

Equitable Access Adjustments

An overview of special provisions for ATAR course examinations

Definitions

- Candidate – a student who has formally studied the course at a school and completed the school-based assessment elements for the course
- Non-school candidate – an individual who has not formally studied the course at a school
- ATAR – Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank
- Sickness/Misadventure – a temporary sickness, non-permanent disability or event close to or during the ATAR course examinations

Types of special provisions offered for ATAR course examinations

- Special Provisions include the equitable access adjustments and the sickness/misadventure application processes.
- Equitable access adjustments are
 - adjusted arrangements for sitting the ATAR course examinations
 - requested before the examinations through an application made by the school.
- Sickness/misadventure consideration is
 - a special consideration for ATAR course examination marks known
 - requested after the examinations through an application made by the student.
- The focus of this presentation is equitable access adjustments.

Equitable Access Adjustments – ATAR course examinations

- Candidates who have a temporary or permanent disability, illness or specific learning disability that could significantly impair their access to timed assessments may have their school apply for them to sit an ATAR course examination under adjusted conditions.

Disability

- An application on the basis of disability requires:
 - Diagnosis made by appropriately qualified professional
 - Diagnosis using relevant standards
 - Direct link between the disability and the demonstrated functional impact in an examination setting
 - Functional impact not derived from 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.

Making examination adjustments

- Not all candidates with disabilities require adjustments.
- Not all candidates need adjustments in all examinations.
- Candidates may need different adjustments in different examinations.
- Adjustments for written and practical examinations are applied for separately.

Procedure for making applications

- The school completes the application form.
- The school works with the student and their parents/guardians/caregivers to gather supporting information that includes:
 - School intervention – including from previous years
 - Essays – as samples where required
 - Diagnostic information – including from previous years.
- The school submits the application by the due date – 27 March 2025.
 - New medical cases will be considered until 4 July 2025

Procedure for granting equitable access adjustments

- All applications are considered individually and assessed according to the information provided
- Assessment panels with expertise in the relevant disability and the education field apply consistent criteria to assess each application.
- The panel determines appropriate adjustments to accommodate the functional impact of the disability that impairs the candidate's access to the examination, as demonstrated by the evidence provided.
- The school is informed of the outcome.
- The school informs student of approved arrangements and liaises with parents/guardians/carers.
- Approved arrangements are available to the student in the Student Portal.
- The school implements approved arrangements for school assessments.

Reviews

- A review of the outcome of the application can be requested by the school when:
 - the student's situation has changed
 - evidence is available that could not have been obtained earlier
 - an alternative arrangement is needed.
- An expert panels will consider the request for a review.
- Friday, 8 August 2025 is the last date to request a review before the 2025 ATAR course examinations.

Appeals

- An appeal can be lodged by the school when
 - the student's situation is outside guidelines
 - there is no further evidence to support the application.
- Appeals are considered by specially convened multidisciplinary panel of experts.
- The decision process takes time and is final.
- The deadline for appeals is advertised with more information provided via email to schools.

Providing adjustments

- A diagnosis of a disability or health condition does not automatically entitle a candidate to adjustments.
- Whether adjustments are required depends on the functional impact of the condition.
- The adjustments listed in the equitable access to assessment policy and guidelines are provided as an indication of some of the possible adjustments available to candidates that meet the evidence requirements for the specified condition.
- The adjustments are listed hierarchically and should be considered so when determining what level of adjustment should be started with when considering implementing adjustments at school level.
- If the adjustment being sought does not appear on the application form, contact the Special Provisions team to discuss the possibility of including this in the application.

Advice for School Case Coordinators

- Engage with the Authority before Year 12 to discuss appropriate adjustments.
- Start the application process early in Year 12 and
 - use the application form supplied
 - submit before the deadline, especially with essays
 - ensure all relevant evidence is provided and forms are complete
 - only apply for adjustments proven necessary – not ‘just in case’
 - keep a copy of the application and reports.
- Ensure the student (and their parent/guardian/caregiver) is aware of the implications of the application and any arrangements approved before making application.
- Ensure the student can access their information from the Student Portal.

Considerations

- Adjustments should not be implemented at the school without confirmation of the disability or updated functional impact details.
- The Authority's *Equitable Access to Assessment Policy and Guidelines* are not a statement of entitlement.
- Provide parents/guardians/caregivers with support to understand:
 - the process and requirements for the application
 - the role of adjustments in ATAR course examinations
 - the level of support will be different when learning a new skill than when completing assessments at the end of Year 12.

Useful documents

- The Special Provisions page on the Authority website contains all the information and forms required to assist with the completion of applications for equitable access adjustments.

<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/assessment/examinations/special-provisions>

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