

# Teacher Guide

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



### Special provisions

Examples of special provisions which may be used to support students include:

- **Technology** – use of laptop for writing tasks, voice activated software for students with low literacy skills, assessment items in electronic form for students with visual impairment,
- **Alternative assessment formats** – practical tests, oral presentations, electronic forms of presentations, all allow demonstration of knowledge for students who have difficulty in writing
- **Assessment requirements** - extra time for reading and completing examination papers, extension of assignment due date, reasonable reduction in word limit required for assignment, use of a separate room for test
- **Assessment supports** - signing interpreters, scribe/note taker, built in relief breaks
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### Special consideration for assessment requirements

Where a student's disability or special need impacts significantly on their ability to complete assessment items or tasks required as per the unit outline, the student may apply through the college Student Services team for Special Consideration. This process formally records the circumstance and decision making in accordance with OBSSS guidelines.



### 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 AST Co-ordinator, psychologist 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 psychologist 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 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 psychologists**

Further information can be obtained through the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, WODEN 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.

Provisions that are made for students with disability or special need are underpinned by the Disability Discrimination ACT (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005).

## 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.

Disability standards for Education (2005) aim to ensure that: students with disability are able to access and participate in education and training free from discrimination, and on the same basis as other students.

Special Needs students are those where the disability or impairment impacts on their capacity to function un-impeded.

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.

## Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are measures that the education provider may implement to enable the student to participate in the learning experiences (including the assessment and certification requirements) of the course or program, and any relevant supplementary course or program, on the same basis as a student without a disability.

## 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 offset the impact of the 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 that assessment items are adjusted, in a timely fashion, to meet the learning needs of the student and address any disadvantage in the student's learning resulting from his or her 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 support different learning styles and student's special needs as part of their daily practice and planning.

**Advice can be sought from:** the school psychologist, career advisers, student welfare teachers, special needs co-ordinator and team, disability education partners, hearing and visual impaired consultants, special education teachers, heads of department and other interested staff in your school.

Functional disability	Autism (ASD)	Chronic fatigue	Chronic pain	Hearing	Learning disabled	Medical condition	Overuse injury	Physical disability	Psychiatric	Speech	Visually impaired
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	✓				✓						
Inability to write with a pen			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			
Involuntary head movements				✓	✓			✓			
Unable to manipulate environment				✓	✓			✓			
Suffers from extreme stress	✓			✓	✓				✓		