



Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements: Additional guidance for schools

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Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to assist schools to comply with SQA's quality assurance requirements in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements in all SQA internal and external assessments.

It provides further guidance and exemplification for the seven types of documentary evidence that SQA requires schools to have available to demonstrate that they have an effective internal quality assurance system for identifying and verifying their candidates' need for assessment arrangements.

This guidance has two sections:

Section A provides guidance and exemplification of the documentary evidence generally required to support the provision of any assessment arrangement.

Section B provides guidance and exemplification of the additional documentary evidence required to support the provision of some **specific** assessment arrangements.

Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 give some examples of good practice for the evidence requirements detailed in Sections A and B.

Please read this guidance in conjunction with *Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements: Information for Schools* (publication code FA7266) and the exemplars of completed assessment arrangements quality assurance reports. These are available from our [assessment arrangements quality assurance web page](#).

If you are unsure about any of the information provided in this document, advice is always available from SQA. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your query or concern.

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Section A: Documentary evidence required to support the provision of any assessment arrangement

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested forms of evidence | Notes |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | Documentary evidence of the school's internal assessment arrangements (AA) verification meeting(s). | <p>An essential part of a school's internal quality assurance system is the AA verification meeting or meetings.</p> <p>All available evidence and information gathered is fully considered at the AA verification meeting by relevant staff prior to providing assessment arrangements in an internal assessment or submitting a request to SQA for assessment arrangements.</p> <p>The school needs to be confident that its decisions to provide, or not to provide, an assessment arrangement in both internal and external assessments are in line with both SQA guidance and the relevant equality legislation.</p> <p>The AA verification meeting ensures that there is a robust evidence base which (i) clearly demonstrates the candidate's need for the assessment arrangement, (ii) has been formally confirmed by the school, and (iii) justifies the decisions taken to provide, or not to provide, particular assessment arrangements.</p> | Minutes or detailed notes of the AA verification meeting(s) which are dated and signed with the names and positions of the personnel involved. | <p>Membership of the AA verification meeting will vary according to schools and local authorities. However, it should always involve someone actively involved in the support process and someone who is responsible for quality assurance.</p> <p>Having a senior member of staff who is independent of the support-for-learning process in your centre is important; it adds rigour to the process. For example, it could involve the principal teacher of learning support, the local authority educational psychologist, and the SQA co-ordinator.</p> |

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested forms of evidence | Notes |
|----------|--|---|---|--|
| 2 | Documentary evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to (i) the provision of assessment arrangements, (ii) the school submitting the request on their behalf, and have been made aware that personal information will be shared with SQA. | <p>It is important that candidates (and parents/carers or guardians where relevant) are fully involved and have agreed to the assessment arrangements being provided in their assessments.</p> <p>It is also essential that candidates have agreed to the school sharing their personal information with SQA as part of the request process.</p> | A pro forma signed by the candidate (and countersigned by a parent/carer where appropriate). This should list all agreed assessment arrangements and a statement confirming that the candidate has agreed to the school sharing their personal information with SQA. | <p>Schools may wish to involve parents/carers where appropriate.</p> <p>Schools may also wish to record details of any candidate who does not wish to use assessment arrangements.</p> |
| 3 | Documentary evidence of candidate's disability/difficulty and how this generally affects the candidate in the learning and teaching situation. | <p>In order to determine the need for an assessment arrangement, the nature and degree of the difficulty will have been assessed together with the impact on learning and teaching in class and on assessment.</p> <p>The expectation is that assessment arrangements will be provided to candidates whose disability or difficulty has already been identified and who are being provided with appropriate additional support/intervention as part of their learning support plan.</p> | Candidate files containing all relevant information such as psychological and other assessments, individual learning plans, support plans and records. For example, planning documentation such as personal learning plans (PLPs) and individualised educational programmes (IEPs). | The information may start in primary and be comprehensive. |

