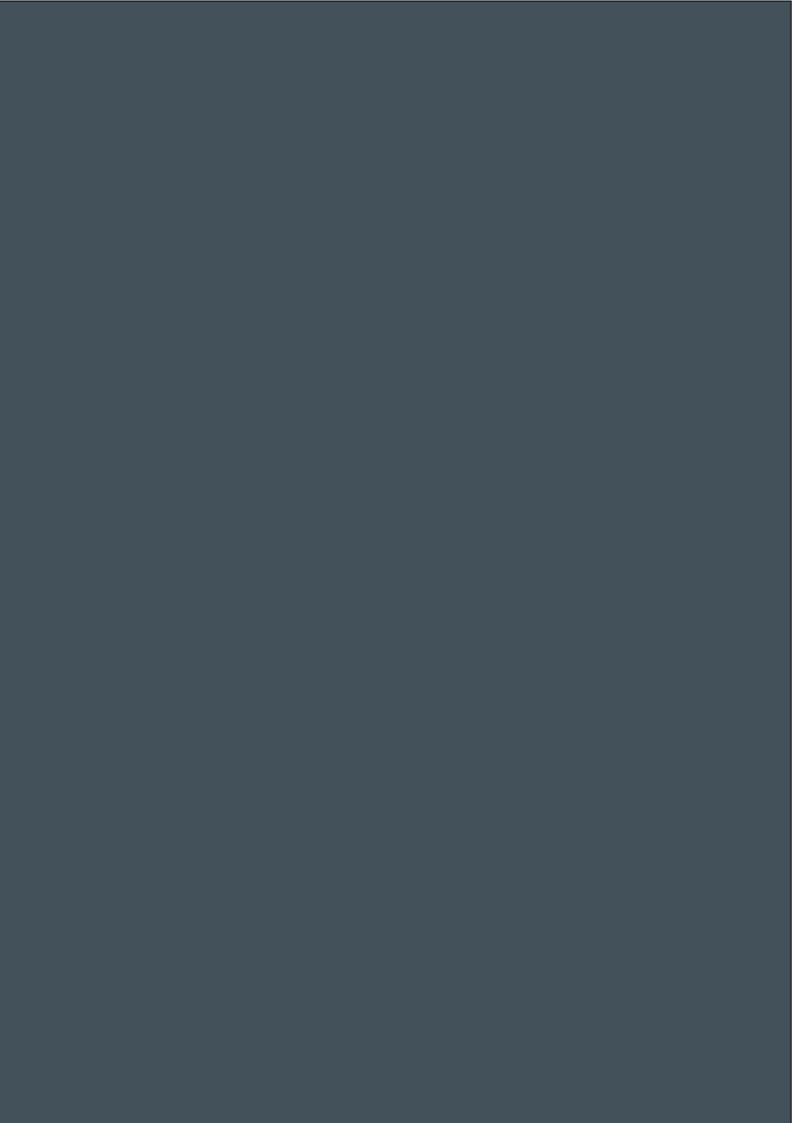# Policy, Guidelines & Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities

June 2018

DOCUMENT APPROVAL

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001	Governing Body	21/06/2018

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities is the outcome of work undertaken by the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) in developing standardised assessment procedures for students with disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland. DAWN represents those staff of all Universities, a number of Institutes of Technology, NCAD and NCI, with responsibility for the provision of support to students with disabilities (see Appendix 1). Through this collaboration DAWN hopes to achieve consistency in the standard and delivery of reasonable accommodations in examinations and assessments across the Higher Education sector.

The purpose of this document is to support Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in developing policies and procedures that ensure students with disabilities are treated fairly and equitably in the examination process, thereby allowing them to compete on an equal footing with their peers and to demonstrate their true knowledge and competency.

