

Equitable Access Adjustments

A brief guide to the medical evidence for adjustments for ATAR course examinations

General notes

- The Authority is committed to all students having access to curriculum and assessment that is appropriate to their needs and recognises and supports individual students who may need assessment adjustments to allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Each application is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Schools are encouraged to engage with the Authority as early as possible to discuss any issues related to supporting students in Years 7–11 who may be eligible for or require specific adjustments in the ATAR course examination.
- This will allow schools to discuss interventions and implement appropriate adjustments for school-based assessment in the years preceding Year 12.

Disability

- An application on the basis of disability requires:
 - a diagnosis made by appropriately qualified professional
 - a diagnosis using relevant standards
 - a direct link between the disability and the demonstrated functional impact in an examination setting
 - the functional impact not derived from a lack of educational experiences.

When are examination adjustments appropriate?

- Adjustments are appropriate when:
 - there is a diagnosis of a disability**and**
 - it can be demonstrated that the severity of the disability will significantly prevent the candidate from accessing the task to demonstrate their knowledge, understandings and skills in a timed examination situation.
- Adjustments are not provided to assist students to reach their potential or maximise their course results.
- Adjustments are provided as a method of ensuring students with a medical or physical health condition that impairs access to assessments are not at such a disadvantage because of this.

Common health conditions/categories

- Candidates may apply for special provisions for many conditions.
- The most common conditions and categories for applications received are:
 - ADHD
 - Fine motor coordination conditions
 - Illness/medical conditions
 - Physical disabilities
 - Specific learning disorders
 - Psychological/mental health conditions
 - Hearing loss
 - Vision impairment.

The following information is a general summary of the evidence requirements for consideration before proceeding with an application for adjustments.

ADHD

- Assessment completed by Paediatrician or Psychiatrist:
 - Letter from Paediatrician or Psychiatrist with definitive diagnostic statement
 - includes date of diagnosis (remains current indefinitely).
 - Current evidence of the functional impact (dated from within six months of application) can be from any treating health professional the candidate sees for ongoing management of ADHD symptoms.
 - In most cases, the treating medical professional will be either a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist, or a GP that the student sees for ongoing medication prescription purposes.

ADHD (2)

- Assessment completed by a psychologist:
 - Copy of diagnostic report with definitive diagnostic statement
and
 - **Either:**
 - confirmation of the diagnosis from specialist medical professional (paediatrician or psychiatrist) – pharmaceutical management
or
 - evidence that the candidate is engaged in, or has completed a course or program of therapeutic intervention to assist with strategies to manage the symptoms of ADHD non-pharmaceutically.

Fine motor coordination conditions

- Covers many conditions impacting the ability to handwrite, including but not limited to:
 - Juvenile idiopathic arthritis
 - Hypermobility
 - Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.
- Diagnosis made by specialist medical professional, e.g. Rheumatologist
 - Letter containing definitive diagnostic statement, date diagnosis made (whenever this occurred)
 - Evidence of the current functional impact of the condition from within six or twelve months of application for adjustments
- Higher-level adjustments also require an assessment by an Occupational Therapist.

Fine motor coordination conditions (2)

- Motor dysgraphia
 - Assessment completed by an Occupational Therapist, whose report will include:
 - a definitive statement identifying condition
 - data from assessments used
 - Note: some examples of common assessments used are on p.21 of the *Schools' Guide to Special Provisions in ATAR Course Examinations – Information for Case Coordinators* available at: <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/examinations/special-provisions>
 - recommendations or strategies for intervention.

Note: currency of evidence requirements aligns with those for fine motor disorders due to medical conditions, e.g. lower- level adjustments: within twelve months, higher-level adjustments: within six months.

Illness/medical conditions

- Refers to all conditions not covered under other categories and may include conditions such as:
 - diabetes, cancer, cystic fibrosis, spinal injuries, hyperhidrosis, scoliosis, pregnancy .
- Evidence of diagnosis is to be provided by a relevant medical/health professional.
- Evidence of the current functional impact of the condition is from within six months of application for adjustments.

Illness/medical conditions (2)

- Diabetes

- evidence can be provided by any medical or health practitioner with the relevant qualifications including Endocrinology practitioners working in a hospital, and General Practitioners based in the community
- date (year) of diagnosis is required
- evidence of the current functional impact must be from within six months of the application lodgement.

Physical disabilities

- Covers any conditions that physically impact a student's access to assessments
 - e.g. Cerebral Palsy, Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy, para/quadruplegia.
- Evidence of diagnosis is to be provided by relevant medical/health professional.
- Adjustments are considered according to the type and degree of impact of the condition.
- A range of adjustments may be considered for candidates that have a physical disability that impacts their ability to access assessment tasks, for example:
 - lower-level: special equipment, a desk to accommodate a wheelchair, preferred seating and/or rest breaks
 - to higher-level: discretionary or extra working time, use of a computer, or a scribe, or a combination of these.

Specific Learning Disorders

- Specific learning disorder (SLD) impairments include:
 - Reading (dyslexia)
 - Writing (dysgraphia)
 - Maths (dyscalculia).
- SLD diagnoses require:
 - an assessment completed by a Psychologist, and
 - a period of six months intervention and remediation before confirmation is provided.

Specific Learning Disorders (2)

- Currency of evidence requirements for Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) are as per those for SLDs

Psychological/mental health conditions

- A definitive statement of diagnosis is required.
- Evidence of the diagnosis may be provided by any medical or allied health practitioner that works in the field of mental health.
- Applications for adjustments must include evidence of the current functional impact of the condition from within six months of application being made.
- Evidence must describe the likely impact of the condition on the candidate's access to the affected examinations.
- Mental health conditions may impact separate to, or in conjunction with other health conditions, which can lead to an array of adjustments required, in accordance with the functional impact of the prevailing condition/s.

Hearing loss/impairments

- In the majority of cases, an Audiologist will have conducted an assessment, which has then led to further engagement with services such as SSEN: Sensory.
- Evidence is required from a relevant health practitioner, e.g. Audiologist's report/Audiogram and/or Speech Pathologist's assessment (if necessary).
- Depending on what age the student acquired the hearing loss, an assessment by a Speech Pathologist may also be relevant in supporting a request for adjustments.

Vision loss/impairment

- A diagnosis of a vision impairment often precedes further engagement with disability services, and what could be many years of engagement with services such as SSEN: Sensory to determine which and provide appropriate adjustments to accommodate the difficulties presented by these conditions.
 - Colour-blindness – an assessment by an Optometrist
 - Vision impairment – an Ophthalmologist or Optometrist will provide details regarding diagnoses
- Evidence of current functional impact is only required for conditions that are variable.
- Evidence provided for conditions that cannot change, e.g. total vision loss, can be from whenever the diagnosis was made.

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