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested forms of evidence | Notes |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| 4 | Documentary evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to any assessment arrangements requested. | <p>Assessment arrangements will usually be reflective of the arrangements normally provided to the candidate in class to ensure they are not disadvantaged during their course.</p> <p>If the school has determined that a candidate does not need support in class, then careful consideration needs to be given as to what other evidence is available to support the provision of an assessment arrangement.</p> | Plan and record of support from support-for-learning staff in class and/or in support base and/or details of support regularly required from subject teachers in class. | <p>The following are key elements of the evidence required to support the provision of assessment arrangements. They answer the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How has the candidate been supported during the course? ◆ Have you considered the varying assessment standards and evidence requirements of different subjects? ◆ Have you evidence that the assessment arrangement requested is appropriate and makes a difference to the candidate's demonstration of their attainment? |
| 5 | Documentary evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account. | <p>As needs may vary across subjects, the need for assessment arrangements should be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.</p> <p>Subject teachers know the difficulties their pupils face in their class on a day-to-day basis, know, and understand the assessment demands of their subject.</p> | Evidence of consultation and negotiation with subject staff, which takes into account (i) how the candidate copes in the different subject classes and (ii) the range of different subject assessment standards and evidence requirements. | |
| 6 | Documentary evidence for particular assessment arrangements (see Section B below). | The particular assessment arrangement must meet the candidate's individual needs. Some assessment arrangements may confer a very slight advantage which is only acceptable when it is balanced against the substantial disadvantage that the candidate would have without the arrangement | Evidence of need for a particular arrangement (see Section B below). | |

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested forms of evidence | Notes |
|----------|--|--|--|---|
| 7 | Documentary evidence of a whole-school system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management. | Schools should have in place a whole-school approach to assessment arrangements as part of each school's wider inclusive practices/policy etc. | There should be documentation and guidance for all staff in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements. This should outline the roles and responsibilities of relevant staff, including individual subject teachers. | In almost all secondary schools, planning to meet identified assessment needs is a collaborative process between the class teacher and the support-for-learning teacher but the process should also involve a senior manager. |

Section B: Additional documentary evidence

This section refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements. Please note that the following assessment arrangements are only acceptable when balanced against the substantial disadvantage that the disabled candidate would face without the arrangement.

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>Use of computer/human reader Schools should have clear evidence that the candidate needs to use a reader.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has significant difficulty with accessing written text in class and reading support is regularly provided.</p> | <p>Recent test of reading speed and accuracy.</p> <p>Reading comprehension test.</p> <p>Evidence from dyslexia-screening packages.</p> <p>Evidence of class work completed with and without the use of a computer/human reader can often show the difference that the support makes¹</p> <p>Ongoing use of a computer/human reader for support in class noted in support records.</p> |

¹ Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way. For example, if there is evidence of the difference the support makes in one subject then this may evidence the difference the support makes in another subject with similar assessment demands.

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|--|--|
| <p>Use of scribe or voice recognition software Schools should have clear evidence that a scribe or voice recognition software is needed.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has significant difficulty with writing and support with writing is regularly provided in class.</p> <p>For candidates who are unable to produce any written work at all, written confirmation of this from a specialist teacher will be acceptable.</p> | <p>Speed, accuracy and legibility assessment by specialist teacher (which might include spelling assessment, speed of production of free, dictated, or word processed work).</p> <p>Example of class work produced with and without a scribe or voice recognition software²</p> <p>Ongoing use of a scribe or voice recognition software for support in class noted in support records.</p> |
| <p>Transcription with correction Schools should have clear evidence that transcription with correction is needed. This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with written communication but who are unable to use appropriate ICT.</p> <p>It is an arrangement which can be requested for candidates where a marker would have difficulty in deciphering their written responses. The key purpose of transcription with correction is to remove the illegibility or the 'unreadability' of a candidate's written responses caused by the candidate's substantial difficulties with spelling and/or punctuation.</p> | <p>Same types of evidence as above.</p> |

² Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way. For example, if there is evidence of the difference the support makes in one subject then this may evidence the difference the support makes in another subject with similar assessment demands.

