



Dyspraxia and examinations

The Equality Act (HMSO, 2010) states that specific learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia / DCD (developmental coordination disorder) and dyscalculia are all classified as a disability under the terms of this Act. It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the basis of their disability. Individuals are entitled to receive reasonable adjustments to help them overcome their difficulties. Therefore reasonable adjustments which enable equality of opportunity during examinations/tests during a child's school career must be considered.

In the current SEND Code of practice (Jan 2015) page 17 paragraph xix states:

Schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled children and young people are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. This duty is anticipatory – it requires thought to be given in advance to what disabled children and young people might require and what adjustments might need to be made to prevent that disadvantage. The appropriate type of access arrangement will very much depend upon the results of testing, interview with the young person and their normal method of working. Teachers should remember that dyspraxia often occurs alongside other overlapping conditions such as dyslexia which will add to the difficulties experienced.

It goes on to say (paragraph xxii) *Where a child or young person is covered by SEN and disability legislation, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should be considered as part of SEN planning and review. Where school governors are publishing information about their arrangements for disabled children and young people, this should be brought together with the information required under the Children and Families Act 2014.*

Evidence will be required and this may be in the form of a diagnostic report written by a medical consultant or Educational Psychologist or other suitably qualified assessor (see below). Schools usually have their own named examinations officer who will be in a position to offer advice.

Why do children with dyspraxia need special consideration?

Formal tests and examinations can present challenges for children with dyspraxia.

They may have difficulties with:

- Speed of processing information.
- Organising their thoughts on paper.
- Short term working memory.
- Sequencing.
- Reading fluency and accuracy
- Handwriting difficulties (legibility and fluency)
- Poor muscle tone resulting in physical pain and exhaustion.
- Visual learning difficulties (tracking words or letter confusion).
- Stress/anxiety which may exacerbate their difficulties.
- Concentration issues.

Every individual with dyspraxia will present with different requirements.

Arrangements.

Students with dyspraxia will usually need some additional arrangements in place to put them on equal footing with their neuro-typical peers. These may include...

- Extra time (usually 25%)
- A reader and or scribe.
- An oral language modifier
- Access to technological adaptations such as a word processor.
- Assistive software (voice recognition programme for example).
- The use of coloured paper to avoid visual strain.
- Supervised rest breaks.
- A separate room/area to avoid disturbance.
- Accessible exam papers (font and colour considerations)

NB For general examinations it is possible for the school to request to open a paper early in order to photo copy it onto coloured paper.

SATs tests.

Details of the current access arrangements can be found here...

www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/assessment/keystage2/ks2tests

General considerations.

Access arrangements must be made to Awarding Bodies in good time, with evidence to support the request.

In order for a student to be able to use a computer in examinations it must be seen to be their normal way of working so parents and teachers need to ensure this is thought about well in advance of exams.

Further info:

There is a computerised test for access arrangements available at <https://www.gi-assessment.co.uk/media/335583/guidelines-for-use-of-exact-updated-290918.pdf>

If schools fail to implement access arrangements parents can apply for special considerations. See <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

For further information please refer to the exams regulator https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/8203/7/Ofqual_LaunchBrochure_Redacted.pdf

PATOSS (The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties) has a list of assessors who have the specialised qualification and are approved to carry out assessments. See <https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/>

Further information available from:
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