



Individual Assessment Arrangements Policy 2024- 25

Summary of changes

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LINKS TO UNCRC

This policy links to the following UNCRC articles:

- Article 2 (non-discrimination)
- Article 3 (best interests of the child)
- Article 6 (life, survival and development)
- Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)
- Article 23 (children with a disability)
- Article 28 (right to education)
- Article 29 (goals of education)

INTRODUCTION

The Dollar Academy policy adheres to the guidelines published by SQA, as follows:

‘As the national awarding body for Scotland, we have a responsibility to ensure that assessment leading to certification is rigorous and fair for **all** learners, and that it allows learners to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the qualification. This is why it is important that assessment arrangements are only provided to those learners identified as having a physical (including medical or sensory), behavioural, mental health or learning difficulty that prevents them from accessing an assessment and demonstrating their attainment.

The four key principles that underpin our model for the provision of assessment arrangements focus on the need to remove barriers for disabled learners to provide them with an equal opportunity to access their arrangements.

Principle 1: Assessment arrangements are intended to enable learners to demonstrate their attainment, not to compensate for lack of attainment

Principle 2: Assessment arrangement must not compromise the integrity of the qualification

Principle 3: Assessment arrangements must be tailored to meet a learner’s individual needs

Principle 4: Assessment arrangements should reflect, as far as possible, the learner’s usual way of learning and producing work’

‘The purpose of assessment arrangements is to provide disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs with an equal opportunity to **demonstrate their attainment** in an assessment. In doing so, we are providing an assessment environment that allows them to show the skills, knowledge and understanding they have achieved, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. Learners are individual people with a diverse range of needs, and it is important that you consider the individual assessment needs of your learner when considering the most appropriate assessment arrangements.’

‘For learners who are disabled, as defined under the provisions of the Equality Act (2010), assessment arrangements..... might be the ‘reasonable adjustment’ required to compensate for a substantial disadvantage, but there may be other unique adjustments that need to be considered to meet their individual needs.’

REASONS FOR APPLICATIONS

Medical

Where a pupil experiences a debilitating medical condition, sensory problems or lack of dexterity due to physical injury an application for individual assessment arrangements would apply.

- Arrangements are made with the SQA co-ordinator, with Medical certificate required
- Pupils and parents will be required to acknowledge arrangements by signing the 'Individual Assessment Arrangements Acceptance' form
- At the end of the exam diet, all forms will be stored in the Support for Learning Department central file

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Use of bilingual dictionaries for candidates for whom English is an additional language

The dictionaries permitted are bilingual translation dictionaries (without explanation of terms). The use of a bilingual dictionary is only appropriate for candidates who are literate in their first language.

- In assessments in Modern Languages that are the candidate's first language the use of a bilingual dictionary will be the same as for every other candidate, i.e. the dictionary will only be used in those parts of the assessment which specify the use of a dictionary
- In both internal assessments and external course assessments, where a candidate's knowledge of English makes it difficult to communicate his or her attainment, the use of a bilingual dictionary may be allowed, **with the exception of assessments in English**
- An extra time allowance of **10 minutes per hour** is permitted for using the dictionary

Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD)

Following a formal referral to Support for Learning, a process of evidence gathering and pupil observation takes place. Where evaluation of the evidence gathered shows that there appears to be a barrier to learning, more detailed information will be required.

- Parents and SFL staff hold discussions in order to explore the possible barrier to learning, and agree a suitable course of action, often resulting in the pupil completing a range of screening assessments
- In-house assessments may, or may not, indicate a literacy, numeracy or developmental co-ordination difficulty
- The department does not 'diagnose' specific learning difficulties, but indicates that there appears to be a difficulty, which is consistent in nature to a recognised SLD
- Further external testing may be required, or referral to specialist services
- Where there is sufficient evidence that the SLD is causing a disadvantage to the pupil in their ability to achieve the required standard, a variety of appropriate supports will be trialled. This will allow the candidate to demonstrate ability, giving clear evidence in relation to the impact of the selected assessment arrangement.