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|--|---|
| <p>Extra time</p> <p>When extra time is the only assessment arrangement required there should be evidence of an ongoing significant difficulty in completing tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) in normal allocated time.</p> <p>It is not expected that schools will have absolute values for the extra time needed, nor that extra time provided for a candidate in relation to an assessment for one subject should automatically be provided for that candidate in relation to assessments for other subjects. It is important, however, that evidence is available to show that the extra time being provided is reasonable and reflects the candidate's needs.</p> <p>NB Evidence that extra time is used when given, for example in a timed assessment, is not sufficient evidence on its own of the need for additional time.</p> | <p>Recent tests of speed of reading and/or speed of reading comprehension and/or speed of writing and/or speed of processing or working.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for subject teachers to allocate extra time for assignments and class assessments and that this extra time has been used on an ongoing basis. This might include samples of work completed with and without extra time³.</p> <p>Evidence of how the amount of extra time required was determined and that the amount is reasonable and appropriate.</p> |

³ Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|---|--|
| <p>Numerical Support in Mathematics Assessments</p> <p>SQA requires centres to have appropriate evidence that the candidate has been identified as having a particular and persistent disability/specific difficulty with number (often referred to as dyscalculia) and is placed at a substantial disadvantage in demonstrating their attainment because of this particular disability/difficulty.</p> <p>There should be evidence of an ongoing significant difficulty in completing mathematics/arithmetic tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) without the support of a number square/line, multiplication square or a four function calculator.</p> <p>NB Evidence that numerical support is used when provided is not sufficient evidence on its own of the need for such support.</p> | <p>Recent assessment of dyscalculia or other screening tests showing significant difficulties in number manipulation/calculation/retention.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for mathematics teachers and other teachers in providing numerical support for assignments and class assessments and that this numerical support has been used on an ongoing basis. This might include samples of work completed with and without the use of such numerical support.⁴</p> |

⁴ Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way.

Appendix 1: Examples of good practice for evidence requirements

Evidence of the internal assessment arrangements (AA) verification meeting(s)

In High School A, the internal assessment arrangements (AA) verification meeting is held in November each year and is chaired by the local authority psychologist. The principal teacher (support for learning) and the SQA co-ordinator are also present. Relevant information/evidence available for each candidate requiring assessment arrangements is fully considered against the guidance from SQA using the SQA checklist.

Only assessment arrangements for those candidates whose evidence is complete are verified. Where evidence is unclear or incomplete, decisions are made as to whether it is possible to reasonably gather the evidence, whether the provision of the assessment arrangement is appropriate, or if there is a need to contact SQA for further guidance. Minutes of the meeting are taken, noting those present and the decisions taken. The minutes are dated and signed by the SQA co-ordinator.

The local authority psychological service also takes responsibility for trying to achieve a consistent approach to the provision of assessment arrangements across the authority. It does this by monitoring the provision of assessment arrangements and suggesting common approaches and processes.

Evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to the provision of assessment arrangements and for the school to share their personal data required for the request with SQA

In High School B, the support-for-learning department devised a pro forma for each candidate which summarises the assessment arrangements to be put in place for both internal and external assessments in each subject.

The pro forma also explains that personal information about the candidate's difficulties will be shared with SQA. This is fully discussed with each candidate. All candidates are encouraged to discuss the arrangements with their parents or carers before signing. For candidates under 16, a parent or carer is also asked to sign.

Subject teachers also use parent evenings as an opportunity to discuss with parents/carers the assessment arrangements required for the candidate in their particular subject. A note of these discussions is kept as evidence in support of the provision of an assessment arrangement.

