

Policy 8: Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy and Procedures

SI Awarding Body Special Provision Policy

The SI special provision procedures are designated to assist those candidates who, because of a permanent or long term disability or temporary disposition, have special assessment needs. The paper is for guidance and cannot cover every circumstance where special provision may be appropriate. Requests for special provision arrangements not covered by the paper should be made to the SI Director of Education and Development

i. Introduction

Special assessment arrangements are arrangements which are approved before the examination to enable candidates who might not otherwise be able to do so, to demonstrate their level of understanding and/or competence. Categories which are covered by this guidance paper are:-

- Physical impairment
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Speech impairment
- Learning difficulties
- Candidates whose first language is not English

ii. General Principles about Special Provision:-

- The nature of the special examination arrangement will be determined according to the assessment needs of the individual candidate.
- The special arrangement must not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates.
- Arrangements must not mislead users of the certificate about the candidate's attainment. In certain circumstances an endorsement will be made on the certificate.
- Arrangements should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment and must not compromise the integrity of the examination.
- The overall responsibility for special arrangements will rest with the awarding body (SI).
- Failure to comply with the regulations contained in the guidance paper may lead to a candidate's results being withheld.
- The candidate has a responsibility to raise issues related to the granting of special provision before the course commences or as soon in the course as the need for special assessment arrangements is identified. Whilst the SI will seek to meet all appropriate requests the SI cannot guarantee, in the event of late notification that all arrangements can be in place by the time of the scheduled examination. Alternative opportunities will be discussed with the candidate.

iii. Physical, visual and hearing impairment

The teaching/coaching of swimming and its associated disciplines takes place in what is potentially a hazardous environment. The guiding principle must be, therefore, safety at all times. Candidates must neither endanger the participants in their charge or themselves. The use of an 'enabler' to assist the candidates to carry out some of the tasks which might reasonably be expected of a teacher/coach may be allowed in exceptional circumstances. This is different from the 'use of assistants' which is a current requirement of a Level 2 candidate. In all instances candidates achieving the standard required for the practical assessment must be able to meet all aspects of the assessment criteria.

iv. Speech Impairment

Effective communication is an essential requirement for a swimming teacher/coach. This relates to issues of safety in addition to the delivery of an effective lesson. As with physical, visual and hearing impairment there will be varying degrees of speech impairment. It is the case, however, that some speech impaired candidates may be extremely skilled at providing instructions, teaching points etc through other means e.g. use of written cards. The difficulty here, however, is that due to the need to have these prepared beforehand they can only be, by their very nature, of a generalised nature. The preparation of written cards during an active lesson would raise serious safety issues. Sign language / mime, on the other hand, may overcome some of these difficulties. Whilst, therefore, there may be instances where a speech impaired candidate may communicate effectively in respect of teaching general safety remains a particular concern.

There are many instances when a teacher can prevent an incident from occurring by virtue of their exercise of supervision and control. For example, a situation may occur where a child is getting out of his/her depth and is becoming alarmed. In this situation a teacher can often talk the child away from the danger by virtue of their commands and authority. Other examples could be given. Safe Supervision of a swimming lesson is often associated with making rescues whereas it should be considered more in terms of preventing an accident happening through being aware and alert and, where necessary, taking preventative action.

Candidates with physical, visual, hearing and speech impairments will not form a homogenous group and must, therefore, be considered individually. However, the overriding consideration must be the safety of the participants in their charge and this should not be compromised. All candidates will be required, therefore, to meet the criteria as stated on the poolside assessment sheets. If it is considered that a candidate, as a result of his/her disability, will be unable to meet the criteria then s/he should be informed at the earliest opportunity. Ideally this should be prior to the commencement of the course.

v. Learning Difficulties

Candidates with learning difficulties are likely to experience difficulties in one or more of the following areas:-

Reader Accuracy	This would include candidates who are unlikely to be able to read the examination material with sufficient accuracy to avoid making mistakes which will affect the understanding of what they read.
Reading Speed	This will be a particular problem where the speed of reading is so slow that the candidate loses the sense of what he or she reads.
Spelling	This will include candidates with spelling difficulties, which significantly slow their work rate and result in the use of alternative words which are easier to spell but may be inappropriate.
Handwriting Speed	Candidates whose handwriting speed is so slow that it presents a particular problem in relation to the time allowed for the examination.