EVIDENCE REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENT

Class teacher responsibility

- Examples of everyday classwork which demonstrate the candidate's difficulty in demonstrating attainment (preferably 2 pieces)
- Graded/timed assessments with and without proposed assessment arrangements, **in consultation with SfL staff, to evidence impact of arrangement**. These can take the form of class tests, work completed in a set time, or other as appropriate
- Consideration should be given to **all** skills required throughout the duration of the course and final exam; departments should consider how to evidence these prior to the individual assessment arrangement application date.

Support for Learning, or specialist staff responsibility

- Statement of the nature and severity of the SLD or identified need
- Trial of the proposed assessment arrangement (as above)
- Statement in relation to impact of difficulty in demonstrating attainment

Prelims **are not** evidence for individual assessment arrangements, as there can be a variety of reasons that a pupil does not perform well. For some subjects, assessments may be used in conjunction with appropriate classroom evidence at the stage of initial referral. Individual arrangements should be in place **before** any SQA assessments are undertaken, preferably no less than 4 weeks in advance.

EVIDENCE GATHERING PROCESS

- Evidence is gathered to support an application for each requested subject qualification during each SQA diet.
- Demonstration of the impact of the SLD is required at every level of SQA presentation and on a year-by-year basis, where the level of qualification has changed.
- Each SQA stage is considered as a new application for assessment arrangements.
- Evidence will be required to demonstrate the impact of the identified needs on the candidate's ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills being assessed.

It should be noted that in order for an application for assessment arrangements to be made in a subsequent year, there must be clear evidence that the difficulty continues to disadvantage the pupil in the assessment situation. In the event that the SLD no longer has an impact on a particular subject assessment, due to successful strategies being in place, or other circumstances, positive evidence will be made available to support the non-submission for that subject.

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

It is vital that assessment arrangements should be tailored as far as possible to meet the individual assessment needs of the candidates concerned.

In consultation with the Support for Learning department, pupils will trial a variety of methods of assessment, arriving at a decision as to what best suits their needs. The chosen method should be used for all identified subject assessments in school.

Once identified, pupil and parent(s)/guardian will be required to complete associated authorisation paperwork, agreeing to, or rejecting the proposed individual assessment arrangements. This will also authorise Dollar Academy to share details concerning the nature of the candidate's difficulty/disability with SQA.

Each candidate's assessment need must be considered in relation to the assessment being undertaken. As assessment arrangements vary, depending on the Course, a candidate's need for individual assessment arrangements may also vary. Although a candidate may need extra time in assessments which require extended written responses, his or her difficulties might not prove to be a barrier to demonstrating attainment in a practical assessment or in an assessment requiring short answers.

Examples of arrangements include:

- alternative accommodation
- extra time- % awarded according to level of need
- linguistic support eg using a reader or a scribe, or speech-to-text software
- rest periods/supervised breaks
- using ICT or digital question papers
- using a calculator in Non-calculator Papers in Mathematics
- signing in assessments
- assistance in aural assessments
- adapted assessment material for candidates with visual impairments
- assistance in practical assessments
- using a prompter
- transcription without correction
- referral of a script to the Principal Assessor
- bilingual dictionaries for candidates for whom English is an additional language

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Authentication is required in order to assure the Dollar Academy SQA coordinator and the Senior Staff Group that decisions to provide additional resources for individual assessment arrangements are justified, as well as for SQA to be consistent in their own judgements on proposals for arrangements.

A panel of staff will meet in Term 1 and Term 2, in advance of prelims each year to consider the evidence submitted for each candidate in application for individual assessment arrangements.

The panel will include the member of SSG responsible for SQA, the Head of Support for Learning and an impartial Head of Department. At this stage, applications will be checked against published SQA criteria and accepted or declined, as agreed by the panel.