This document replaces the original Policy on Examination and Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that was published by DAWN in 2008, and the earlier guidelines on reasonable accommodations in examinations that were published by AHEAD in 2001[1]. A working group, chaired by NUI Maynooth and comprising representatives from CIT, DCU, TCD, UL, UCC and UCD, was established to comprehensively review the original policy (see Appendix 2). The working group conducted extensive research into examination and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities in second level and in Higher Education in Ireland and abroad. The National Educational Psychological Service and the Psychological Society of Ireland were represented on the working group and the State Examinations Commission provided a detailed written submission. The working group met from December 2011 to June 2012. The recommendations of the working group were presented to DAWN on 27th June 2012 for discussion and a final document, incorporating the recommendations of the working group and the views of the wider group, was adopted on 16th November 2012.

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[1] AHEAD, 2001, Examination Arrangement for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Institutions of Higher Education, Dublin, AHEAD Education Press.

SECTION ONE: POLICY FOR THE GRANTING OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN EXAMINATIONS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1.   General Principles

1.1   Letterkenny Institute of Technology is committed to ensuring, as far as possible and within the framework of current legislative requirements, that students with disabilities have equality of access to and participation in all examinations and assessments procedures. This includes end-of-semester examinations and any other examinations that contribute to module or course results.

1.2   Letterkenny Institute of Technology is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are enabled to demonstrate their knowledge and competency on an equal footing with their peers.

1.3   For the purpose of this document, reasonable accommodations are defined as those actions that enable students to demonstrate their true knowledge and ability in examinations without changing the demands of the examination. The intention behind the provision of such accommodations is to alleviate a substantial disadvantage without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

1.4   The granting of reasonable accommodations will not put the integrity or status of the examination or assessment at risk, and will ensure fairness to all students.

1.5   Reasonable accommodations should support students to become more independent in their learning.

1.6   Ultimate responsibility for ensuring equality of access in examinations and assessments lies with Letterkenny Institute of Technology, academic departments, the exams office and the Curve may be involved in coordinating reasonable accommodations.

1.7   For the purpose of this document the definition of disability is that encompassed by the Equal Status Acts 2000-2011 (as amended from time to time) and the policy adopted through this document will apply to any student who may be regarded as having a disability under those Acts.

1.8   This document is applicable only to those students with a permanent or long-term disability, that is, a disability that is likely to last longer than one year.

2.   Policy on Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations

2.1   Provision of Reasonable Accommodations

    2.1.1   A Needs Assessment is performed with all students with disabilities to determine the level of support required in college, including reasonable accommodations for examinations.

    2.1.2   This document provides guidelines for determining when reasonable accommodations may be appropriate in examinations. The actual need for a particular accommodation is determined through the need assessment process, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.

2.1.3   Students with disabilities who received reasonable accommodations in Irish state examinations, other institutions and/ or jurisdictions will only be granted reasonable accommodations on completion of a Needs Assessment with Letterkenny Institute of Technology.

2.1.4   Reasonable accommodations should not be provided without prior consultation with the Disability staff in The Curve.

2.1.5   Reasonable accommodations may be reviewed with each student annually. Students who fail to use a reasonable accommodation that has been granted will have that accommodation reviewed.

2.1.6   Students with disabilities should follow the complaints procedure in operation in Letterkenny Institute of Technology to appeal a specific examination accommodation that has not been granted.

2.2   *Availing of Reasonable Accommodations*

2.2.1   Students with disabilities must register with The Curve/Learning Support and complete a Needs Assessment to avail of reasonable accommodations in examinations.

2.2.2   Students with disabilities must provide appropriate supporting documentation from an accepted Medical Consultant or Specialist (see Appendix 4).

2.2.3   It is the student's responsibility to inform learning support staff of any changes to his/ her disability which may require new or revised accommodations. Changes to examination accommodations are only approved following an updated Needs Assessment with The Curve/Learning Support.

2.2.4   Students with disabilities who require specialist examination supports such as assistive technology or a reader/scribe must attend training in the use of such accommodations. Training will be organised by staff in the Curve. It is the student's responsibility to be proficient in the use of technology for examinations.

2.3   *Notification of Reasonable Accommodations*

2.3.1   On completion of the Needs Assessment, students with disabilities will be notified of the support that will be provided in college, including reasonable accommodations that have been granted for examinations.

