



Providing Services to Candidates with Specific Learning Disabilities

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The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) is dedicated to providing equitable, reliable and valid examination and assessment services. Special examination arrangements (SEAs) can be made available in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) for candidates with specific learning disabilities (SLD). The provision of such services allows these candidates to be equitably assessed under suitable conditions without having an unfair advantage over other candidates.

SLD refers to severe problems in reading and writing (i.e. Dyslexia). The HKEAA has set up the Committee on Candidates with SLD (the Committee) to consider the applications from candidates with SLD. Members of the Committee 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 SEAs.

Regarding the SEAs for other candidates with special needs, please refer to the leaflet on *Providing Services to Candidates with Special Needs*.

Documentation Requirements

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

- A psychological assessment report, issued by a qualified educational psychologist (EP)/clinical psychologist (CP) with professional practice training, within four years from the public examination, or with the date of assessment not earlier than S3. The assessment tool used by the psychologist should be one with Hong Kong norms to substantiate the diagnosis of SLD. The qualified EP/CP may submit a progress review report for cases previously assessed to have SLD, as deemed appropriate. Please refer to the *Application Guide* for details.
- Record/information of provisions of SEAs made by the candidate's school in internal examinations.

Candidates who have been given SEAs in a previous HKDSE, Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) or Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) due to SLD are not required to submit updated psychological assessment reports with their current applications if they apply for the same provisions.

Special Examination Arrangements

For candidates who meet the diagnostic criteria of SLD (Dyslexia), depending on the nature and severity of their disability, their provisions of SEAs in school internal examinations, and recommendations from the psychologist and school, SEAs may be made for candidates with SLD in the public examination as appropriate.

Extra time allowance (ETA)

Additional examination time may be allowed if supporting evidence is provided. Normally, a 25% extended time allowance will be granted for written papers and multiple-choice papers and 5% for Visual Arts Paper 1B and Paper 2B. Please refer to the *Application Guide* for details.

Supervised breaks

Supervised breaks will be given to candidates with ETA. 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.

Special arrangements for question papers and answering questions

- Question papers with one-sided printing or enlarged print (black and white), or ivory colour question papers may be provided to candidates.
- 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, or using special answer sheets with wider line spacing.



Special arrangements in examination centres

Candidates with SEAs 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.



Ancillary aids

Use of a computer to input answer (excluding 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 Committee.
- candidates with extremely slow handwriting speed - reports from occupational therapists/medical practitioners should be submitted as supporting evidence for the consideration of the Committee.

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 (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 examination venue and computer facilities for the candidate in the public examination. Private candidates have to provide their own computer with the relevant software.

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 examination 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 some designated subjects. Please refer to the *Application Guide* for details.

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 examination 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.



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.

SEAs in the public examination 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 SEAs in the public examination. If candidates do not receive special arrangements in school internal examinations due to extenuating circumstances, they should provide documentary evidence for consideration by the Committee.



Repeaters

Candidates who have been given SEAs in a previous examination due to SLD **must submit a fresh application for SEAs 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/en/Candidates/special_needs_candidates/hkdse.html

Enquiries

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

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

Telephone: 3628 8917

Email: dse@hkeaa.edu.hk

Website: www.hkeaa.edu.hk