Where a decision is not agreed, this will be submitted to a second member of SSG for review.

AUTHORISATION FOR REQUESTING INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The final stage of quality assurance is authorised by the member of SSG responsible for internal quality assurance, who can vouch for adherence to all internal QA systems, acknowledging that responsibilities have been met in terms of quality assuring the appropriateness of the request.

- Authorisation meetings are arranged in December of each year and again during the exam diet as required
- Applications are sampled from each year group to ensure compliance with internal quality assurance, SQA guidelines, fairness and consistency of awards
- Each application is signed by the responsible member of SSG in order to authorise the application

APPENDIX 1- TERMS IN MORE DETAIL

ADAPTED PAPERS

- Question paper printed on a specified colour – there are 6 SQA specified colours
- Standard large print question paper – this is the original question paper enlarged to 18pt, in standard SQA font, on A3 white paper
- Modified large print question paper – this is produced using the following sizes: 14pt; 18pt; 24pt; 36pt and 48pt; and in the following font styles: SQA Standard; Arial; or Comic Sans font. In addition, modified content may be requested and this involves simplifying visual complexity and layout and, where necessary, reducing visual content (while still meeting the same assessment objectives as the original paper)
- Braille question paper – this involves reducing visual complexity, where necessary, with the paper then being produced in Braille
- Raised diagrams – simple tactile diagrams are produced using heat expanded Minolta paper. These are supplied with Braille papers, but can also be supplied with a modified print paper
- Question paper with double line spacing

Adapted question papers in digital format Question papers in digital format allow candidates with reading and/or writing difficulties to utilise speech recognition technology and, where the format of the question paper is a question/answer book, complete their examinations on screen. In this way candidates can access and complete question papers independently.

Criteria for requesting Adapted Digital Question Papers Candidates must:

- have a relevant identified disability and/or additional support need (SLD)
- normally use ICT to access teaching materials and classroom assessments
- have had an opportunity to practise using digital past papers

In addition, there will be dedicated IT support available during the examination.

ICT

These guidelines are for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs.

For many disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, computers and other forms of assistive technology (including screen readers, voice recognition/activated systems) provide an effective means of communication. ICT can often allow candidates to demonstrate their attainment more effectively and independently than would be possible with support such as readers and scribes.

It is important, however, that where ICT is used, it is appropriate to candidates' needs and that there has been sufficient time and training to ensure that they are able to use it effectively.

Please note: Requests to use ICT/ WP facilities to undertake SQA examinations in cases where there is no identified difficulty, should be submitted to the SSG SQA co-ordinator for consideration.

EXTRA TIME

The amount of extra time requested should accurately reflect the candidate's needs. While the candidate will always have the option of using the extra time (or not), the overall use of extra time will be monitored and used to check the accuracy of the assessment of need.

THE USE OF A SCRIBE

The scribe must follow explicit instructions from the candidate with regard to spelling and the placement of diacritics, eg accents, umlauts, graves. This is because marks can only be awarded for the candidate's ability

to spell. If the spelling of a word indicates a particular tense, this would be important in marking, for example, if the candidate says 'passer', this sounds the same as 'passez', 'passé', 'passée', 'passés' – the candidate would need to spell out the correct one because the scribe cannot assume that the candidate knows how to spell the word using the correct tense.

For the same reason, transcription with correction and the use of a tape recorder are not allowed.

ASSISTANCE IN AURAL ASSESSMENTS

Any technological aid which amplifies (but does not distort) sound may be used in an aural assessment. An aural test, which is normally presented to candidates on CD, may be presented live to enable the candidate to lip-read. In a Modern Languages assessment the live presentation should, where possible, be given by someone whose first language is the language being assessed.

Where extra time is required for aural assessments, it may be possible to request a version of the assessment CD with extended pauses.