2.3.2   The Examinations Office is responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations in end-of-semester examinations. The Curve will provide the Exams Office with the list of accommodation requirements at least 30 days in advance of exams.

2.3.3   Academic departments are responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations in in-class assessments.

2.3.4   Students, requiring separate exam venues, will be notified by the Exams Office 24 hours in advance of the exam. The student will receive an email outlining their location and start time.

2.3.5   It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office to ensure that all announcements or amendments by lecturers are conveyed to all students with disabilities sitting examinations in separate examination venues.

2.3.6   Students that do not avail of an accommodation provided may be removed from the list for future exams.

2.4   Disclosure of Reasonable Accommodations

2.4.1   The provision of reasonable accommodations in examinations will be made known to the relevant academic, administrative and examination staff with the student's consent.

2.4.2   Students with disabilities are, where possible, marked anonymously unless they request otherwise. Use of alternative examination arrangements may affect the anonymity of the student.

2.4.3   Marking Guidelines apply to students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty. The Disability Officer will ensure that marking guidelines are forwarded to the relevant academic staff (see section 3.4).

3.   Guidelines for Granting Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities

3.1   Alternative Venues

Students with disabilities receiving reasonable accommodations may sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group. These venues are normally shared with other students. Please see Procedures for the Provision of Alternative Venues for Examinations.

3.2   Time Allowance

Students whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability may require extra time in examinations.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 5.

Extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour. In exceptional circumstances this extra time may be extended.

3.3   Rest Breaks

Students who may require a rest break in examinations include students whose ability to complete the examination within the required time is significantly impacted by a medical, sensory, psychological or physical disability.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Rest Breaks in Examinations.

3.4 *Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts*

Marking Guidelines inform the examiner that the student, due to the nature of his/her disability, has a particular difficulty with spelling, grammar and written expression, and provide a framework for marking the scripts of such students. Marking Guidelines apply to timed examinations only.

If a core component of assessment is that of competence in spelling, grammar and written expression, it is not possible to disregard these elements (for example, languages).

Please see Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts from Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty.

3.5 *Use of a Computer*

Students whose ability to write is significantly impacted by a disability may require a computer in examinations.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 5.

Please see Procedures for Computer-based Examinations.

3.6 *Scribe*

Scribes may only be granted for students who cannot handwrite or use a computer due to the nature of their disability.

If a core component of assessment is that of competence in spelling, grammar and written expression, it is not possible to disregard these elements (for example, languages). In other subjects testing written communication skills, including English or Irish, a scribe will be allowed, but the student will be assessed only on those aspects of written communication which he or she can demonstrate independently, such as the use of language and effective grammatical presentation.

Additional time of ten minutes per hour and a separate venue will be provided when using a scribe.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 5.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Scribes in Examinations.

3.7 *Voice Recognition Software*

A student who is eligible for a computer or a scribe may use voice recognition software. The use of a computer with voice recognition software requires a separate examination venue and invigilator.

3.8   Reader

Students whose ability to read is significantly impacted by a disability may require a reader in examinations.

Most students will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader. In exceptional cases only an individual reader may be required.

In some cases students will use assistive technology (for example, text to speech software) to read the examination paper. Where the student is using assistive technology an electronic paper will be required.

If the examination is assessing competence in reading and reading comprehension the provision of a reader may not be appropriate.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 5.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Readers in Examinations.

3.9   Sign Language Interpreters

A sign language interpreter translates oral based language, text and speech, into Irish Sign Language (ISL) so a deaf person can understand what is being communicated.

Where a student's first language is ISL an interpreter may, if requested, be made available to translate the examination paper into ISL. An interpreter may also be made available to facilitate a student whose first language is ISL answering the examination questions in ISL. This can be done in one of the following ways:

- The student may wish to sign his/her examination and to have this simultaneously transcribed by a scribe.
- In exceptional circumstances where learning outcomes cannot be assessed by any other mode, the presentation of assignments or examinations in ISL recorded on videotape may be permitted. If a student signs the examination to a scribe or on video, additional time, a separate examination venue and appropriate invigilation will be granted.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Irish Sign Language Interpreters in Examinations.

