

Guidelines for Special Consideration in Assessment

Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities

Introduction

The provision of special consideration is an issue that all teachers need to be aware of if they are to ensure the curriculum is inclusive for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

Special consideration in its broadest sense simply means taking into account the special needs of individual students, and can be applied across all aspects of the curriculum. In terms of assessments, special consideration can involve:

- special arrangements for school generated tests, assignments, practicum and other assessments.
- exemptions from assessment.

Rationale

In providing education for all students, staff of Education Queensland must meet the requirements of Commonwealth and State anti-discrimination legislation, as well as State Education Acts and Education Queensland policy and statements.

Education Queensland has a commitment to provide equitable educational opportunities to ensure students with disabilities, learning difficulties and learning disabilities have the opportunity to:

- access all aspects of the curriculum
- participate in all aspects of the curriculum
- demonstrate their knowledge and skills
- gain positive outcomes.

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning. Schools need to ensure that their means of assessment are fair and equitable to all students. For students with disabilities, learning difficulties and learning disabilities this may mean the application of special consideration to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Special consideration does not provide the students with an advantage over their peers but enables them to demonstrate the full extent of their learning.

Eligibility for special consideration

Eligible students include those whose special education needs arising from a disability, learning difficulty or learning disability have been ascertained or appraised using Education Queensland guidelines.

Special arrangements

Special arrangements involve a practical adjustment of how the task is presented and/or how the students are expected to respond in order to demonstrate knowledge and skills. When determining the type of special arrangements required, teachers must consider the student's individual needs. For example not all students with disabilities, learning difficulties and learning disabilities may require additional time for an examination. When making such decisions principals and teachers should request advice from specialist teachers in the impairment area (AVT or Support Teacher), Support Teachers: Learning difficulties and learning disabilities and Speech-language pathologists. Support could also be requested from the staff of the Low Incidence Unit.

For examples of some of the practical adjustments that can be made see Attachment 1.

It is important to note that special consideration is available to students undertaking the Year 2 Diagnostic Net, and the standardised test in Years 3, 5 and 7 as well as the Queensland

Core Skills Test. The statutory bodies responsible for these tests (Queensland School Curriculum Council and Board of Senior Secondary Schools Studies) provide schools with guidelines with regards to special consideration. Teachers may also refer to these documents for additional guidance.

Exemptions from assessments

Exemption involves the students not undertaking a task that is required of other students. Because Education Queensland has a commitment to providing equitable educational opportunities for all students, those students with disabilities, learning difficulties and learning disabilities should be exempted from participation in assessment **only** in exceptional cases. Decisions about exemptions should be made in collaboration with teachers, parents, principals and appropriate specialist support staff.

Reporting

Teachers should note that special consideration may impact on reporting but only if the special consideration precludes mandatory/substantive requirements of a syllabus from being met (e.g. the student is exempted from completing orals in senior English, or the content is altered substantially.) See Education Queensland websites for further details.

Conclusion

This document has addressed the need to provide some students with special consideration in assessment so they have adequate opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. To ensure access and participation and to gain positive outcomes for all students, it may also be necessary for teachers to apply special consideration to other aspects of the curriculum (i.e. work plan design, use of specific technology to complete class work).

References

Legislation

- Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Act (1991)
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Queensland Education (General Provisions) Act (1989)
- Queensland Disability Services Act (1992)

Education Queensland Policy and Guidelines

Department of Education (2000). *Department of Education Manual*. Brisbane: Department of Education.

- SM-15: Ascertainment Procedures for Students with Disabilities
- CS-05: Educational Provision for Students with Disabilities
- CS-13: Educational Provision for Students with Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities
- CS-15: Principles of Inclusive Curriculum

Education Queensland (1998). *Education Provision for Students with Disabilities Action Plan 1998-2002*, Brisbane: Education Queensland.

Education Queensland 2000, *Annual Statement of Expectations for Schools 2000*. Brisbane: Education Queensland.

Education Queensland 2000. *Planning for Equity*, Brisbane: Education Queensland.

Low Incidence Unit 1999. *For Your Information 10: Special considerations: an overview* Brisbane: Low Incidence Unit Hearing Impairment Services, pp.1-6.

Low Incidence Unit 1999. *For Your Information 11: Special considerations: P-7*, Brisbane: Low Incidence Unit Hearing Impairment Services pp.1-5.

ATTACHMENT 1

Low Incidence Unit 1999. *For Your Information 12 Special considerations: 8-10*. Brisbane: Low Incidence Unit Hearing Impairment Services, pp.1-6.

Low Incidence Unit 1999. *For Your Information 13; Special considerations:11-12*. Brisbane: Low Incidence Unit Hearing Impairment Services, pp.1-6.

SM-17: Appraisal procedures for students with learning difficulties and learning disabilities

Other

Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies 1999. *Guidelines for Applications for Special Consideration: Queensland Core Skills Test*. Brisbane: Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies.

Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies 1994. *Special Consideration Exemption and Special Arrangements in Senior Secondary School-Based Assessment*, Brisbane: Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies.

Queensland School Curriculum Council 1999, *1999 Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Information for Schools*. Brisbane: Queensland School Curriculum Council.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN ASSESSMENT

Examples of special consideration include but are not limited to the following.

Practical adjustments of tasks presented to the student**Time related consideration**

- Negotiated extra time for tests including perusal (e.g. up to 20 minutes extra per hour)
- Negotiated time for assignments
- Options of rest breaks
- Scheduling of exams e.g. morning/afternoon

Change in presentation for papers or assignments

- Braille format
- Print size e.g. large print
- Format – clear, uncluttered, well spaced, boxed information
- Audio – tape, reader or multimedia
- Interpreter/transliterator
- Parallel presentation of language – symbols, signs, graphics
- Rewording the questions

Use of appropriate technology

- Low vision aids
- Closed Circuit Television
- Braille machines – manual/electronic
- Laptops with/without spellchecker and voice output
- Typewriters
- Talking or large print calculators
- Use of specialised software
- Assistive listening devices
- Captions
- Augmentative and alternative communication devices
- Access to information through CD Rom, video and audio

Different environmental conditions

- Appropriate lighting and seating
- Tests supervised in different room
- Oral presentations to reduced audience

Additional assistance

- Scribe during formal examinations
- Assistance with planning and research for assignments
- Assistance where assessment has safety implications e.g Home Economics, Science
- Reader for tests and formal assessments
- Interpreter/transliterator

Variation in the students response to the assessment task

- Assessments presented in different formats, e.g. audio
- Use of other tactile/concrete materials
- Parallel representation of language – signs, symbols, graphics
- Video, audio and written
- Presentation in signed mode instead of spoken mode
- Augmentative and alternative communication devices
- Computer presentation