



# Providing Services to Candidates with Special Needs

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香港考試及評核局  
Hong Kong  
Examinations and  
Assessment Authority

## Introduction

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) is dedicated to providing reliable and equitable examination and assessment services. For candidates with special needs (such as candidates with disabilities), special examination arrangements can be made for them. The provision of such services allows these candidates to be equitably assessed under suitable conditions without having an unfair advantage over other candidates.

Candidates' disabilities can roughly be categorised into physical, visual, aural, oral, specific learning disabilities and others (e.g. autism, Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder). Depending on the nature and severity of their disabilities, candidates are given special arrangements in an examination in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) and Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination, including exemption from part of an examination.

Applications for special examination arrangements are processed by the Committee on Special Needs Candidates and the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Public Examinations Board.

## When to Apply

### **School Candidates**

- Candidates should submit applications in September two years before the examination year via their schools (i.e. HKDSE candidates should submit their applications in September of the S5 school year). For candidates whose conditions of disabilities are unstable, they may submit applications in September in the year preceding the examination.
- For HKALE candidates who are studying S7 or HKDSE candidates studying S6 in the 2011-12 school year, in case they have not submitted applications before, they should do so in September of the school year via their schools.

### **Private Candidates**

- Private candidates should submit applications during the examination registration period.

Applications submitted after the application deadline will normally not be accepted. The application deadline is indicated in the Application Guide.

## Documentation Requirements

- All applications should be supported by an up-to-date medical / assessment report, valid throughout the examination period, issued by the Hospital Authority, Department of Health, Education Bureau, a registered medical practitioner or a professional (e.g. audiologist, speech therapist, psychologist) in accordance with the requirements stated in the Application Guide.
- Schools should provide information on the special arrangements made for the candidates in the school internal examinations. Recommendations on the special arrangements in the public examinations should also be stated in the applications.

## Processing Procedures

- Applications from candidates with specific learning disabilities are considered by the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities; other applications are considered by the Committee on Special Needs Candidates.
- Candidates should indicate the special examination arrangements they require in the applications. In considering the special examination arrangements, the type of special needs, severity of the disabilities and the requests of the candidates will be given due consideration.
- The HKEAA will issue an acknowledgement to the school / private candidate on receipt of an application.
- Candidates asking for extra time allowance (ETA) due to difficulties in writing arising from motor function problems have to take a speed test arranged by the HKEAA for consideration of the requests for ETA.

## Notification of Results

The results in writing will be released to the schools and the candidates by the end of January of the school year of application.

## Appeal

- Candidates who are not satisfied with the results of their applications may apply for review within 4 weeks after the release of application results. Applications for review must be made in writing and supported with additional justifications and / or documentary evidence.
- Applications for review are processed by an independent "Appeal Panel for Special Needs Candidates". Appellants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review by mid-March of the same year.

## Special Examination Arrangements

Depending on the nature and severity of their disabilities, candidates may be given the following special arrangements in an examination:

### **Extended examination time**

- Extra time allowance may be given for answering questions.
- One or more short breaks may be provided during an examination.
- Prolonged and / or additional pauses may be given during listening tests.
- Preparation and / or examination time may be extended for oral examinations.

### **Ancillary aids**

- Candidates with visual disabilities may be allowed to use their own ancillary aids (e.g. Braille, magnifiers).
- Candidates with aural disabilities may use their own hearing aids.
- Some candidates, depending on the severity of their disabilities, may be allowed to use the computer (as a typewriter) in answering questions. Candidates must provide evidence to support this need. Schools should provide the computer facilities for their candidates in the public examinations. Please refer to the Application Guide for details.

### **Special arrangements for question papers and answering questions**

- Candidates may be provided with Braille or enlarged question papers.
- For multiple-choice (MC) papers, candidates may be allowed to write their answers on the answer sheets, or fill in MC answer sheets with larger boxes, or circle the MC answers on the question papers.
- Some candidates, depending on the severity of their disabilities, may be allowed to use screen readers in designated examinations to read out the question papers. Candidates must provide evidence to support this need. Schools should provide the computer facilities (including the text-to-speech software) for their candidates in the public examinations. Please refer to the Application Guide for details.

## Special Examination Centres

### Special assistance in examination centres

- In practical examinations, invigilation staff may help candidates to handle laboratory equipment.
- For candidates with aural disabilities, a teacher from their schools may be allowed to be present at the examination centre to assist in the verbal communication between the invigilators and the candidates.
- In oral examinations, candidates concerned are given sufficient time to respond to questions. Examiners may repeat the questions or instructions where necessary and take into consideration the candidates' oral disabilities when making the assessment.

**Candidates being given special arrangements in school internal examinations will NOT automatically be given special examination arrangements or similar arrangements in public examinations.**

- Candidates who are given extended examination time, or require the use of Braille / enlarged question papers or special answer sheets / books are arranged to sit for the examination at a special examination centre.
- Special examination centres are normally set up in secondary schools (most are classrooms in secondary schools while a few are secondary school halls). Examination procedures in special examination centres are the same as those in other centres. However, extra invigilators are available to offer assistance to candidates if necessary.
- Examination rooms in a special examination centre are usually accessible by lifts or on the same floor as the main entrance.

If a candidate is exempted from part of an examination, an assessed result will be given for the exempted part based on the candidate's performance in the other parts of the examination sat. The exemption granted will be indicated on the candidate's certificate but the reason for granting the exemption and the special arrangements made will not be reported.

The Authority will provide other necessary arrangements to meet the special needs of candidates (e.g. hospitalisation). Hospitalised candidates applying to take the examination in the hospital must obtain the doctor's written permission. The application must be submitted with the necessary documents at least 24 hours before the examination.

**If a candidate was given special examination arrangements / exemption in a previous examination and wishes to have special arrangements in the current examination, he / she has to submit a fresh application.** The same arrangements / exemption will normally be made when he / she repeats the examination, provided that the candidate's conditions of disabilities remain unchanged.

## Exemption from Part of an Examination

## Other Special Examination Arrangements

## Repeaters

## Enquiries

### School Examinations and Assessment Division Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

12/F Southorn Centre, 130 Hennessy Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

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For the Application Guide and application methods, please visit [www.hkeaa.edu.hk](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk).