



Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations





RACE Scheme - An Overview

- What is RACE and principles for assessing eligibility
- Accommodations
- Criteria on grounds of Learning Difficulty (and some common problems)
- Reactivations
- Testing (and Testing issues)
- Quality Assurance Programme





EXAMINATIONS and RACE





General Principles for Schools in Assessing Eligibility

The assessment of eligibility must be based on appropriate evidence of need

- NO SURPRISES – for School or Student
- RACE as part of a continuum of support – provided for students with identified needs already receiving support
- RACE arrangements reflective of school support – *normal way of working*
- Student needs to “practice” with RACE supports before the examinations
- If RACE is needed but no supports being provided then what supports will be provided?





Accommodations available under the category of Learning Difficulty....

- A **reading assistant**, who, on request, read occasional words or phrases from the examination paper to the candidate without elaboration or explanation. The vast majority of candidate's needs will be met through the provision of reading assistance, delivered by a reader shared in a small examination centre between 2-4 candidates.
- An **exam reading pen** which can be used by the candidate to scan the examination paper. It converts the text to speech which candidates can listen to using ear-phones. Candidates may have reading assistance for any subject that is not compatible with an exam reading pen.
- An **individual reader**, who, on request, will read the entire or any part of the examination paper to the candidates without elaboration or explanation. On the basis that a shared reader will be appropriate to the needs of most candidates individual readers should be recommended on an exceptional basis only based on the educational needs of candidates
- A **word processor or recording device** to record the candidate's responses or, in very exceptional circumstances, access to a **scribe**.
- A **waiver** from the assessment of spelling, punctuation and certain elements of grammar in language subjects.

(See Section 5.1.1 Learning Difficulty page 15, from RACE Instructions for Schools 2023)





Eligibility Criteria for Reading Accommodations



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta
Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational
Psychological Service

READING ASSISTANCE/EXAM READING PEN /INDIVIDUAL READER

Appropriate evidence of the candidate's level of need as detailed in section 2 of the application form

AND

A standard score of 85 or less on a recommended test of word reading (i.e. reading accuracy not comprehension)

AND EITHER

A reading accuracy error rate of 7% or more on examination papers at the appropriate level

A reading speed of 89 words or less per minute on examination papers at the appropriate level

(See Pages 42- 45 in RACE – Instructions for Schools 2023)





Points to note re. Reading Accommodations ...

Common problems observed by SEC in previous years included:

- Text not being read from a second subject
- Text being read at the incorrect level
- Excess number of words being read
- Errors not calculated/recorded
- Test instructions not adhered to

In the 2023 Instructions for Schools document, page 44, SEC have specified that:

“If speed of reading is the issue for a candidate, the duration of test of the reading speed should not exceed 10 minutes”

and

“In all tests candidates should read at their normal speed”





Eligibility Criteria for Writing Accommodations

WAIVER FROM THE ASSESSMENT OF SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND CERTAIN ELEMENTS of GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

Appropriate evidence of the candidate's level of need as detailed in section 2 of the application form

AND

*A standard score of **85 or less** on an approved test of spelling*

AND

*Spelling/grammar/punctuation error rate of **8% or more** in scripts written in the language of the school under examination conditions*

(See Appendix C – Page 83 RACE – Instructions for Schools 2023)





Eligibility Criteria for Writing Accommodations (cont.)

Use of a Word Processor or Recording Device:

Two separate eligibility categories exist for this accommodation:

1. Quality of Written Work
2. Speed of Writing

(page 47 RACE Instructions for Schools 2023)





Eligibility Criteria for Writing Accommodations (cont.)

WORD PROCESSOR/RECORDING DEVICE – QUALITY OF WRITTEN WORK

Appropriate evidence of the candidate's level of need as detailed in section 2 of the application form

AND

*A standard score of **85 or less** on an approved test of spelling*

AND

*Spelling/grammar/punctuation error rate of **20% or more** in scripts written in the language of the school under examination conditions*

(See Appendix C – Page 83 RACE – Instructions for Schools 2023)





Eligibility Criteria for Writing Accommodations (cont.)

WORD PROCESSOR/RECORDING DEVICE – SPEED OF WRITING

Appropriate evidence of the candidate's level of need as detailed in section 2 of the application form

AND

*A standard score of **85 or less** on an approved test of spelling*

AND

*Spelling/grammar/punctuation error rate of **8% or more** in scripts written in the language of the school under examination conditions*

(See Appendix C – Page 83 RACE – Instructions for Schools 2023)

AND

Speed of writing of less than 12 words per minute





Eligibility Criteria for Writing Accommodations (cont.)



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Department of Education

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta
Síceolaíochta Oideachais
National Educational
Psychological Service

SCRIBE – WORD PROCESSOR/RECORDING DEVICE NOT SUITABLE DUE TO PHYSICAL OR SPEECH DIFFICULTIES

The candidate already meets the eligibility criteria for access to the use of a word processor or recording device as set out at Section 9.1.3 Category 1 or 2

AND

The candidate's physical and speech difficulties render the use of a recording device or word processor unsuitable

SCRIBE – WORD PROCESSOR/RECORDING DEVICE NOT SUITABLE IN CERTAIN SUBJECTS

The candidate already meets the eligibility criteria for access to the use of a word processor or recording device as set out at Section 9.1.3 Category 1 or 2

AND

The use of the device in question is not possible or is particularly difficult in the case of the specific examination (e.g. Mathematics)





Points to note re. Writing Accommodations ...

Common problems observed by SEC in previous years included:

- Lack of supporting evidence
- Photocopies of samples of work submitted (making it difficult to identify errors)
- Some applications for access to a Scribe being made on grounds of “*choice*”
- Test instructions not adhered to





Reactivation of an Accommodation:

Accommodations that were provided at Junior Cycle will be reactivated at Leaving Certificate subject to confirmation by the school authority of an identified and continuing need. Further testing at Senior Cycle is not required.

(See page 7 and page 33 from RACE Instructions for Schools 2023)





Testing:

The list of appropriate tests for use has been updated in accordance with Circular letter 0067/2020 (see page 41-42). Please note that a test to establish a candidate's standard score in reading or spelling and writing, must be administered on an individual basis.





Testing for Reading Accommodations:

- Wide Range Achievement Test 5 (WRAT-5) **or**
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III) **or**
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Test 3rd Edition **or**
- Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement **or**
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis 3rd Edition (DRA 3) **or**
- Adult Reading Test 2nd Edition (ART 2)





Testing for Writing Accommodations:

- Wide Range Achievement Test 5 (WRAT-5) **or**
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT III) **or**
- Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Achievement **or**
- SPaRCS Test





Testing for Speed of Handwriting:

- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting 2007 for Age Range 9 to 16:11 (www.pearsonclinical.co.uk)
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting 2011 for Age Range 17 to 25 (www.pearsonclinical.co.uk)





Testing Issues:

Great care should be taken to ensure that all tests are carried out correctly, with a particular emphasis placed on the following:

- Use of publisher's record sheets
- Correct calculation of chronological age
- Adherence to test administration instructions (including basal and ceiling points)
- Meticulous attention to the calculation of raw scores, and subsequent conversion to standard scores

(RACE Instructions for Schools 2023 - Page 41)





Quality Assurance Programme

Applications will be subject to central quality assurance checks during and following the application process.

Schools may be selected for QA based on a number of factors, including:

- school size
- category and volume of applications
- compliance with deadlines
- late applications
- referral of complex cases
- recommendations for individual special centres
- random selection
- etc.



*All details, and more,
of this presentation are
contained in the SEC
Instructions for Schools
document available online
at:*

www.examinations.ie

