may be provided in compensation for the disturbing effects both of the illness and any disturbance due to the ending of the other candidates' examination.

- 6.5. A candidate who is unable to write may use an amanuensis or technological aid, as is most appropriate both to the candidate and to the examination s/he is taking.
- 6.6. An amanuensis shall know enough about the subject of the examination to be familiar with the required terms and vocabulary but shall not be an expert. S/he must be entirely disinterested. If a disinterested person cannot be found, there must also be an invigilator present. Appropriate additional time shall be permitted for dictation, and for certain examinations and/or medical conditions, or where the amanuensis is unfamiliar with the terminology, it may be appropriate to allow further additional time. For parts of certain examinations (e.g. languages, engineering) the use of an amanuensis may not be appropriate. In such cases it may be possible to arrange for the candidate to write the answers to these parts him/herself (with additional time where appropriate) and dictate only the essay-style answers.
- 6.7. All candidates who require to use a personal computer to type his/her answers shall use a machine provided and checked by the department/division before use in the examination room.
- 6.8. Where there is concern regarding the legibility of a candidate's handwriting following an examination, a scribe or use of a keyboard can be recommended by a diagnostic assessor. In such cases, the candidate shall dictate the completed script to a typist under supervision. The typed version shall correspond line for line and page for page with the original and both the original script and the transcription should be returned to the examiners for marking.

Approved by Senate
December 2015

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Appendix A – requirements for a full diagnostic assessment report for specific learning difficulty

For the purposes of paragraph 2.6 of the Procedure, a full diagnostic assessment report should be provided by a professional corresponding to one of the four categories below, and shall include the following information:

- *Details of assessments, including methods used and the dates of such assessments.*
- *Statement of test results and interpretation of these in terms of their implications for the candidate's examinations.*

1. Cognitive assessments

- *To include a test of general reasoning or problem solving ability.*
- *To include tests on auditory short term memory, auditory working memory, processing speed and visual perception*

2. Literacy attainments

Outline of candidate's history of literacy difficulties, Results of the assessments including standardized scores and confidence bands in the following areas:

- *Single word Reading accuracy*
- *Single word spelling accuracy*
- *Writing speed and legibility*
- *Comprehension and reading speed*
- *Names, dates and 'test ceilings'*
- *Interpretation of the results in terms of their implications for the candidate's examinations.*

3. Other information

- a) Statement as to whether the candidate has a specific learning difficulty*
- b) If the candidate has a specific learning difficulty, details of these and why these are severe enough to warrant additional examination arrangements.*
- c) Any other information to be taken into account, such as perceptual, attention or co-ordination disorders, and any other relevant emotional factors.*
- d) Any additional arrangements which in the judgment of the author will allow the candidate to compensate for his or her difficulty while at the same time not giving the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.*

4. Information about the author

Name and address

State whether:

- *A Chartered Psychologist*
- *A full-time Affiliate Member of the Association of Educational Psychologists*
- *Employed as an Educational Psychologist by a Local Education Authority*

- *A specialist tutor assessor with a PATOSS practicing certificate*

Reports for Registry should be forwarded to the Disability Advisory Service marked 'Strictly Confidential'. Such reports shall be used only for the purposes of assisting a student in the provision of reasonable adjustments including additional examination arrangements. These reports shall be retained by the Disability Advisory Service, and shared with others only in order to ensure the provision of required additional examination arrangements.