

Reasonable adjustments in assessment

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

Schools are responsible for administering assessment within the requirements of the relevant syllabus and meeting quality assurance processes for Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension), General (Senior External Examinations) subjects, and short courses.

Under the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) (DSE), they are also responsible for ensuring that adjustments are provided, as needed, to enable students with disability to access and participate in assessment on the same basis as students without disability.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA) are provided to minimise barriers for a student whose disability or medical condition may affect their ability to read, respond to or participate in assessment on the same basis as other students. AARA are also appropriate when illness or misadventure pose barriers for students in assessment.

AARA are determined in consultation with students and/or parents/carers. Decisions about AARA are considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the evidence and the functional impact of the disability, medical condition or other circumstance. For AARA applications, evidence is summarised in school statements and reports from medical professionals (or other professionals, in the case of misadventure).

Adjustments are 'reasonable' when they achieve the purpose of enabling access and participation for the student on the same basis as other students, while schools also:

- take into account the student's learning needs and balance the interests of all parties affected, including other students, staff and the school itself
- consider alternative reasonable adjustments that are less disruptive and intrusive but no less beneficial for the students, as needed
- maintain the academic requirements of subjects and ensure the integrity of assessment requirements and processes. All inherent requirements and components of the course must be maintained at the same standard for all students.

AARA are applicable for students who have completed required learning as outlined in the relevant syllabus or course. They cannot be used to compensate for learning that has not occurred or to exempt a student from the learning or knowledge and skill requirements of a subject or course.

Examples of AARA

As the application of AARA is based on the functional impact for the individual student, arrangements for assessment may vary significantly for different students with the same diagnosis, condition or circumstance. AARA may also vary from subject to subject and assessment to assessment for individual students, according to their individual needs and choices, and the nature of the assessment.

For this reason, the QCAA does not provide a prescriptive list of adjustments or impacts relevant to particular diagnoses, or an exhaustive list of possible conditions or circumstances to which AARA may be applied. The following table is designed to provide information and prompts for schools to make decisions to support their individual student's needs. See section 6.4.4 in the [QCE and QCIA Policy and Procedures Handbook](#) for further information about possible AARA.

Example conditions	Possible impacts / barriers	Possible assessment AARA
ADHD	Focusing /concentrating for extended periods of time, impulse control	• Rest breaks, medication
	Attending to verbal instructions	• Assistance (e.g. supervisor using the student's name in reading assessment instructions)
Anxiety and/or depressive disorder	Focusing, concentrating	• Rest breaks (to refocus thoughts or use coping strategies)
	Attending to and processing verbal instructions, regulating emotions, coping with social dynamics	• Varied seating, rest breaks, medication, assistance (e.g. supervisor to provide support and reassurance)
Arthritis/rheumatism	Pain, discomfort, fatigue, particularly in producing written responses	• Rest breaks (for pain, discomfort, fatigue) or extra time (if writing is slow) • Computer or scribe
ASD	Sensory processing, emotional regulation, restrictive or repetitive activities/behaviours	• Varied seating, assistance, rest breaks, extra time
	Coping with social demands before, during and/or after assessment	• Varied seating, rest breaks
	Fine motor control, handwriting legibility	• Computer or assistive technology
Auditory processing disorder	Attending to and processing verbal instructions	• Individual instructions
Back injury, chronic pain	Pain, discomfort, problems sitting for long periods	• Rest breaks (e.g. to stand and stretch), medication, physical equipment
Chronic Fatigue	Sustaining attention, focus, concentration	• Rest breaks, food, drink, medication
Colour vision deficiency	Seeing colour	• Alternative format papers (black and white)
Crohn's disease / inflammatory bowel disease	Pain, discomfort	• Rest breaks, varied seating, ease of access to toilets, medication
Diabetes	Risk of dangerous blood glucose levels (hypoglycaemic; hyperglycaemic)	• Diabetes management
	Dangerous blood glucose levels (hypoglycaemic; hyperglycaemic)	• Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness & misadventure application for EA
Epilepsy	Risk of epileptic seizure	• Varied seating, medication, rest break if feeling unwell
	Epileptic seizure prior to or during exams	• Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness & misadventure application for EA
Hearing impairment	Hearing directions, hearing time reminders	• Individual instructions, assistance, varied seating, physical equipment, Auslan interpreter
Head injury	Headaches, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, slowness in mental processing	• Rest breaks, extra time, medication
Illegible writing	Writing unable to be read by marker	• Computer

Example conditions	Possible impacts / barriers	Possible assessment AARA
Illness (eg. migraine, asthma)	Focusing, concentrating, maintaining attention	• Rest breaks, varied seating, extra time if ill during an exam
	Requiring medical attention	• Comparable assessment, extension for IA • Illness & misadventure application for EA
Intellectual disability / neurological impairment	Attending to and processing verbal instructions	• Assistance (supervisor using the student's name in reading assessment instructions)
	Anxiety, regulating emotions	• Varied seating, assistance (e.g. supervisor to provide support and reassurance)
	Processing speed	• Extra time, rest breaks
	Reading instructions, questions, stimulus and own responses	• Reader
	Demonstrating learning, knowledge and skills through writing	• Scribe, computer or assistive technology • Varied seating, extra time
Physical injury – upper limb (eg. broken arm)	Pain, discomfort, fatigue	• Rest breaks, physical equipment
	Accessing and manipulating materials, producing written responses	• Assistance, scribe, computer or assistive technology • Extra time, physical equipment
	Physically demonstrating skills	• Comparable assessment, extension for IA
Physical injury – lower limb	Pain, discomfort, fatigue	• Rest breaks, physical equipment
	Physically demonstrating skills	• Comparable assessment, extension for IA
Physical disability (paraplegia, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy) and motor coordination disorders	Accessing and manipulating materials	• Alternative format papers, computer or assistive technology • Assistance, physical equipment/environment, medication
	Producing written responses	• Scribe, computer or assistive technology • Varied seating, extra time
	Pain, discomfort, tiredness	• Rest breaks
Pregnancy (last trimester) or early infant care	Discomfort Infant care / breastfeeding	• Varied seating, rest breaks, physical equipment (eg. ergonomic furniture)
Sensory processing disorder	Sensory sensitivities and processing differences	• Varied seating, individual instructions, rest breaks
Specific Learning Disorder (Dyslexia)	Reading instructions, questions, stimulus and own responses	• Reader, rest break or extra time
	Demonstrating learning, knowledge and skills through writing	• Scribe, computer or assistive technology • Varied seating, extra time or rest breaks
Speech/Language Impairment	Understanding instructions (receptive language)	• Individual instructions and reader
	Reading instructions, questions, stimulus and own responses	• Reader or assistive technology

Example conditions	Possible impacts / barriers	Possible assessment AARA
	Demonstrating understanding through writing	• Scribe or computer or assistive technology • Varied seating, extra time
Vision impairment	Accessing text (reading text and visual information) and producing responses	• Alternative format papers (e.g. enlarged print, braille), extra time, scribe, reader, vision aids, rest breaks, assistive technology

More information

For more information, please phone 1300 381 575 or email aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au.



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