Evidence of disability/difficulty and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation

High School C keeps relevant information on candidates in two main places. A pupil file contains general information, including details transferred from primary school, medical records, educational psychologist reports, personalised learning plans (PLPs) and individualised educational programmes (IEPs), etc. The support-for-learning department also has its own files containing current evidence including details of assessment of need, records of support given, etc. Together these files give details of the difficulty each candidate has experienced and how it affects the candidate's access to learning and teaching.

Evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to the assessment arrangements requested

In High School D, the support-for-learning department keeps detailed records of those pupils who are currently receiving additional learning support in the classroom or in the learning support base. This also includes relevant information from subject teachers about support needed and provided in their class.

In one pupil's case, the file indicates that he currently has scribing support from an Additional Support Assistant for some of his subjects (National 4 Modern Studies and National 4 RMPS). He also attends the support base for one hour a week to finish off work he cannot complete in other classes. Subject teachers also record that they have needed to act as a scribe for this pupil on occasion.

Evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account

In High School E, the detailed records kept in the learning support base show that, for one candidate with specific learning difficulties, all subject teachers have been consulted. Teachers in subjects where extensive writing is required, (for example, in the class assessments for Higher History, and Higher Modern Studies), confirm that the candidate has access to a computer with spellcheck software in class. In Maths and Physics, however, it is felt that the candidate is able to hand write his own responses (and prefers to do so) and only needs some extra time to finish off class work and assessment tasks.

Evidence of a whole-school system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management

In High School F, there is policy documentation and guidance which provides all staff with relevant information on the school's approach to providing appropriate evidence for assessment arrangements. This highlights the need for collaboration and partnership working across the school and clarifies roles and responsibilities of subject and learning support staff.

Appendix 2: Examples of good practice for evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

Use of a computer/human reader

In High School A, a number of candidates have difficulty with reading. In addition to recording the evidence detailed in Section A above, the support-for-learning staff also assess reading speed and accuracy regularly, and maintain records of when a computer/human reader is used in class and in assessments.

One pupil has had reading difficulties since primary school. On a yearly basis, support staff have tested his reading and although there have been improvements which enable him to cope with some tasks independently, testing shows that he still has difficulty with reading and comprehension. This information is retained on file and his support plan shows that he has access to text-to-speech software in English and History. Notes from other subject teachers show that he uses text-to-speech software, on occasion, to help him with reading in class. The support-for-learning department records this information and ensures that he has access to text-to-speech software for all class tests and he has a regular time in the support base where he can be helped to complete assignments and homework.

Transcription with correction

In High School B there is one pupil who has a well-documented writing difficulty with spelling and punctuation— samples of writing are available on file. Her writing is also extremely hard to decipher especially when she has to write under time pressure. A marker, unfamiliar with her writing, would find it very difficult to decipher.

She is not sufficiently competent in the use of ICT, and a decision is taken to request transcription with correction in her external assessment. Her support-for-learning teacher knows her writing sufficiently well to be able to transcribe her written responses in her external assessments.

Extra time

One pupil at High School C has recently been assessed as having dyslexia. In her case, she is very slow at interpreting written information and producing any written text. Her support-for-learning file contains examples of her work in class completed with and without extra time which clearly shows an improvement in performance when extra time is provided. In the classroom, she is frequently unable to complete tasks within the lesson time and this is recorded by subject staff and reported to the support-for-learning staff. A support strategy is put in place is also recorded in her file. Evidence is also available which shows that, on average, she requires 20% extra time for extended writing tasks.

A pupil at High School D was assessed as having a mild specific learning difficulty in primary school. He is just about to enter S4 and start his National 4 courses. He has received no extra support in the classroom in secondary school but his mother has raised the question of whether he should have extra time in his unit assessments. He is assessed by a member of the support-for-learning department who finds that he still has a slight problem with spelling but that this has no marked effect on the time he needs to produce work. Subject staff are also consulted and confirm that he has no difficulty finishing tasks in class.

There is no evidence available to support the need for extra time.