3.10   Furniture in Examination Venues

Students with disabilities may require alternative furniture (i.e. chair support, writing board, footstool etc.) in examination venues.

3.11   Personal Assistants

Students who have a Personal Assistant may require the Personal Assistant to be in attendance at the examination venue.

3.12   Examination Papers in Alternative Formats

- Students who are visually impaired may require examination papers in enlarged print.
- Students who have a visual impairment may require graphs, diagrams, maps or other visual elements of the examination paper presented in a tactile format.
- Students who are blind or vision impaired and fluent Braille readers may require a Braille version of the examination paper.
- Students who have difficulty reading the examination paper may require coloured overlays.

3.13   Flexible Examination Arrangements

Flexible examination arrangements refer to any alteration in the standard form of assessment in order to accommodate a student's disability. This might include:

- Provision of an oral examination instead of a written test.
- Some flexibility around the scheduling of examinations, such as, allowing more time between examinations for a student with a physical disability who experiences fatigue.
- Examinations split into more than one session.

It should be noted that flexible examination arrangements are granted in exceptional circumstances only.

SECTION TWO: PROCEDURES FOR THE PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE VENUES FOR EXAMINATIONS TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1.   Procedures for the Provision of Alternative Venues for Examinations

Letterkenny Institute of Technology should ensure the following in relation to alternative examination venues:

- Alternative venues should be fully accessible to students with disabilities.

- The physical space available should be appropriate for the effective provision of the reasonable accommodation, for example:

  - A large table to accommodate enlarged papers; Braille material, and/or technological aids.
  - Adequate floor space for manoeuvring wheelchairs, mobility aids, crutches, canes and any other physical aid.
  - Access to power points for equipment and/or assistive technology.

- It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office to ensure that all announcements or amendments by lecturers are conveyed to all students with disabilities sitting examinations in separate examination venues.

2.   Procedures for the Provision of Rest Breaks in Examinations

Letterkenny Institute of Technology should ensure the following in relation to rest breaks:

- Rest breaks should be considered as pauses in the exam and the exam time should be stopped when a student takes a rest break. Students will normally have 10 minutes per hour.

- Students should tell the invigilator when they wish to have a rest break. They may take as much or as little out of their allocation as they wish at any one time.

- Students can choose to stay in the room for their rest break, or may leave the room if supervised by a member of staff. This can include going to the bathroom, taking a drink or snack if recommended, or moving around to relieve physical discomfort.

- Students may not talk about or work on the examination during their rest break. The student's examination papers should also be turned over during rest breaks.

3. Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts from Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty[2]

A student with a disability who has a reading, writing or spelling difficulty can be disadvantaged when assessment takes the form of a written timed examination. Student's written work may contain:

- **Surface errors** in spelling and grammar such as inaccuracies in the use of tense, grammatical agreement, plurals, spelling and punctuation.
- **Structural flaws** including weak sequencing of ideas, paragraphs, and sentences; unclear expression of cause and effect; lack of competence in using abstract language or lack of awareness of writing genre.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration when marking the examination script of a student with a reading, writing or spelling difficulty:

- First, read the script quickly to judge the student's underlying understanding of the topic; then assess their performance against the learning outcomes. If the script contains all the required elements but does not introduce them in a clear logical order, avoid penalising the student for a lack of structure in their writing unless this is a stipulated competency being assessed.
- Errors in **spelling** do not necessarily mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the word or its function in their writing. Generally, such errors do not lead to ambiguity and should not be penalised when subject knowledge is being assessed.
- **Lexical** errors, such as *coarse* for *course,* do not mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the words. This kind of error should not be penalised unless it leads to ambiguity.
- **Grammatical** errors, like incorrect tense endings, lack of subject – verb agreement and incorrect word order may not affect the meaning of the sentence. For example: Some of the features of Socratic dialogues were they seek definitions of abstract ideas, cross examining beliefs to expose contradictions and he used to use questioning to bring the pupil to recognise the truth. Here the student's meaning is clear, the errors do not lead to ambiguity and the student should not be penalised.
- **Students with difficulties in reading, writing and spelling might not always use punctuation as a tool to clarify meaning.** Scripts may contain long sentences that are difficult to follow with indiscriminate punctuation or no punctuation at all. Very short sentences or fragments of sentences might also be produced. For instance: The study considered three main areas of research. The effect's of frequent drug use the role of the family in the offenders behaviour and the impact of custodial sentence's on reoffending. In this case the student's meaning is clear, but errors in punctuation can lead to ambiguity which will be reflected in the mark awarded.
- Some students may have **restricted vocabulary** and use a far more limited range of words that one would expect. Avoid penalising students who may have an immature style of writing, unless written communication is a specified learning outcome.
- Where grammar and spelling are core competencies of a course a student's work must be marked on the basis of accuracy in the language and therefore these marking guidelines will not apply.
- In all subjects, if a student's errors make a material difference to the meaning of their work, it will not be possible to classify them as surface errors that do not incur penalty. For instance, if a nursing student writes hypertension instead of hypotension, this will affect the mark awarded.

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[2] Adapted from Guidelines for Marking the Work of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (University of Central Lancashire) web link for marking guidelines for students with specific learning difficulties [accessed 14th June 2012]

- In all subjects, if the surface errors or structural flaws make the student's work so ambiguous that it is impossible to decipher the meaning, then this diminishes his/her ability to demonstrate the module's learning outcomes and this would be reflected in the marks awarded.

4. Procedures for Computer-based Examinations

Student's Responsibilities during Examinations

- The student must confirm that they are proficient in the use of the technology for examinations. To ensure competence in the use of the assistive technology, a number of training sessions may be required.
- Where word processing is required by a student a minimum typing speed of 20 words per minute (wpm) is recommended. Training may be provided and it is the student's responsibility to be proficient in typing for his/ her examination.
- During an examination it is the student's responsibility to save their own work onto the memory stick provided. If they do not save their work and it is lost, they will not receive any additional time to finish their exam. The invigilator brings memory stick to Examinations Office for printing.
- Students should not be permitted to bring any computer related equipment of their own (e.g. a memory stick or mouse) into the examination without prior approval and checking. In situations where appropriate facilities cannot be provided or where it is not practical to transfer software/personalised settings (voice recognition software, document reading software and screen magnification software) it may be permitted for a student to utilise their own equipment and/or the equipment supplied to them by Letterkenny Institute of Technology.
- If students have any difficulties during an examination they must alert the invigilator.

The following guidelines should be taken in to account with regard to computer/laptop setup:

- Students should be provided with guidelines on how to use their software under examination conditions and, if necessary, should attend training sessions prior to the examination period.
- Students who are using a computer will sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group. These venues are normally shared with other students.
- Technical support should be available for each computer-based examination session and at any other necessary stages (e.g. printing).
- Students taking examinations in which they are allowed to use a calculator should bring their own approved calculator to the examinations. No access is provided to the internet, intranet or any other means of communication.
- Sufficient laptops should be available in the examination venue. Appropriate contingency plans should be put in place in the event of any computer malfunction and/ or failure during the examination sessions.
- The computer should have an adequate power supply (i.e. should be charged and/or plugged in for the duration of the exam). The computer must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used.
- Where MS Word is used to type examination answers the built-in spelling and grammar checker/ thesaurus/ encyclopaedia and translation features may be disabled.
- Where word processing (MS Word) is being used the software package should be set to background-save the students work.
- Where word processing is utilised students must save their examination answers.

Saving examination answers to USB key:

- A USB key is provided by Letterkenny Institute of Technology.
- Students save their work to the USB key.
- USB key is returned to the Examinations Office, for printing, at the end of the examination.
- A backup copy must be saved to the examination computer/ laptop.

