
**POLICY FOR ESTABLISHING
ALTERNATIVE
ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR
CANDIDATES WITH
DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. This document outlines specific strategies that may be considered when establishing reasonable alternative assessment arrangements for candidates with disabilities and/or special needs. Any such alternative assessment arrangements are subject to the approval of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA).
2. The SRA Day One Outcomes are competence standards. These are the standards which all candidates must achieve to demonstrate their ability to practise. All candidates must be assessed against the competence standards but reasonable adjustments will be made to the way the standards are assessed to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged as a result of a disability and/or special need.
3. It must be stressed that in many cases it is not possible to provide a definitive statement of the arrangements that should be made for candidates with a particular disability.
4. In developing assessment methods and materials Kaplan QLTS will aim to identify and adopt methods which minimise any subsequent need to make alternative assessment arrangements.
5. When selecting an alternative assessment strategy for individual candidates, the following factors should also be considered:
 - The nature and onset of disability. Even within the same type of disability there will be variations in the specific arrangements that will be required. The type of arrangements made will also vary according to whether the impairment is long-standing, recently acquired, fluctuating or intermittent;
 - The nature of the assessment to be undertaken. Candidates with similar disabilities may require very different arrangements, depending on the specific assessment tasks employed within courses. It may also be the case that for an individual candidate, alternative arrangements might be required for some tasks and not for others.
6. This Policy will be monitored by Kaplan and any necessary amendments will be made and implemented at the earliest opportunity. As a minimum, Kaplan QLTS will review this and all associated policies on an annual basis as part of its ongoing Quality Assurance procedures.

2. REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

1. Candidates requesting reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements to accommodate disabilities and/or special needs should submit their requests and medical and/or other relevant supporting evidence as soon as possible. Some more complex adjustments may take a considerable time to discuss and then put in place.
2. For pre-existing conditions, we would ask that the request and supporting evidence is provided when registering for the MCT or booking for the OSCE. In order to allow adequate time to make the adjustments required, the latest such requests and supporting evidence should be provided is the registration deadline for the MCT or the booking deadline for the OSCE.
3. Where a disability and/or special need arises after the registration deadline for the MCT or the booking deadline for the OSCE or where it is not possible to provide evidence by the relevant deadline, every effort will be made to accommodate the candidate concerned. However, if candidates contact us very close to the exam we may not be able to assist them.
4. The Supporting Evidence must include information detailed enough to identify:
 - a. The reason(s) why reasonable adjustments are necessary; and
 - b. The appropriate reasonable adjustments required.
5. Supporting Evidence which is not submitted with the registration form for the MCT or the booking form for the OSCE may be submitted by email to qltsassessments@kaplan.co.uk or by post to:
Assessments Department
Kaplan QLTS
Spring House
Main Building
40-44 Holloway Road
London
N7 8JL.

3. CANDIDATES WITH DYSLEXIA (or other specific learning difficulties)

1. Supporting Evidence required:

An assessment report from a Chartered Educational Psychologist normally dated no earlier than 2 years prior to registration for the assessment. The report should indicate the degree to which dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties might affect the candidate's performance in an education or training context and should contain specific recommendations for support and assessment arrangements.

2. Examples of Alternative arrangements to be considered:

1. **Additional time.** An extra time allowance may be granted for reading and/or completion of assessments. The amount of extra time permitted should normally

be between 10-15 minutes per hour, depending on the recommendations within the assessment report.

2. **Use of audiotape.** Assessment questions may be recorded on audiotape, provided that the questions are appropriate to such a medium. Candidates may also be permitted to record their assessment answers on audiotape. (This arrangement may also necessitate extra time).
3. **Use of a reader/amanuensis.** A candidate may be permitted to use a reader and/or dictate assessment answers to a scribe, either during the assessment period itself or afterwards, dictating from their own written scripts. This may also require additional time. (See Section 7 for Guidelines on the use of readers/amanuenses.)
4. **Use of a word processor or personal computer.** The use of a word processor or personal computer with spell check facility may be permitted. In this case, appropriate steps would need to be taken with regard to security and invigilation arrangements. (See Section 8 for Guidelines on the use of personal/ laptop computers in assessments.)
5. **Separate invigilation.** It is likely that the above arrangements might also require separate invigilation, to minimise disruption for the candidate concerned and for other candidates. Separate invigilation might also be appropriate for candidates whose specific learning difficulties cause them to be distracted by the presence of other candidates. Again, the assessment report should be consulted for guidance on this matter.
6. **Enlarged/coloured assessments.** Where recommended in the assessment report, assessments may be provided in an enlarged format (in which case a larger than normal desk might be required), or on coloured paper. Colour filters could also be permitted in the assessment room.

