

# Teacher Guide

## Equitable Assessment and Special Consideration in Assessment in Years 11 and 12



### Special provisions

Some of the special provisions which may be made to help students complete assignments, tests and examinations include:

- braille and enlarged print papers
- Use of a computer
- extra time for reading and completing examination papers
- signing interpreters
- scribes for tests and/or note takers in class
- specialised furniture such as ergonomic chairs and slopeboards
- audio-taped questions
- being able to take movement and/or sustenance breaks
- being able to take a test in a separate venue with an independent supervisor
- alternative assignment formats
- negotiated extensions of time for assignments
- practical test questions that demonstrate test content
- early feedback to let the student know that they are not reaching required standards
- oral examinations of written material

### How can school counsellors and the special needs team help?

The school counsellor /special needs team can assist with a number of issues:

- providing advice and a support network for the student
- helping teachers understand the disability, impairment or short term misadventure

### Special consideration for the ACT Scaling Test (AST)

Students with disabilities/special needs should be encouraged to apply for assistance in undertaking the AST. Special provision will be related to specific needs and may include some of the accommodations for tests and exams referred to above.

Students should discuss their needs and eligibility for assistance with the school counsellor and/or the Special Needs Team early in the year they will be sitting the AST.

Application and verification of needs for the AST should be recommended on the appropriate forms through the school principal and submitted by the due date. Requests are made for specific provisions based on the recommendations of the school counsellor and/or the Special Needs Team, who have considered documentary evidence from relevant professionals.

Invigilators (exam supervisors) responsible for the student during AST will be provided with specific information about the particular requirements of individual students.

**Note:** Because of the nature of the AST - some support given for college assessment may not be relevant/granted for the AST.

### Short term misadventure/ special consideration

This booklet also applies in part to situations where a student's ability to demonstrate achievement is impaired by a circumstance of a short term temporary basis. This includes situations such as bereavement, depression, illness or injury. In these situations a student would be entitled to one or more of the following:-

- alternative assessments
- extensions on submission of work
- sitting assessments at times different to other students
- extra time allowed for assessment items
- exemption from completing items (status for individual items)
- status for a semester or half- semester unit

In these circumstances a student needs to apply for Special Consideration and must supply appropriate and current documentation to the college.

**Students are advised to seek help from:-year supervisors, welfare team or counsellors.**

**Further information can be obtained through the  
ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, LYONS Phone (02) 6205 7181**

# Equitable Assessment

All students must have equal opportunities to show their achievement. Teachers have to be sensitive to, and supportive of, students' needs during assessment periods, whether it is in class assessment tasks, assignment work, major end of semester tests or the ACT Scaling Test (AST). This publication considers students with special needs or disabilities. These needs are generally identified and documented, particularly at the college level. It is essential that students with special needs are supported throughout Years 11 and 12, as well as when sitting AST.

**It is NOT a question of giving these students something extra – it is a question of giving them what is rightfully theirs – an equal opportunity to demonstrate their full capabilities.**

*Universities and TAFEs also make provisions for students with special needs. The special provisions for Years 11 and 12 are in line with these.*

## Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) **defines disability** very broadly to include physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disabilities and special needs. It includes physical disfigurement, the presence in the body of a disease-causing organism (eg the HIV virus) and any other chronic or short term illness.

**Special Needs** students are those with functional difficulty caused by a disability or an impairment.

The World Health Organisation defines disability and impairment as follows:

**DISABILITY:** Any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in a manner or within the range considered usual for a human being. For example, for a person with a visual impairment, the loss of the ability to see effectively is a disability.

**IMPAIRMENT:** Any loss or dysfunction of a psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. For example, the damage to the eye or optic nerve is the impairment.

If a student has an impairment which makes it difficult to study, complete assignments and do his/her best on an assessment task, then the student has a disability which may affect his/her ability to demonstrate achievement.

## Alternative assessment

Alternative assessment is any alteration to the standard form of assessment, (examinations and/or assignments) or conditions relating to the assessment, which is put in place to accommodate a disability or special need.

Alternative assessment seeks to provide equity, **not advantage**. The same requirements and standards apply to all students, however it is reasonable to accommodate functional difficulties which result from a special need or disability.

## Functional difficulties

This section outlines some types of disability and the associated functional difficulties for which an alternative assessment strategy may be required.

Some students may have a number of functional difficulties associated with their disability and may also have more than one type of disability.

## What can individual teachers do?

Teachers see students completing assessment tasks and operating in the classroom on an almost daily basis, and so are most aware of students' needs. Teachers can make adjustments to their teaching and assessment practices to accommodate different learning styles and special needs difficulties. Talk to the counsellors, career advisers, student welfare teachers, special needs co-ordinator and team, integration consultant teachers, hearing and visual impaired itinerant teachers, special education teachers, heads of department and other interested staff in your school.

	Autism (ASD)	Chronic fatigue	Chronic pain	Hearing	Learning disabled	Medical condition	Overuse injury	Physical disability	Psychiatric	Speech impairment	Visually impaired
<b>Functional disability</b>											
Impaired concentration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Lower endurance for writing	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Reduced writing speed	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Unintelligible/slow speech				✓	✓					✓	
Inability to maintain writing posture for period of exam			✓		✓	✓		✓			
Inability to access information orally	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	
Inability to access information visually					✓						✓
Language difficulty due to restricted auditory input				✓	✓						
Difficulty accessing information in print	✓			✓	✓						✓
Inability to see own handwriting					✓						✓
Difficulty in expressing own knowledge in written form	✓			✓	✓						
Difficulty expressing numbers and numerical concepts	✓				✓						
Inability to write with a pen			✓		✓		✓	✓			
Involuntary head movements					✓			✓			
Unable to manipulate environment					✓			✓			
Suffers from extreme stress	✓				✓				✓		