Computer-based Examinations for Students who are Blind/Vision Impaired

- The computer must be set-up in line with the general computer set-up guidelines.
- For a blind student, document reading software, word processing facilities and/or Braille/Braille-related devices and software may be needed.
- For a student with low vision, screen magnification software and word processing facilities may be required. For screen magnification a large computer monitor may also be required.

Procedures for the Use of a Computer as a Reader

- Computer software which reads out an electronic paper, but does not decode or interpret the paper, may be used in place of a personal reader. The software must be tested to ensure it reads the electronic examination paper accurately. Academic departments must adhere to HEI guidelines when creating electronic examination papers.
- Where an application for a computer reader is approved, invigilators are permitted to open examination papers up to one hour before the starting time of the examination to test the software.
- Where the software is unable to give factual information from diagrams, graphs and tables for a blind/vision impaired student, it must be supplemented with the support of a personal reader (see Guidelines on Provision of Readers in Examinations).

Procedures for the Use of Voice Recognition Software

- Students who qualify for the use of Voice Recognition Software in an examination must develop a mature voice file with appropriate subject specific vocabulary.
- Ensure the computer being used meets at least the minimum software requirements as set out in the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Ensure the USB headset has been installed and tested with the software prior to the examination.
- The examination must be held in a separate venue where the accuracy of the software cannot be impacted by external noise.
- As it is not recommended to transfer and use voice files on different hardware from that which it was created, permission may be given to the student to use their own equipment. In this case, the computer should be cleared of any previously stored data and verified by a nominated member of staff in Letterkenny Institute of Technology.
- The invigilator may be required to scribe if Voice Recognition Software is being used and there are any handwritten requirements, for example: diagrams, formulas or other modelled answers.

5.   Procedures for the Provision of Scribes in Examinations

The role of a scribe is to record a student's dictated answers in an examination. Procedures for Letterkenny Institute of Technology:

* Both the student and scribe should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination.
* The scribe should be an independent person and not known to the student.
* In most instances the scribe will also act as the invigilator for the examination.
* Sometimes a student may require a reader and a scribe. Is such instances the same person may act as both.
* A recording of the session is recommended as this will act as a secondary source of information for the examiner if required.
* Scribes should have proficient typing skills if typing a student's dictated answers, and should be capable of writing legibly at appropriate speed if writing a student's dictated answers.
* Scribes should have a good working knowledge of the subject being examined.

Procedures for Scribes

* The scribe is required to produce an accurate record of the student's answers and to write/type at an appropriate speed.
* The scribe should arrive before the commencement of the examination, allowing sufficient time to establish a rapport with the student, to make seating arrangements and to agree guidelines for:
  * Presentation
  * Spelling
  * Punctuation
  * New paragraphs etc.
* The scribe should be relaxed. This may help to alleviate any anxieties the student may have in relation to the examination.
* The scribe should advise students as to the duration of the examination, the number of questions to be answered and any additional instructions.
* The starting time and finish time of the examination should be clearly stated by the scribe and/or invigilator.
* An institution may require that the examination script is submitted in electronic format and that the examination material is recorded on an official computer located in the institution, not on a laptop belonging to the student or scribe.
* If using a computer, the scribe should ensure the computer is set to automatically save work regularly (every 3 to 5 minutes). If using Microsoft Word, go to Tools/Options/Save and select the preferred time.
* If the student needs a rest or toilet break the scribe/invigilator should accompany them.
* A student may elect to write sections of the paper themselves.
* If the student writes notes, essay plans or illustrations, these should be included with the examination script. For example, the student might draw rough diagrams from which the scribe will draw a final version and include both copies with the examination script.

6.   Procedures for the Provision of Readers in Examinations

The role of a reader in examinations is to read the examination questions only. Most students will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader. In exceptional cases only an individual reader may be required. Procedures for Letterkenny Institute of Technology:

- Both the student and reader should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination.
- The reader should be an independent person and not known to the student.
- In the case of a foreign language, scientific, mathematical or technical subject, the reader should ideally have a working knowledge of that subject/language.
- The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate.
- In most instances the reader will also act as the invigilator for the examination.
- Sometimes a student may require a reader and a scribe. Is such instances the same person may act as both.

Procedures for Readers

- The reader should not provide content to the student or offer any suggestions.
- The reader should not advise the student on which questions to attempt, when to move on the next question, or the order in which questions should be attempted.
- Instructions given on the examination paper can only be repeated when the reader is specifically requested to do so by the student.
- The reader should make no other comment or use any intonation which emphasises any part of the examination questions, nor make any interpretation of the examination question(s).
- The reader should not discuss any matter with the student during the examination unless it relates to the re-reading of an examination question (having been requested to do so by the student).

Working with Vision-Impaired Students

- Readers should read the examination questions as often as requested.
- Readers should provide information regarding time elapsed and time remaining.
- Readers should help a student using tactile maps, diagrams, graphs and tables to extract the information which the print copy would provide to a sighted student.
- Readers should give the spelling of a word on an examination paper if requested.
- Readers should report any communication problems during the examination to the invigilator.

7.   Procedures for the Provision of Irish Sign Language Interpreters in Examinations

- The interpreter should arrive before the commencement of the examination, to make seating arrangements and to interpret interactions between invigilators and students. This time should also be used as an opportunity for the student and the interpreter to become familiar with each other's communication styles.
- The interpreter should translate all announcements and information given by the invigilator prior to and during the examination.
- The interpreter should translate all interaction between the examiner and the student, including questions and clarifications. The interpreter should interpret no other speech/sign, nor go beyond the student's or the invigilator's/examiner's communications.

- The student may request that the interpreter translate questions from the written examination paper. If, following translation, there is need for further clarification, the interpreter may attempt to rephrase their interpretation but they must not attempt to introduce additional information over and above that which is specifically mentioned in the question. Any further clarification that is sought should be referred to the examiner and not offered by the interpreter.
- Where a student's first language is ISL an interpreter may, if requested, offer a translation of ISL vocabulary into English; this may include offering the spelling of word in English on the basis of ISL vocabulary.
- The interpreter must not provide additional examples, contextual information nor should he/she attempt to provide guidance to the student in answering a question.
- If a student wishes to sign his/her assignment or examination and to have this simultaneously transcribed by a scribe, the interpreter may seek clarification, as is normal in interpreted interaction. This should be done in a manner that reduces the impact upon the student's flow. If the interpreter is seeking frequent clarification, the matter should be raised with the Disability/Access Officer at the earliest opportunity, and a suitable replacement for further examinations should be found.

SECTION THREE: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Member Institutions of Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN)

Higher Education Institutions in DAWN include:

Athlone Institute of Technology
Carlow College
Carlow Institute of Technology
Cork Institute of Technology
Dundalk Institute of Technology
Dublin City University
Dublin Institute of Technology
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Institute of Technology Tallaght
Institute of Technology Tralee
Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Limerick Institute of Technology
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
National College of Art & Design
National College of Ireland
National University of Ireland Galway
National University of Ireland Maynooth
Queens University Belfast
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Shannon College of Hotel Management
St Angela's, Sligo
Trinity College Dublin
University College Cork
University College Dublin
University of Limerick
University of Ulster
Waterford Institute of Technology

Appendix 2: Membership of the Examinations Working Group

Ms Rose Ryan, Acting Director of Access, National University of Ireland Maynooth (Chair)

Ms Siobhan Colclough, Disability Advisor, University College Cork

Ms Alison Doyle, Disability Officer, Trinity College Dublin

Ms Andrea Feeney, Director of Operations & IT, State Examinations Commission

Mr Alan Gregory, Senior Psychologist, National Educational Psychological Service

Ms Ruth Murphy, Disability Administrator, Cork Institute of Technology

Ms Anne O'Connor, Head of Disability and Learning Support Service, Dublin City University

Ms Aisling Palmer, Disability Officer, National University of Ireland Galway

Ms Fiona Sweeney, Manager Access Centre, University College Dublin

Mr Kieran Sweeney, Educational Psychologist

Mr Declan Treanor, Director of Disability Service, Trinity College Dublin

Ms Rita Wall, Educational Psychologist, Psychological Society of Ireland

Specific Learning Difficulties subgroup (Aisling Palmer, University of Limerick, Siobhan Colclough, University College Cork, and Bernie Langtry, Athlone Institute of Technology) reviewed accommodations for students with specific learning difficulties. Alison Doyle, Trinity College Dublin also advised this group.