4. CANDIDATES WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

1. Supporting Evidence required:

Assessment report from a specialist agency (e.g. RNID) or suitably qualified professional.

2. Examples of Alternative arrangements to be considered:

1. **Written/signed instructions.** Invigilators should be notified of the presence of candidates who are deaf or hard of hearing so that the candidates can be alerted to spoken instructions. It may be appropriate to arrange for the candidate to be placed close to the invigilator and/or to be provided with written notes of spoken instructions. For deaf candidates whose first language is British Sign Language, it may also be appropriate to arrange for an interpreter, communication support worker or lip speaker to be available.

2. **Modification of assessments.** For candidates who are pre-lingually deaf (where the deafness occurred prior to early language development) it may be appropriate to arrange for assessments to be viewed by a teacher of the deaf and necessary modifications made to the 'carrier language' used without changing the meaning of a question. A copy of the amended assessment should be submitted with the assessment script.
3. **Additional time allowance.** Pre-lingually deaf candidates may also require an additional 10 - 15 minute reading time allowance to clarify any misunderstanding over the phrasing or vocabulary of the questions. This may be particularly important where multiple choice papers are concerned. It may be appropriate to make a communication support worker or teacher of the deaf available during the reading time to ensure that the candidate understands the question.
4. **Signed assessments.** For candidates whose first language is British Sign Language, consideration will be given to arranging assessment through other media. Deaf candidates may be permitted to produce assessed work or assessments in Sign Language on video which could be 'voiced over' afterward by an interpreter.
5. **Separate invigilation.** Separate invigilation will be necessary for candidates undertaking signed assessments and may also be required for candidates using an interpreter, lip speaker or communicator during assessments.

5. CANDIDATES WHO ARE BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED

1. Supporting Evidence required:

Assessment report from specialist agency (e.g. RNIB) or suitably qualified professional.

2. Examples of Alternative arrangements to be considered:

1. **Adaptation of assessments.** Assessments should be provided in a format appropriate to the candidate's requirements, for example in Braille or large print. It should be noted that it can take several weeks for material to be brailled so assessments need to be ready in good time. Candidates using large print or brailled papers may require a larger than normal desk on which to spread out their papers and equipment.
2. **Use of audiotape.** Some candidates may use taped material in preference to Braille or large print. Where this is the case, arrangements should be made for assessments to be presented on audiotape.
3. **Use of readers/amanuenses.** A candidate may be permitted to use a reader and/or to dictate answers to a scribe. (See Section 7 for Guidelines on the use of readers/amanuenses.)
4. **Use of specialist equipment.** Candidates who normally use specialist technology to produce written work (such as large screen monitor, personal

computer with screen enlargement software, voice synthesiser, close circuit television (which enlarges print)) may be permitted use of these facilities during assessments. In some cases, however, it may be more appropriate for candidates to use their own specialist technology. (See Section 8 for Guidelines on the use of personal computers in assessments.)

5. **Transcription of assessments.** If a candidate produces answers in Braille, Kaplan QLTS will try to arrange for the script to be transcribed after the assessment. If a facility for transcribing Braille is not immediately available, then the candidate may be required to dictate the answers from a Braille copy to an amanuensis or typist.
6. **Special seating/lighting arrangements.** Some candidates may require particular seating arrangements, to access/avoid natural light for working, or may require task lighting.
7. **Separate invigilation.** It is likely that the above arrangements might also require separate invigilation to minimise disruption for the candidate concerned and for other candidates.
8. **Additional time.** A slow reading/writing speed and/or use of specialist technology during the assessment may also necessitate an additional time allowance. The amount of time to be permitted will be determined in individual cases on the basis of advice contained within specialist assessment reports.

6. CANDIDATES WITH OTHER DISABILITIES

1. Supporting Evidence required:

This will vary according to the specific circumstances but will generally be a report from an external agency with detailed knowledge of the candidate's condition. (e.g. a GP or consultant/specialist).

2. Examples of Alternative arrangements to be considered:

1. **Alternative assessment location.** Normally, a location suited to the candidate's needs and meeting appropriate assessment conditions should be made available. Candidates who are wheelchair users or who have other mobility difficulties should be scheduled to sit assessments in accessible centres. Due regard should be given to the emergency evacuation arrangements for wheelchair users which apply within particular locations; invigilators should be fully briefed on these by the Head of Operations Kaplan QLTS.

Some candidates may have particular requirements with regard to their positioning within an assessment hall (e.g. close to exits, require frequent access to toilets). Where these requirements cannot be met within general assessment centres, an alternative location may be arranged.