LINGUISTIC SUPPORT

Linguistic support is a general term which includes a number of arrangements which are designed to overcome a candidate's substantial difficulties in reading (for example, reading accuracy and/or reading speed) and in writing (for example, spelling, handwriting speed and/or legibility) where this is because of a disability/additional support need. Linguistic support can be permitted in both internal and external assessments.

The arrangements available include:

- ◆ the use of information and communication technology (ICT)
- ◆ a reader to read the assessment material to a candidate
- ◆ a scribe to write down verbatim a candidate's dictated responses
- ◆ the use of a tape recorder for a candidate to record responses
- ◆ transcription, with correction of spelling and punctuation, of a candidate's completed work
- ◆ transcription without any correction of a candidate's completed work

The use of linguistic support in the assessment of writing in Modern Languages and Gaelic

In the assessment of writing in these subjects, the overall quality of the written language, particularly spelling accuracy, is being assessed, therefore the use of some types of linguistic support is restricted. See SQA website. www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/AA_AssessmentArrangementsExplained.pdf

READERS

The use of a reader is allowed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with reading written communication, and who cannot decode written text independently.

A reader is a responsible person who reads text to a candidate. This may involve reading all instructions and questions to the candidate, or the candidate may request only certain questions or words to be read. The candidate may also ask that their responses are read back to them.

SCRIBES

The use of a scribe is allowed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with written communication, and who cannot produce written communication by any other means, eg ICT.

A scribe is a responsible person who writes down or word processes a candidate's dictated answers to the questions. This may involve scribing all the candidate's responses or the candidate may request only certain questions or words are scribed. The scribe cannot add refinements to the candidate's responses, but discretion may be used regarding spelling and punctuation.

TRANSCRIPTION WITH CORRECTION OF SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION

This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with written communication, but who need to write their responses because they are unable either to use ICT or dictate their responses.

TRANSCRIPTION WITHOUT CORRECTION

This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of those candidates who have illegible handwriting but who are unable to use ICT. The transcript may be handwritten or word-processed. If it is to be handwritten, the transcriber must have legible handwriting.

PRACTICAL HELPERS

A practical helper is a responsible person who carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the candidate. This is permitted for candidates who have difficulties that prevent them carrying out practical assessments safely and independently.

Approval to use this arrangement depends on the published assessment criteria and the degree of assistance provided by the practical helper

PROMPTERS

A prompter may be required where a candidate has little or no sense of time, or has concentration difficulties. The prompter may sit beside the candidate to keep their attention on the assessment.

Before the examination, the invigilator will be fully informed of the methods to be used to prompt the candidate. Methods can include verbal prompts, the use of cue cards, a tap on the desk. The invigilator must be informed of the method beforehand. If the invigilator has any concerns about the appropriateness of the prompt, this will be discussed immediately with SQA so it can be agreed before the assessment.

REFERRAL OF A SCRIPT TO THE PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR

In certain subjects, where the answers are in the form of an extended written response, candidates who have a substantial difficulty with written communication can have their examination scripts referred to the Principal Assessor (PA).

All scripts are marked against set criteria, and referring a script to the PA does not change this. For example, if marks are allocated for spelling, punctuation and grammar, all candidates will be subject to the same criteria, regardless of their particular difficulties. Referral to the PA is, though, useful for candidates whose scripts may be very difficult for a Marker to interpret.

The list of subjects where this arrangement is allowed is available on the SQA Assessment Arrangements Requests System. (Please note this list is subject to review.)

SCREEN READERS AND SPEECH RECOGNITION SOFTWARE

Learners who use ICT in assessments may also need assistive technology to allow them to access the assessment independently. Learners with reading, writing or spelling difficulties, a visual impairment or a physical difficulty may find it difficult to work with a human reader or scribe and prefer to do this using software.

Digital reading software and applications can be used by learners who are using ICT and a digital question paper.

Test-to speech software allows the learner to highlight text that they would like read aloud and for this to be converted into audio.

