



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities

Adopted by DAWN November, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities is the outcome of work undertaken by the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) in developing standardised assessment procedures for students with disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland. DAWN represents those staff of all Universities, a number of Institutes of Technology, NCAD and NCI, with responsibility for the provision of support to students with disabilities (see Appendix 1). Through this collaboration DAWN hopes to achieve consistency in the standard and delivery of reasonable accommodations in examinations and assessments across the Higher Education sector.

The purpose of this document is to support Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in developing policies and procedures that ensure students with disabilities are treated fairly and equitably in the examination process, thereby allowing them to compete on an equal footing with their peers and to demonstrate their true knowledge and competency.

This document replaces the original Policy on Examination and Assessment Accommodations for Students with Disabilities that was published by DAWN in 2008, and the earlier guidelines on reasonable accommodations in examinations that were published by AHEAD in 2001¹. A working group, chaired by Maynooth University and comprising representatives from CIT, DCU, TCD, UL, UCC and UCD, was established to comprehensively review the original policy (see Appendix 2). The working group conducted extensive research into examination and assessment accommodations for students with disabilities in second level and in Higher Education in Ireland and abroad. The National Educational Psychological Service and the Psychological Society of Ireland were represented on the working group and the State Examinations Commission provided a detailed written submission. The working group met from December 2011 to June 2012. The recommendations of the working group were presented to DAWN on 27th June 2012 for discussion and a final document, incorporating the recommendations of the working group and the views of the wider group, was provisionally adopted on 16th November 2012. A legal opinion was subsequently sought from the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs in University College Cork and the final policy was adopted by DAWN on 8th November 2013.

¹ AHEAD, 2001, *Examination Arrangement for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Institutions of Higher Education*, Dublin, AHEAD Education Press.

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Section One:

Policy for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities

1. General Principles

- 1.1 National University of Ireland, Maynooth ('Maynooth University' or 'the University') is committed to ensuring, as far as possible and within the framework of current legislative requirements, that students with disabilities have equality of access to and participation in examinations and assessments procedures. This includes University scheduled examinations and any other examinations that contribute to module or course results.
- 1.2 Maynooth University is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities will be enabled to demonstrate their knowledge and competency on an equal footing with their peers.
- 1.3 For the purpose of this document reasonable accommodations are defined as those actions that enable students to demonstrate their true knowledge and ability in examinations without changing the demands of the examination. The intention behind the provision of such accommodations is to alleviate a substantial disadvantage without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- 1.4 The granting of reasonable accommodations will not put the integrity or status of the examination or assessment at risk, and will ensure fairness to all students.
- 1.5 Since a core principle of examinations is to ensure equitable treatment for all candidates, arrangements should not give the candidate for whom they are made an advantage over other candidates.
- 1.6 Reasonable accommodations should support students to become more independent in their learning.
- 1.7 Ultimate responsibility for ensuring equality of access in examinations and assessments lies with Maynooth University, although a number of administrative units and academic departments may be involved in coordinating reasonable accommodations.
- 1.8 For the purpose of this document the definition of disability is that encompassed by the Equal Status Acts 2000-2011 (as amended from time to time) and the policy adopted through this document will apply to any student

who may be regarded as having a disability under those Acts (see Appendix 3).

- 1.9 This document is applicable only to those students with a permanent or long-term disability, that is, a disability that is likely to last longer than one year.

2. Policy on Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations

2.1 Provision of Reasonable Accommodations

- 2.1.1 A Needs Assessment is carried out with all students who register with the Disability Office to determine the level of support required in college, including reasonable accommodations for examinations.
- 2.1.2 This document provides guidelines for determining when reasonable accommodations may be appropriate in examinations. The actual need for a particular accommodation is determined through the need assessment process, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.
- 2.1.3 Students with disabilities who received reasonable accommodations in Irish state examinations, other institutions and/ or jurisdictions will only be granted reasonable accommodations on completion of a Needs Assessment with Maynooth University.
- 2.1.4 Reasonable accommodations should not be provided without prior consultation with the Disability Office.
- 2.1.5 Reasonable accommodations may be reviewed with each student annually. Students who fail to use a reasonable accommodation that has been granted will have that accommodation reviewed.

2.2 Availing of Reasonable Accommodations

- 2.2.1 Students with disabilities must register with the Disability Office and complete a Needs Assessment to avail of reasonable accommodations in examinations.
- 2.2.2 Students with disabilities must provide appropriate supporting documentation from an accepted Medical Consultant or Specialist as outlined on access.nuim.ie/disability
- 2.2.3 It is the student's responsibility to inform Maynooth University of any changes to his/ her disability which may require new or revised accommodations. Changes to examination accommodations are only approved following an updated Needs Assessment with the Disability Office.
- 2.2.4 Where assistive technology has been deemed suitable as part of the needs assessment process, it is the preferred accommodation for examinations unless the student is unable to use the recommended technology due to the nature of his/her disability.
- 2.2.5 Students with disabilities who require specialist examination supports such as assistive technology or a reader/ scribe must attend training in the use of such accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to be proficient in the use of any accommodations that are provided for examinations.

2.3 Notification of Reasonable Accommodations

- 2.3.1 On completion of the needs assessment students with disabilities will be notified of the support that will be provided in college, including reasonable accommodations that have been granted for examinations.
- 2.3.2 The Examinations Office is responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations in University scheduled examinations. The Disability Office is responsible for making information on those accommodations available to students with disabilities.
- 2.3.3 Academic departments are responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations in in-class assessments. The Disability Office is responsible for making information on those accommodations available to students with disabilities.

2.3.4 It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office to ensure that all announcements or amendments by lecturers are conveyed to all students with disabilities sitting university-scheduled examinations in separate examination venues.

2.4 Disclosure of Reasonable Accommodations

2.4.1 The provision of reasonable accommodations in examinations will be made known to the relevant academic, administrative and examination staff.

2.4.2 Use of alternative examination arrangements may affect the anonymity of the student.

2.4.3 Marking Guidelines apply to students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty. Academic departments are responsible for ensuring that Marking Guidelines are applied where appropriate (see section 3.4).

3 Guidelines for Granting Reasonable Accommodations

3.1 Alternative Venues

Students with disabilities receiving reasonable accommodations normally sit their university-scheduled examinations in a different venue to their peer group. These venues are normally shared with other students. Only in exceptional circumstances will a student with a disability sit an examination in a room of their own.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Alternative Venues for Examinations.

3.2 Time Allowance

Students whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability may require extra time in examinations.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 4.

Extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour. In exceptional circumstances this extra time may be extended.

3.3 Rest Breaks

Students who may require a rest break in examinations include students whose ability to complete the examination within the required time is significantly impacted by a medical, sensory, psychological or physical disability.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Rest Breaks in Examinations.

3.4 Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts

Marking Guidelines inform the examiner that the student, due to the nature of his/her disability, has a particular difficulty with spelling, grammar and written expression, and provide a framework for marking the scripts of such students. Marking Guidelines apply to timed examinations only.

If a core component of assessment is that of competence in spelling, grammar and written expression, it is not possible to disregard these elements (i.e. a modern language).

Please see Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts from Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty.

3.5 Use of a Computer

Students whose ability to write is significantly impacted by a disability may require a computer in examinations.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 4.

Please see Procedures for Computer Based Examinations.

3.6 Scribe

Scribes may only be granted for students who cannot handwrite or use a computer due to the nature of their disability.

If a core component of assessment is that of competence in spelling or grammar, it is not possible to disregard these elements (i.e. a modern language). In other subjects testing written communication skills, including English or Irish, a scribe will be allowed, but the student will be assessed only on those aspects of written communication which he or she can demonstrate independently, such as the use of language and effective grammatical presentation.

Additional time of ten minutes per hour will be provided when using a scribe.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 4.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Scribes in Examinations.

3.7 Reader

Students whose ability to read is significantly impacted by a disability may require a reader in examinations.

Most students will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader. In exceptional cases only an individual reader may be required.

Where approved by the University as part of the needs assessment process, students will use assistive technology (for example, text to speech software) to read the examination paper. In this instance an electronic paper will be required.

If the examination is assessing competence in reading and reading comprehension the provision of a reader may not be appropriate.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are listed in Appendix 4.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Readers in Examinations.

3.8 Sign Language Interpreters

A sign language interpreter translates oral based language, text and speech, into Irish Sign Language (ISL) so a Deaf person can understand what is being communicated.

An ISL an interpreter may, if requested, be made available to translate the examination paper into ISL.

An interpreter may also be made available to facilitate a student answering the examination questions in ISL. This can be done in one of the following ways:

- The student may wish to sign his/her examination and to have this simultaneously transcribed by a scribe.
- In exceptional circumstances where learning outcomes cannot be assessed by any other mode, the presentation of assignments or examinations in ISL recorded on videotape may be permitted.

If a student signs the examination to a scribe or on video, additional time, a separate examination venue and appropriate invigilation will be granted.

Please see Procedures for the Provision of Irish Sign Language Interpreters in Examinations.

3.9 Furniture in Examination Venues

Students with disabilities may require alternative furniture (i.e. chair support, writing board, footstool etc.) in examination venues.

3.10 Personal Assistants

Students who have a Personal Assistant may require the Personal Assistant to be in attendance at the examination venue. The Personal Assistant will normally remain outside the examination hall.

3.11 Examination Papers in Alternative Formats

- Students who are visually impaired may require examination papers in enlarged print.
- Students who are blind or vision impaired and fluent Braille readers may require a Braille version of the examination paper.
- Students who have difficulty reading the examination paper may require coloured overlays.

Section Two:

Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities

Procedures for the Provision of Alternative Venues for Examinations

Maynooth University should ensure the following in relation to alternative examination venues:

- Alternative venues for university-scheduled examinations should be fully accessible to students with disabilities. Alternative venues for in-class tests should, where necessary, be accessible to students with disabilities.
- The physical space available should be appropriate for the effective provision of the reasonable accommodation, for example:
 - A large table to accommodate enlarged papers, Braille material, and/or technological aids.
 - Adequate floor space for manoeuvring wheelchairs, mobility aids, crutches, canes and any other physical aid.
 - Access to power points for equipment and/or assistive technology.
- It is the responsibility of the Examinations Office to ensure that all announcements or amendments by lecturers are conveyed to all students with disabilities sitting university-scheduled examinations in separate examination venues.

Procedures for the Provision of Rest Breaks in Examinations

Maynooth University should ensure the following in relation to rest breaks:

- Rest breaks should be considered as pauses in the exam and the exam time should be stopped when a student takes a rest break. Students will normally have up to 10 minutes per hour.
- Students should tell the invigilator when they wish to have a rest break. They may take as much or as little out of their allocation as they wish at any one time.
- Students can choose to stay in the room for their rest break, or may leave the room if supervised by a member of staff. This can include going to the bathroom, taking a drink or snack if recommended, or moving around to relieve physical discomfort.
- Students may not talk about or work on the examination during their rest break. The student's examination papers should also be turned over during rest breaks.

Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts from Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty²

Marking Guidelines apply to timed written University scheduled examinations only.

A student with a disability who has a reading, writing or spelling difficulty can be disadvantaged when assessment takes the form of a written timed examination.

A student's written work may contain **surface errors** in spelling and grammar such as inaccuracies in the use of tense, grammatical agreement, plurals, spelling and punctuation.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration when marking the examination script of a student with a reading, writing or spelling difficulty:

1. First, read the script to judge the student's underlying understanding of the topic; then assess their performance against the learning outcomes. If the script contains all the required elements but does not introduce them in a clear logical order, avoid penalising the student for a lack of structure in their writing unless this is an aspect of the competency being assessed.
2. Errors in **spelling** do not necessarily mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the word or its function in their writing. Generally, such errors do not lead to ambiguity and should not be penalised when subject knowledge is being assessed.
3. **Lexical** errors, such as *coarse* for *course*, do not mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the words. This kind of error should not be penalised unless it leads to ambiguity.
4. **Grammatical** errors, like incorrect tense endings, lack of subject-verb agreement and incorrect word order may not affect the meaning of the sentence. Where the student's meaning is clear and the errors do not lead to ambiguity, the student should not be penalised.

² Adapted from *Guidelines for Marking the Work of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties* (University of Central Lancashire)
http://www.uclan.ac.uk/information/services/sds/marketing_guidelines_for_students_with_specific_learning_difficulties.php [accessed 14th June 2012]

5. A student with a disability who has a reading, writing or spelling difficulty might not always use **punctuation** as a tool to clarify meaning. Scripts may contain long sentences that are difficult to follow with indiscriminate punctuation or no punctuation at all. Very short sentences or fragments of sentences might also be produced. Where the student's meaning is clear and the errors do not lead to ambiguity, the student should not be penalised.
6. Some students may have restricted vocabulary and use a far more limited range of words that one would expect. Avoid penalising students who show this style of writing, unless written communication is an aspect of the competency being assessed.
7. Where grammar and spelling are core competencies of a course a student's work must be marked on the basis of accuracy in the language and therefore these marking guidelines will not apply.
8. In all subjects, if a student's errors make a material difference to the meaning of their work, it will not be possible to classify them as surface errors that do not incur penalty. For instance, if a nursing student writes hypertension instead of hypotension, this will affect the mark awarded.
9. In all subjects, if the surface errors make the student's work so ambiguous that it is impossible to decipher the meaning, then this diminishes his/her ability to demonstrate the module's learning outcomes and this would be reflected in the marks awarded.

Procedures for Computer Based Examinations

Student's Responsibilities during Examinations

1. The student must confirm that they are proficient in the use of the technology for examinations. To ensure competence in the use of the assistive technology, a number of training sessions may be required.
2. Where word processing is required by a student a minimum typing speed of 20 words per minute (wpm) is recommended. Training will be provided and it is the student's responsibility to be proficient in typing for his/ her examination.
3. During an examination it is the student's responsibility to save and print their own work. If they do not save their work and it is lost, they will not receive any additional time to finish their exam.
4. Students should not be permitted to bring any computer related equipment of their own (e.g. a mouse) into the examination without prior approval and checking. In situations where appropriate facilities cannot be provided or where it is not practical to transfer software/ personalised settings (document reading software and screen magnification software), the University may permit a student to utilise their own equipment and/or the equipment supplied to them by the University.
5. If students have any difficulties during an examination they must alert the invigilator.

The following guidelines should be taken in to account with regard to computer setup:

1. Students should be provided with written guidelines on how to use their software under examination conditions and, if necessary, should attend training sessions prior to the examination period.
2. Students who are using a computer will sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group. These venues are normally shared with other students.
3. Technical support should be available for each computer based examination session and at any other necessary stages (e.g. printing).
4. An examination image should be created which must not give the student access to other applications such as calculators, spreadsheets etc. Students taking examinations in which they are allowed to use a calculator should bring their own approved calculator to the examinations. No access is provided to the

internet, intranet or any other means of communication. Different examination images may be created to meet the needs of different cohorts (i.e. visually impaired students, students with specific learning difficulties etc.).

5. Sufficient work stations should be available in the examination venue including at least one replacement computer (and printers where required). Appropriate contingency plans should be put in place in the event of any computer malfunction and/ or failure during the examination sessions.
6. The computer should have an adequate power supply (i.e. should be charged and/or plugged in for the duration of the exam). The computer must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used.
7. Where WordPad or MS Word is used to type examination answers the built-in spelling and grammar checker/ thesaurus/ encyclopaedia and translation features will be disabled.
8. Where word processing (MS Word) is being used the software package should be set to background-save the students work.
9. Where word processing is utilised students are required to print their examination answers. Where students are printing their examination answers, ensure that adequate paper and toner are available to meet the demands of the test centre.

Computer Based Examinations for Students who are Blind/Vision Impaired

1. The computer must be set-up in line with the general computer set-up guidelines.
2. For a blind student, document reading software, word processing facilities and/or Braille/Braille-related devices and software may be needed.
3. For a student with low vision, screen magnification software and word processing facilities may be required. For screen magnification a large computer monitor may also be required.

Procedures for the Provision of Scribes in Examinations

The role of a scribe is to record a student's dictated answers in an examination.

Procedures for Maynooth University

- The student should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination.
- The scribe should be an independent person and not known to the student.
- In some instances the scribe may also act as the invigilator for the examination.
- Sometimes a student may require a reader and a scribe. In such instances the same person may act as both.
- The scribe is required to produce an accurate record of the student's answers and to write/type at an appropriate speed.
- Scribes should have a good knowledge of the subject being examined.

Procedures for Scribes

- The scribe should arrive before the commencement of the examination, allowing sufficient time to establish a rapport with the student, to make seating arrangements and to agree guidelines for:
 - Presentation
 - Spelling
 - Punctuation
 - New paragraphs etc.
- The scribe should be relaxed. This may help to alleviate any anxieties the student may have in relation to the examination.
- The scribe should advise students as to the duration of the examination, the number of questions to be answered and any additional instructions.
- The starting time and finish time of the examination should be clearly stated by the scribe and/or invigilator.
- An institution may require that the examination script is submitted in electronic format and that the examination material is recorded on an official computer located in the institution, not on a laptop belonging to the student or scribe.
- The computer should be set to automatically save work regularly (every 3 to 5 minutes).

- A student may elect to write sections of the paper themselves.
- If the student writes notes, essay plans or illustrations, these should be included with the examination script. For example, the student might draw rough diagrams from which the scribe will draw a final version and include both copies with the examination script.

Procedures for the Provision of Readers in Examinations

The role of a reader in examinations is to read the examination questions only. Most students will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader. In exceptional cases only an individual reader may be required.

Procedures for Maynooth University

- The student should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination.
- The reader should be an independent person and not known to the student.
- In the case of a foreign language, scientific, mathematical or technical subject, the reader should ideally have a good knowledge of that subject/language.
- The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate.
- In some instances the reader may also act as the invigilator for the examination.
- Sometimes a student may require a reader and a scribe. In such instances the same person may act as both.

Procedures for Readers

- The reader should not provide additional information to the student or offer any suggestions.
- The reader should not advise the student on which questions to attempt, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which questions should be attempted.
- Instructions given on the examination paper can only be repeated when the reader is specifically requested to do so by the student.
- The reader should make no other comment or use any intonation which emphasises any part of the examination questions, nor make any interpretation of the examination question(s).
- The reader should not discuss any matter with the student during the examination unless it relates to the re-reading of an examination question (having been requested to do so by the student).
- The reader must not decode symbols and unit abbreviations (e.g. '2²' should not be read as 'two squared' but the function simply pointed to by the reader

since part of the assessment is recognising what the superscript '2' means. Similarly, if the symbol '>' is printed, it should not be read as 'greater than' but simply pointed to by the reader).

Readers for Vision-Impaired Students

- Readers should read the examination questions as often as requested.
- Readers should provide information regarding time elapsed and time remaining if requested.
- Readers should help a student using diagrams, graphs and tables to extract the information which the print copy would provide to a sighted student.
- Readers should give the spelling of a word on an examination paper if requested.
- Readers should report any communication problems during the examination to the invigilator.

Procedures for the Provision of Irish Sign Language Interpreters in Examinations

- The interpreter should arrive before the commencement of the examination, to make seating arrangements and to interpret interactions between invigilators and students. This time should also be used as an opportunity for the student and the interpreter to become familiar with each other's communication styles.
- The interpreter should translate all announcements and information given by the invigilator prior to and during the examination.
- The interpreter should translate all interaction between the examiner and the student, including questions and clarifications. The interpreter should interpret no other speech/sign, nor go beyond the student's or the invigilator's/examiner's communications.
- The student may request that the interpreter translate questions from the written examination paper. If, following translation, there is need for further clarification, the interpreter may attempt to rephrase their interpretation but they must not attempt to introduce additional information over and above that which is specifically mentioned in the question. Any further clarification that is sought should be referred to the examiner and not offered by the interpreter.
- Where a student's first language is ISL an interpreter may, if requested, offer a translation of ISL vocabulary into English; this may include offering the spelling of word in English on the basis of ISL vocabulary.
- The interpreter must not provide additional examples, contextual information nor should he/she attempt to provide guidance to the student in answering a question.
- If a student wishes to sign his/her assignment or examination and to have this simultaneously transcribed by a scribe, the interpreter may seek clarification, as is normal in interpreted interaction. This should be done in a manner that reduces the impact upon the student's flow.

Section Three:

Appendices

Appendix 1: Member Institutions of DAWN

Athlone Institute of Technology
Dublin City University
Dublin Institute of Technology
Cork Institute of Technology
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Institute of Art Design & Technology
Institute of Technology Tallaght
Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Limerick Institute of Technology
National College of Art & Design
National College of Ireland
National University of Ireland Galway
National University of Ireland Maynooth
Queens University Belfast
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
Trinity College Dublin
University College Cork
University College Dublin
University of Limerick
University of Ulster
Waterford Institute of Technology

Appendix 2: Membership of The Examinations Working Group

- Ms. Rose Ryan, Acting Director of Access, Maynooth University (Chair)
- Ms. Siobhan Colclough, Disability Advisor, University College Cork
- Ms. Alison Doyle, Disability Officer, Trinity College Dublin
- Ms. Andrea Feeney, Director of Operations & IT, State Examinations Commission
- Mr. Alan Gregory, Senior Psychologist, National Educational Psychological Service
- Ms. Ruth Murphy, Disability Administrator, Cork Institute of Technology
- Ms. Anne O'Connor, Head of Disability and Learning Support Service, Dublin City University
- Ms. Aisling Palmer, Disability Officer, National University of Ireland Galway
- Ms. Fiona Sweeney, Manager Access Centre, University College Dublin
- Mr. Kieran Sweeney, Educational Psychologist
- Mr. Declan Treanor, Director of Disability Service, Trinity College Dublin
- Ms. Rita Wall, Educational Psychologist, Psychological Society of Ireland

- Specific Learning Difficulties subgroup (Aisling Palmer, University of Limerick, Siobhan Colclough, University College Cork, and Bernie Langtry, Athlone Institute of Technology) reviewed accommodations for students with specific learning difficulties. Alison Doyle, Trinity College Dublin also advised this group.
- Assistive Technology subgroup (Simon Ahern, Maynooth University, Ann Fogarty, National College of Ireland, Michelle Power, Waterford Institute of Technology, Linda Doran, University College Cork) reviewed Assistive Technology provision and identified best practice.
- Disability accommodations were reviewed by Rose Ryan, Maynooth University, and Anne O Connor, Dublin City University
- Surveys were coordinated by Declan Treanor, Trinity College Dublin and Fiona Sweeney, University College Dublin.

Appendix 3: Definition of Disability

The legal definition of disability, which is outlined in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2011), defines disability as follows:

1. “the total or partial absence of a person’s bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person’s body,
2. the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,
3. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person’s body,
4. a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
5. a condition, illness or disease which affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.”

Appendix 4: Guidelines for Granting Reasonable Accommodations to Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty

These guidelines have been informed by the criteria applied by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in Ireland, and also by the criteria applied by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in the UK.

These guidelines are intended to assist HEIs when determining the examination accommodations that may be required by students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty. The need for a particular accommodation is determined through the need assessment process, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.

In a small number of complex cases – where the learning profile of the student falls outside of these guidelines, or there is a co-morbidity of diagnosis, or other mitigating circumstances that are deemed to constitute a significant barrier to performance – appropriate examination accommodations may be awarded based on the expertise, and at the discretion of, the Disability Officer.

1. Students with a disability who demonstrate a lower than average writing speed or reading speed or working memory or processing speed (i.e. at or below a standard score of 89/23rd percentile) may require extra time in examinations.
2. Students with a disability who demonstrate one or more of the following may require a computer in examinations:
 - i. a lower than average writing speed (below 15wpm)
 - ii. a speed of processing at or below a standard score of 85/ 16th percentile
 - iii. a level of legibility that would make the paper unreadable to an examiner
3. Students with a disability who have a spelling attainment at or below a standard score of 70/ 2nd percentile may require the use of a scribe.
4. Students with a disability whose reading speed, accuracy or comprehension is at or below a standard score of 85/ 16th percentile may require a reader in examinations.