2. **Additional time allowance/rest breaks.** Candidates whose ability to write or type is impaired, or whose concentration is adversely affected (e.g. by prescribed

medication) should be permitted an additional time allowance, the extent of which will be determined individually on the basis of specialist advice or the information contained in the external agency's report. For candidates who experience severe pain or discomfort when sitting in one position for long periods, additional time may be allocated in the form of supervised rest breaks throughout the assessment session.

3. **Personal assistant.** A candidate who requires personal assistants for day to day activities may also use these to provide assistance with manual tasks, at the candidate's instruction, during the assessment (e.g. turning pages, inserting a disk or USB stick into a computer) or during rest breaks (e.g. assisting with eating, toileting).
4. **Use of reader/amanuensis.** A reader or amanuensis may be provided for candidates who are unable to read print or write/type assessment answers. (See Section 7 for Guidelines on the use of readers/amanuenses.)
5. **Use of specialist equipment.** Candidates who normally use specialist technology to produce written work (including personal computers) may be permitted use of these facilities during assessments. Requests to bring special furniture into the assessment room may also be approved. (See Section 8 for Guidelines on the use of personal computers in assessments.)
6. **Re-scheduling of assessments.** Some candidates may require flexibility in the scheduling of their assessment, where feasible (E.G. candidates with conditions which result in early fatigue). Assessments may need to be scheduled so that adequate rest periods are provided. These rest breaks would need to be appropriately supervised.
7. **Separate invigilation.** It is possible that the above arrangements may require separate invigilation to minimise disruption for the candidate concerned and for other candidates. Separate invigilation might also be appropriate for candidates with mental health conditions which might make the experience of sitting in an assessment room with other candidates difficult.
8. **Alternative assessment activities.** For candidates whose disabilities present functional limitations in performing assessment activities, reasonable accommodations should be sought to enable demonstration of the skills and knowledge being tested.

7. GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE USE OF A READER AND AMANUENSIS

1. A reader should be a person who is able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and who should ideally have a working knowledge of the subject being examined.
2. An amanuensis should be a person who is able to produce an accurate record of the candidate's answers; who can write legibly and at a reasonable speed; and who should ideally have a working knowledge of the subject being examined.

3. A candidate should, wherever possible, be given adequate practice in the use of a reader and/or an amanuensis. If possible, the candidate and reader/amanuensis should be familiar with each other and the candidate should not be expected to use different readers/amanuenses during successive assessments.
4. Where required, a candidate using a reader and/or an amanuensis may also be permitted additional time in which to complete the assessment.
5. The reader/amanuensis and the candidate should be given copies of these guidelines prior to the assessment.
6. During the assessment a reader and/or amanuensis must not:
 - a. Give any factual help to the candidate or offer any suggestions;
 - b. Give advice to the candidate on which questions to answer or in which order;
 - c. Give advice to the candidate regarding when to move on to the next question.
7. During the assessment a reader should:
 - a. Read accurately and read only the rubric and questions;
 - b. Read, as often as requested by the candidate, the instructions, questions and answers already recorded;
 - c. If requested by the candidate, give the spelling of a word which occurs in the question paper (otherwise spellings must not be given, unless the candidate is permitted use of a dictionary).
8. During the assessment an amanuensis should:
 - a. Write down answers exactly as they are dictated;
 - b. Require the candidate to provide spellings of specialist or technical terms used in his/her answer.
9. Kaplan QLTS may, at its discretion, grant approval for a reader/amanuensis to act simultaneously as an invigilator and be bound by the rules governing the work of invigilators.

8. GUIDANCE NOTES ON THE USE OF PERSONAL OR LAPTOP COMPUTERS IN ASSESSMENTS

1. A USB stick will be supplied by Kaplan QLTS, which will be formatted prior to the assessment and should be marked by the invigilator with the candidate's name and/or registration/candidate number and time of the assessment.
2. The USB stick should be used by the candidate for the purposes of the assessment only.
3. Wherever possible, candidates should be provided with Kaplan QLTS equipment. However, where it is essential for the candidate to use their own personal or laptop computers, the hard drive should be checked before the assessment, preferably by a technician. In some cases, it may be necessary to temporarily remove particular document files or software applications. Care should be taken in this process to ensure that any specialist software (e.g. voice recognition or screen enlargement software) is not removed.

4. Where a candidate is undertaking an assessment over two or more sessions, the assessment provider should hold the USB stick for each subsequent session.
5. Candidates who are permitted these arrangements should be warned that any candidate attempting to use unfair means during an assessment will be liable to an allegation of cheating.
6. The invigilator should ensure that the candidate uses only those facilities which have been approved and are specified in the invigilator's instructions.
7. Where specified in the invigilator's instructions, the candidate should be allowed additional time.
8. The USB stick should be returned with all assessment documentation to Kaplan QLTS or other relevant assessment authority.