SEPARATE ACCOMMODATION

Separate accommodation is an arrangement for learners who need to complete an assessment in a separate room. This is particularly important for learners who have other arrangements (prompt, reader, scribe for example) which may cause a disturbance to other candidates.

There are two types of separate accommodation: individual accommodation and small group accommodation. It is important to consider the most suitable type of accommodation based on the availability of rooms and the level of disruption to other learners.

SUPERVISED BREAKS OR REST PERIODS

Rest periods and supervised breaks are permitted either inside or outside the assessment room. The time taken for the break does not count towards the time allowed for the assessment.

It is the responsibility of the SQA co-ordinator to arrange supervision of the candidate when they are out of the room.

APPENDIX 2 - INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

Updated information explaining how assessment arrangements work and some examples of the arrangements that are available can be found on the following link:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/103011.11854.html>

Some additional guidance which you may find helpful is below:

ADAPTED QUESTION PAPERS IN DIGITAL FORMAT

- You need to know how to enter your personal details.
- You need to know how to access/read the digital paper, and how to insert answers and save files.
- You will be provided with a print copy of the question paper in addition to the digital paper.
- You may use this paper copy for questions requiring any drawing or handwritten work, eg Mathematics.
- When your work is printed and your centre is satisfied with the hard copy, all material saved on the hard drive will be deleted.
- *Remember: Save your work*

WORKING WITH A READER

- You will have had practice using a reader before the assessment.
- The reader will make sure that you are clear about his/her exact role. For example, your reader may say 'I can only read what I am asked to read, I cannot explain anything to you, but I can read things as many times as you like.'
- Before you start, or during a practice session, your reader will decide with you which side to sit on so that you are both comfortable.
- During the assessment you can read some parts of the assessment yourself and have others read to you.
- You must study any diagrams, graphs, or pictures yourself. You can ask your reader to read out any text or captions in them.
- You should tell your reader the instructions, questions or parts of questions you wish to have read. (If you are allowed a dictionary, you can ask your reader to look something up for you and read it.)
- Your reader can also read back your answers to you.

- Your reader can only read the exact wording of the paper, and cannot give meanings of words, rephrase questions, or interpret anything for you.
- An exam invigilator may need to be positioned beside your reader.

WORKING WITH A SCRIBE

- You will have had practice using a scribe before the assessment.
- Your scribe will make sure that you are absolutely clear about their role in the assessment.
- Before you start, or during a practice session, decide which side your scribe should sit on so you are both comfortable.
- During the assessment you can write some responses and dictate others if you like, and you might also want to write or draw something extra. This will be submitted to SQA with your script.
- You must produce any diagrams, maps or graphs by yourself. If you are unable to draw these, your scribe may be allowed to assist, but only if this has been agreed with SQA beforehand.
- An exam invigilator may need to be positioned beside your scribe.

USING A PRACTICAL HELPER

Things you should know:

- Your helper should know the subject and assessment, but will not have any personal interest in your success.
- Your helper will carry out your instructions exactly as you give them (unless to do so would cause a hazard).
- Your helper will not be able to give you any factual help or tell you what you have to do.
- If your helper does not understand your instructions, they might ask you to explain them further.
- Your helper might not need to help you throughout the whole assessment, as there may be parts of the assessment that you can do without help.
- You should have been using a helper during your Course, and you should know how to work with your helper in an exam.

WORKING WITH A PROMPTER

- Your prompter will normally be someone you know, but he/she cannot be a relative or close friend.
- Before the exam, agree with the prompter how he/she will prompt you and where they will sit.
- During the exam, the prompter will only draw your attention back to the task, and will not be able to explain any questions to you.

APPENDIX 3 - INFORMATION FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL

INFORMATION FOR READERS: WHAT TO DO (AND WHAT NOT TO DO)

You should ensure that the candidate is clear about your exact role in the assessment. For example, you may say 'I can only read what you ask me to read. I cannot explain anything to you, but I can read things as many times as you like.'