Assistive Technology subgroup (Simon Ahern, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Ann Fogarty, National College of Ireland, Michelle Power, Waterford Institute of Technology, Linda Doran, University College Cork) reviewed Assistive Technology provision and identified best practice.

Disability accommodations were reviewed by Rose Ryan, National University of Ireland Maynooth, and Anne O Connor, Dublin City University

Surveys were coordinated by Declan Treanor, Trinity College Dublin and Fiona Sweeney, University College Dublin.

Appendix 3: Definition of Disability

The legal definition of disability, which is outlined in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2011), defines disability as follows:

1. "the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,

2. the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,

3. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,

4. a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or

5. a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour."

Appendix 4: Documentation Required for Verifying a Disability

DISABILITY	MEDICAL CONSULTANT/SPECIALIST	EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY REQUIRED
Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Asperger's Syndrome/Autism	Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist or Neurologist or Paediatrician	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Blind/Vision Impaired	Ophthalmologist or Ophthalmic Surgeon	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Deaf/Hearing Impaired	Professionally qualified Audiologist	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional. A Bilateral Audiogram from a qualified Audiologist is also required.
Developmental Co-ordination Disorder/Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist and an Occupational Therapist or Neurologist	A full psycho-educational assessment from an appropriately Psychologist and a report that assesses motor skills and functioning from an Occupational Therapist or Neurologist.
Mental Health Condition	Psychiatrist	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.

DISABILITY	MEDICAL CONSULTANT/SPECIALIST	EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY REQUIRED
Neurological Conditions	Neurologist/other relevant Consultant	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Neurological Conditions – speech, language and communication disorders and written language difficulties associated with these disorders	Speech and Language Therapist	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Physical Disability	Orthopaedic Consultant or other relevant consultant appropriate to the disability/condition	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Significant On-going Illness	**Diabetes Type 1:** Endocrinologist or Paediatrician **Cystic Fibrosis (CF):** Consultant respiratory physician or Paediatrician **Gastroenterology Conditions:** Gastroenterologist **Others:** Relevant consultant in area of condition or Consultant Registrar/Registrar	CAO Evidence of Disability Form or a report with the same level of detail completed by the appropriate professional.
Dyscalculia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist	A full psycho-educational assessment.
Dyslexia	Appropriately qualified Psychologist	A full psycho-educational assessment.

APPENDIX 5: Guidelines for Granting Reasonable Accommodations to Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty

These guidelines have been informed by the criteria applied by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in Ireland, and also by the criteria applied by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in the UK.

These guidelines are intended to assist HEIs when determining the examination accommodations that may be required by students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty. The need for a particular accommodation is determined through the need assessment process, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.

In a small number of complex cases – where the learning profile of the student falls outside of these guidelines, or there is a co-morbidity of diagnosis, or other mitigating circumstances that are deemed to constitute a significant barrier to performance – appropriate examination accommodations may be awarded based on the expertise, and at the discretion of, the Disability Officer.

1. Students with a disability who demonstrate a lower than average writing speed or reading speed or working memory or processing speed (i.e. at or below a standard score of 89/23rd percentile) may require extra time in examinations.

2. Students with a disability who demonstrate one or more of the following may require a computer in examinations:

   i. a lower than average writing speed (below 15wpm)
   ii. a speed of processing at or below a standard score of 85/ 16th percentile
   iii. a level of legibility that would make the paper unreadable to an examiner.

3. Students with disability who have a spelling attainment at or below a standard score of 70/ 2nd percentile may require the use of a scribe.

4. Students with a disability whose reading speed, accuracy or comprehension is at or below a standard score of 85/ 16th percentile may require a reader in examinations.

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