

Providing Services to Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities

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香港考試及評核局
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Examinations and
Assessment Authority

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) may make special examination arrangements for candidates with special needs. A leaflet "*Providing Services to Candidates with Special Needs*" has been published to set out the general application guidelines and procedures, as well as the special examination arrangements available in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE).

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) refers to severe problems in reading and writing (i.e. Dyslexia). The HKEAA has set up the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with SLD to consider the applications from candidates with SLD. Members of the Task Group come from the Education Bureau, Department of Health, secondary schools, tertiary institutions, parent representatives and the HKEAA Secretariat. This leaflet aims to provide some guidelines to assist candidates with SLD and their schools in making their applications for special examination arrangements.

Documentation Requirements

The following information / documents should be attached to the application:

- An *Assessment Report* form, duly completed by a qualified educational / clinical psychologist with professional practice training and the applicant's school head (the candidate and his / her parent should also sign on the *Assessment Report* form). The *Assessment Report* form serves to provide information on the severity of the candidate's specific learning disability and evidence of the extent to which the candidate is disadvantaged because of his / her disability.
- A psychological assessment report, issued within 4 years from the examination year, giving assessment of the candidate's reading and writing abilities. The assessment tool used by the psychologist should be one with Hong Kong norms to substantiate the diagnosis of SLD (please refer to the Application Guide for details).
- Record of provisions made by the candidate's school in internal examinations.

Candidates who have been given special examination arrangements in a previous HKDSE, HKCEE or HKALE due to SLD are not required to submit updated psychological assessment reports with their current applications if they apply for the same special examination arrangements.



Special Examination Arrangements

For candidates who meet the diagnostic criteria of SLD (Dyslexia), depending on the nature and severity of their disability, their history of special provisions in school, and recommendations from the psychologist and school, special examination arrangements may be made as appropriate.

Special examination arrangements for candidates with SLD may include:

Time allowance

Additional examination time may be allowed if supporting evidence is provided. Normally, a 25% extended time allowance will be granted for written papers and 15% for multiple-choice papers. Longer time allowance may be permitted only in exceptional cases with justifications.

Supervised breaks

Supervised breaks will be given to candidates with time allowance. Depending on individual needs, schools / candidates may choose whether or not to have breaks. Supervised breaks are only applicable to examinations lasting 90 minutes or more. Normally, a 5-minute break for every 45 minutes of examination will be given. Additional breaks may be permitted only in exceptional cases with justifications.

Special format of question papers

Question papers with one-sided printing or enlarged print (black and white), or ivory-colour question papers may be provided to candidates.

Special answer books / sheets

Candidates may be permitted to present their answers in a special manner, such as writing on alternate lines or pages of an answer book, circling the multiple-choice answers on a question paper instead of filling in the boxes on an answer sheet. Special answer sheets with wider line spacing may be provided upon request at special centres.

Special arrangements in examination centres

Candidates with special examination arrangements will be allocated to special centres. Special examination centres are normally set up in secondary schools (mostly classrooms with a few school halls). Depending on the special needs of the candidate, he / she may also be assigned special seating (e.g. near the front or back of the examination room). Depending on the supply of special centres in various districts, candidates may not be arranged to take the examination in their chosen examination district.

Other special arrangements

Use of a screen reader

If the word reading ability of a candidate with SLD in the first language has been assessed on a standardised test with relevant norm by a professional and the test results indicate that he / she has severe word reading difficulties, he / she may be allowed to use a screen reader in designated examinations to read out the question papers. This arrangement is not applicable to examinations testing candidates' reading comprehension skills. The school should provide exam venue and computer facilities (including the text-to-speech software) for the candidate in the public examination. Private candidates have to provide their own computer with the relevant software. Please refer to the Application Guide for details.

Use of speech-to-text software

If the writing ability of a candidate with SLD in the first language has been assessed on a standardised test with relevant norm by a professional and the test results indicate that he / she has severe writing difficulties, he / she may be allowed to use speech-to-text software (a built-in function in MacBook Air) in the examinations to answer the questions. The school should provide exam venue, computer facilities and Chinese character input method (if applicable) for the candidate in the public examination. Functions other than word processing should be disabled before the public examination. Private candidates have to provide their own computer with the relevant software. The provision is applicable to Liberal Studies and seven elective subjects. Please refer to the Application Guide for details.