Before you start, you should decide, with the candidate, which side to sit on so that you are both comfortable.

You must only:

- read as requested by the candidate. Candidates will indicate to you those instructions, questions or parts of questions they wish to have read. When a dictionary is allowed, you may consult this at the candidate's request and read out entries
- read the exact wording (instructions and questions) of the question paper. You must not give meanings of words, rephrase, or interpret anything

You must not:

- direct the candidate in any way, eg when to move on to another question

Remember: If asked to, you can read back the candidate's answers.

Candidates should have the option of reading some parts of the assessment themselves and having others read to them. Although the candidate should study and interpret any diagrams, graphs or pictorial material themselves, they can ask you to read out any text associated with such material.

A separate invigilator is required when a reader is used and the invigilator may need to be positioned alongside you. You should discuss this with the invigilator before the start of the assessment.

You must refer any problems in communication (or any doubt you might have over any other matter) during the assessment to the invigilator.

INFORMATION FOR PRACTICAL HELPERS: WHAT TO DO (AND WHAT NOT TO DO)

You should:

- be familiar with the requirements of the subject and assessment, but you must not have any personal interest in the success of the candidate or be a relative or a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject
- carry out instructions exactly as they are given, unless to do so would cause a hazard. Do not give factual help or make suggestions regarding what has to be undertaken. If you do not understand the candidate's instructions, you may ask for clarification
- aim to ensure that the candidate is not substantially disadvantaged by their difficulty, but you must not provide the candidate with an unfair advantage. The object is to enable a true assessment of the candidate's attainment to be made without the Unit or Course requirements being significantly compromised

Assistance may not be required throughout the whole assessment, as there may be parts of the assessment that the candidate can do without help.

Any problems arising during a practical assessment must be referred immediately to the invigilator or the teacher/lecturer in charge.

INFORMATION FOR SCRIBES: WHAT TO DO (AND WHAT NOT TO DO)

You should ensure that the candidate is clear about your exact role in the assessment. For example, you may say, 'I can only write what you dictate to me. I cannot explain anything to you, but you can tell me to change anything I have written.'

Before you start, decide, along with the candidate, which side to sit on so that you both comfortable.

You should ensure you are familiar with any technical terms (including place names, names of characters in literary texts, etc) the candidate is likely to use.

You must only record responses exactly as they are dictated by the candidate. You may use your discretion regarding spelling and punctuation, except Modern Languages. You may read back what you have written when asked to do so by the candidate.

You must not:

- give any advice regarding which questions to answer, which order the questions should be answered in, etc
- add refinements to the candidate's responses
- produce any diagrammatical or graphical material – if the candidate is unable to draw maps, graphs, diagrams etc, you may be allowed to assist, but this must have been agreed beforehand with SQA

Remember: The candidate can write some responses and dictate others.

A separate invigilator is required when a scribe is used, and the invigilator may need to be positioned beside you. You should discuss this with the invigilator before the start of the assessment.

You must refer any problems in communication (or in any other matter) that arise during the assessment to the invigilator.

INFORMATION FOR PROMPTERS: WHAT TO DO (AND WHAT NOT TO DO)

Normally, you will be familiar enough with the candidate to know the difference between a real attention lapse and periods of thinking. You should not, though, be a close friend or relative of the candidate.

Before the exam you should:

- agree with the candidate where you should sit, and the method you will use to bring back his/her attention, eg light tap on the desk, use of a cue card

During the exam you should:

- only draw the candidate's attention back to the assessment task – you do not need to be in a position to read the candidate's responses

If any problems arise during the examination, speak to the invigilator.

Remember, in all cases, the invigilator is there to ensure that the correct procedures are followed, and that the assessment process is fair and valid. The invigilator should be fully informed of the method you will use to regain the candidate's attention.