Handwriting Legibility

This may relate to writing under time pressure. There are, however, candidates whose scripts are illegible despite their being allowed to write more slowly.

vi. Request for special provisions

The most common requests for special provision relates to candidates who are dyslexic or who have difficulty in reading and/or writing and relates specifically to those aspects of the assessment process which require a written answer. It is also the case, however, that many candidates experiencing these types of difficulty have become adept at overcoming the problem providing that sufficient time is allowed for them to compose and record written answers. Where the work set is in the form of homework this often presents fewer difficulties, as time is less of an issue. However, where written answers are required in an assessment situation this should not be a test of speed but a means of ascertaining the candidate's level of underpinning knowledge.

Providing additional time, where this is required, does not, therefore, present any real difficulties and this issue can be dealt with at a local level following consultation between the course tutor and the appointed verifier. If there is a difference of opinion between the course tutor and the verifier this should be referred back to the SI Awarding Body, by the verifier, for clarification. The maximum additional time allowed is 25% of the total examination time at Level 1 and 25% of the total examination time at Level 2. An allowance of greater than this may be permitted in exceptional cases with the prior approval of the SI Director of Education and Development.

If the allowance of additional time is considered by the Course Tutor and appointed Internal Verifier to be insufficient in respect of helping the candidates in the written aspect of the course then the following strategies may be adopted :-

- 1 Worksheet questions - can be presented on audio tape
- 1 Stroke analysis - can be presented on audio tape
- 1 Log Book - application to the SI Awarding Body for extension.
- 2 Written knowledge test/examination - Time extension
Reader
Amanuensis
- Decision to be made by the Internal Verifier following a request from the Course Tutor
- Decision to be made by SI training following submission of a request from the Internal Verifier.

vii. Candidates who's first language is not English

The use of a bilingual dictionary is permitted where the candidate's first language is not English and where this is presenting obvious difficulties. Additional time may also be granted if writing in English is also a problem. Where additional time is granted this should comply with the guidance provided under learning difficulties. Communication used during the practical teaching situation must be in English although in certain circumstances arrangements can be made for this to be in Irish. In the case of a deaf candidate a sign language interpreter may be allowed as the candidate may not have a strong command of written English. Any cost involved in the use of a sign language interpreter will be the responsibility of the candidate.

viii. Organisation of special provision procedures in respect of written examinations

The responsibility for making the necessary arrangements to facilitate provision rests with the course organiser in consultation with the Course Tutor. In many circumstances a candidate receiving special provision will not necessitate changes to the normal organisation of a written examination other than the provision of extra time. Whilst it is unreasonable to expect all candidates to remain in the examination room for the extra period of time granted under special provision care needs to be taken to ensure that the departure of other candidates does not adversely affect the candidate(s) who remain.

If the special provision allowance includes the use of a reader or an amanuensis then an alternative room will be required. In this situation a second invigilator should also be in attendance. In the case of a deaf candidate the reader and/or amanuenses should be an experienced sign language interpreter.

ix. Guidance for a reader

A reader will be a responsible adult with no connection with the candidate on the course and ideally with little or no knowledge of the subject area being examined. The role of the reader is to read questions to the candidate. The candidate will be required to provide written answers. The reader must not add to or explain any of the words or phrases used in the question and must provide no additional guidance. The question may be repeated as many times as required by the candidate. Extra time will be provided as detailed in 6.0 of this guidance. It is recommended that any candidate using a reader should have adequate practice with a reader prior to the actual examination.

x. Guidance for an amanuensis

An amanuensis will be a responsible adult with no connection with the candidate on the course and ideally with little or no knowledge of the subject area being examined. The role of the amanuensis is to read out the question and then to write down the answers provided by the candidate (see guidance for reader above). The answer written down must be the words of the candidate and must not be amended or interpreted by the amanuensis. The amanuensis may read back the answer if requested by the candidate but any changes made should form a new answer with the original being deleted. Extra time will be provided as detailed in section 4 of this guidance. It is recommended that any candidate using an amanuensis should have adequate practice with an amanuensis prior to the actual examination.

xi. Variation to numbers 3 and 4

In certain circumstances the SI will approve the use of an enabler in order to provide access to SI qualification for individuals who have what might be considered to be more complex assessment needs. By their very nature this aspect of special provision will be used only in clearly identified circumstances.

Specific examples of where an enabler may be used are as follows:

- a) A deaf candidate has a speech impairment which makes communication with the group in his/her charge difficult.**

In this instance a signer may be allowed to assist with the communication to and from the group. The signer would, in effect communicate with the participants in the water but would be directed by the deaf candidate who is working towards Swim Ireland qualification. The assessment would, therefore, take into account both the candidate who had enrolled on the course and also the signer who would be provided by the candidate. Again the focus would be on the management and organisation of the group and whilst the assessment would be against the deaf candidate only this would include the effective management of the enabler.

- b) Candidate who is a wheelchair user who wishes to achieve the Level 1 disability certificate but is unable to provide support in the water to a disabled swimmer.**

In this instance the enabler would provide the support but under the direct guidance of the candidate teacher. An integral aspect of this assessment would be for the disabled candidate to demonstrate that s/he can provide clear, concise and technically correct guidance to the enabler in respect of this aspect of the assessment process, and that this was implemented effectively in the practical situation.

xii. Exceptions to mainstream assessment

Assessment for SI qualifications is normally carried out in what might be described as a mainstream environment in which the majority of pupils do not have the type of special needs which will impact significantly upon the way in which the lesson is conducted. However, provision can be made to facilitate assessment opportunities for what might be considered as special populations. Such an example might be:

- a) A deaf candidate has speech impairment and expresses a desire to teach swimming to deaf pupils and not in a mainstream situation.**

In this instance the candidate may be assessed working entirely with hearing impaired swimmers where the primary means of communication is through signing. This will normally require the course to be run in conjunction with a deaf school but where this is not the case the candidate will be required to provide his/her own swimmers who were, themselves, hearing impaired.

In those circumstances when special provisions similar to that outlined above are required, and are felt to be appropriate and beneficial, it is essential that this is discussed, initially, with the SI Director of Education and Development, who will provide written confirmation of the decision of the Awarding Body (ASA). The candidate receiving this level of special provision will have his/her certificate endorsed accordingly. An example of the type of endorsement is as follows:

-The holder of this certificate was assessed using an enabler. Therefore, the SI recommends this provision should be made available at all times.ø

Or

-The holder of this certificate was assessed teaching hearing impaired swimmers using signing as the primary means of communicationø

b) A candidate requests that the written examination be provided in a language other than English.

Where possible, candidates will be encouraged to complete the written examination in English. However, if requested, arrangements can be made for the written examination to be taken in Irish.

xiii. Temporary Illness

In circumstances where a candidate suffers temporary illness or injury at the time of the assessment, the following procedures must be followed:

- a. Practical teaching/coaching - a pass may be awarded in those situations where the Tutor / Assessor feels that there is sufficient documented evidence to show that the candidate was competent in all the assessment areas. This should be discussed with the Internal Verifier (IV) and, if doubt exists, with the External Verifier (EV). Where this is not possible arrangements may be made for additional assessments to be made in the candidateø workplace (or equivalent) after the course has been completed. The Awarding Body must be informed accordingly with dates when the assessment will take place and the venue to be used.
- b. Log Book - as extension for submission can be granted subject to the agreement of the External Verifier (EV) in liaison with the Internal Verifier. The Awarding Body must be notified of the decision and of the timescales related to the extension.
- c. Written examination - an amanuensis may be provided or, where this is not appropriate, a re-sit opportunity provided. Arrangements should be made in conjunction with the Awarding Body.

xiv. Cost

Any additional cost related to the organisation and implementation of special assessment arrangements is the responsibility of the Accredited Centre