Use of a computer to input answer (not including speech-to-text software)

Use of a computer instead of handwriting may be considered for the following candidates:

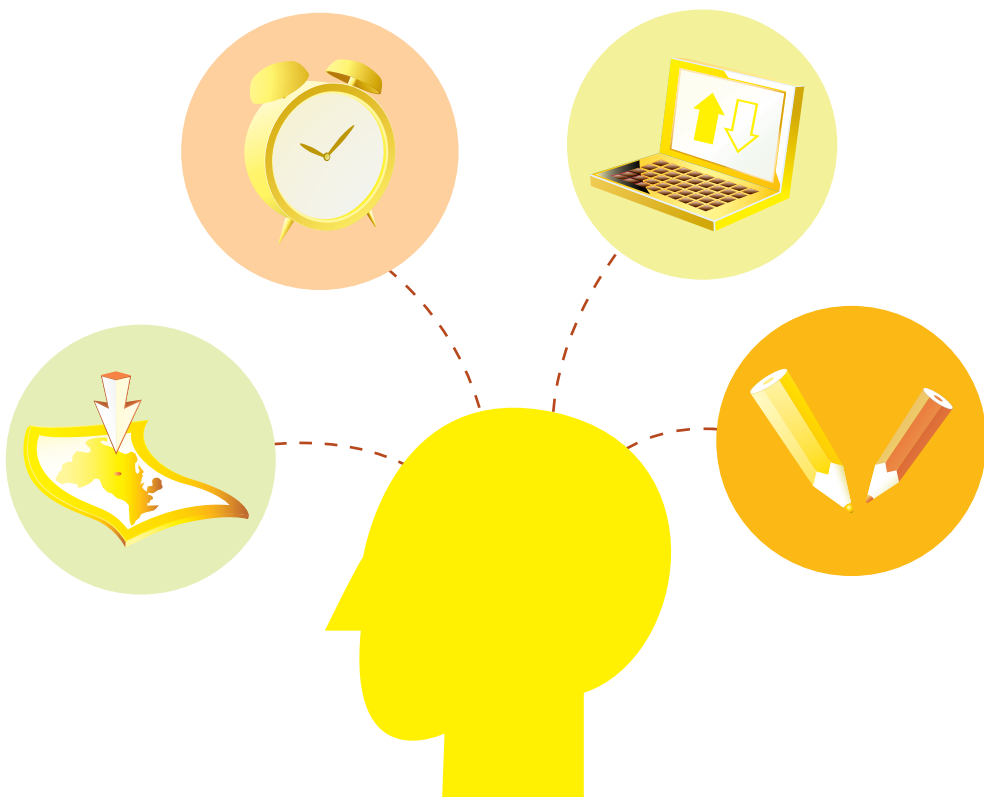
- candidates with illegible handwriting – schools should provide at least a copy of the candidates' handwritten Chinese and English composition work in a recent internal test or examination for the consideration of the Task Group.
- candidates with extremely slow handwriting speed – reports from occupational therapists / medical practitioners should be submitted as supporting evidence for the consideration of the Task Group.

If a candidate requires the use of a computer due to other reasons, the reasons should be specified on the application form with supporting documents provided.

If a candidate is allowed to use a computer (i.e. word processor) to type the answers, the computer should only be used as a type-writer. Access to the Internet or functions such as calculation, spell-check, grammar-check, translation, thesauri and "displaying related terms" in Chinese character input are not allowed. The school should provide the computer facilities for the candidate in the public examination. Private candidates have to provide their own computer with the relevant software.

Other special arrangements may be considered on an individual basis, provided that sufficient evidence in support of the candidate's request is submitted, and the requested arrangements are practicable in a public examination setting without any unfair advantage over other candidates or violation of the assessment objectives.

Special arrangements in public examinations will be made for candidates who meet the diagnostic criteria of SLD. Candidates being given special arrangements in school internal examinations will NOT automatically be given similar special examination arrangements in public examinations. If candidates do not receive special examination arrangements in school due to extenuating circumstances, they should provide documentary evidence for consideration by the Task Group on Special Examination Arrangements for Candidates with SLD.



Repeaters

Candidates who have been given special examination arrangements in a previous examination due to SLD **must submit a fresh application for special examination arrangements when repeating the examination.** The same arrangements will normally be granted when he / she repeats the examination, provided that the candidate's condition of reading and writing difficulties remains unchanged.

For the Application Guide and application methods, please visit the Authority's website at www.hkeaa.edu.hk.

Enquiries

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