Guidelines and Procedures

for the Provision of Alternative Arrangements in Tests and Examinations to Students with Disability/Impairment

A Research-based Standard to Guide Implementation

Written by ACHIEVE's Subgroup on Alternative Arrangements

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ACHIEVE

The National Post-Secondary Education Disability Network Incorporated

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Introduction

This document sets out guidelines and procedures with which individual Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs) may provide consistent alternative arrangements in tests and examinations to students with disability/impairment.

ACHIEVE, The National Post-Secondary Education Disability Network Incorporated, commissioned research into current provision of extra time in alternative arrangements. The *National Survey of Alternative Assessment Arrangements Policy and Practice in Tertiary Education* (ACHIEVE, 2015) reported that 82% of respondent TEIs use a standard in allocating extra time in tests and examinations and 18% use a case-by-case approach. When asked how ACHIEVE could work towards clarification on policy, provision and practice, respondents suggested national guidelines for consistent provision across institutions while enabling TEIs to develop their own policy and practice.

Based on the research findings, ACHIEVE set up a working subgroup to compile standardised guidelines and procedures for the implementation of alternative arrangements in tests and examinations. Subgroup membership was open to all ACHIEVE members, including Students' Associations, and its members are listed on the following page. The subgroup met four times during a yearlong process to take responsibility for these guidelines. We would like to thank the subgroup for the extra work during the drafting phase of the project and to acknowledge feedback and suggestions received from institutions and student associations during the consultation phase of the project. We also acknowledge exemplars by DAWN, The Disability Advisors' Working Network, Ireland, and BCIT, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Canada. Finally, these national Guidelines and Procedures would not be possible without the continued support of Ako Aotearoa, The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

ACHIEVE's goal is to align standardised guidelines and procedures with current best practice, internal policy in each TEI and *Kia Ōrite, Achieving Equity: New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments* (ACHIEVE, 2004).

Marg Dobson and Melissa Lethaby, ACHIEVE Co-Presidents

ACHIEVE
c/o University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054
New Zealand
Email info@achieve.org.nz
Web www.achieve.org.nz

ACHIEVE Subgroup on Guidelines

ACHIEVE Administrator, Rachel 'Aluesi

ACHIEVE Facilitator, Martha Bell, PhD

Ara Institute of Canterbury, Christine Brennan

Auckland University Students' Association (AUSA):

       Student Welfare Officer 2015, Miriam Bookman

       Student Welfare Officer 2016, Penelope Jones

Social Resources Ltd, Educational Psychologist, Jack Austin

Southern Institute of Technology, Claire O'Neill

University of Otago, Jackie Fox

University of Otago, ACHIEVE Co-President, Melissa Lethaby

University of Waikato, ACHIEVE Co-President, Marg Dobson

Victoria University of Wellington, Brett Challacombe-King

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Section One - Alternative Arrangements in Tests and Examinations

Context

These guidelines and procedures for the provision of alternative arrangements in tests and examinations to students with disability/impairment in Aotearoa New Zealand were developed by ACHIEVE in response to the research reported in National Survey of Alternative Assessment Arrangements Policy and Practice in Tertiary Education (2015). ACHIEVE's vision states:

> *Assessment and examination policies, procedures and practices provide students with impairments with the same opportunity as their peers to achieve learning outcomes.*

> *Kia Ōrite – Achieving Equity* (2004)

The Guidelines and Procedures document brings together and makes available the collective experience of ACHIEVE members for the benefit of all tertiary students with disability/impairments within and between tertiary learning environments in Aotearoa New Zealand. Additionally, the document recognises the legislative requirements that mandate, wherever it is necessary and reasonable to do so, all tertiary education and training institutions (TEIs and PTEs) to take into account a student's impairment and make appropriate adjustments to assessment procedures to reduce the impact of the impairment, however temporary or permanent, on their learning.

With the aim of providing a pathway to equitable achievement these guidelines and procedures provide standardised processes for determining the reasonableness of modifications to assessments. They will complement the internal practices and contextual knowledge within every institution and will enable tertiary organisations to make decisions which are legislatively compliant, measurably consistent across the sector and are best practice for students with disability/impairment.

ACHIEVE respects its relationship with Māori and is committed to enhancing the equitable provision of alternative arrangements for hauā Māori. ACHIEVE intends these guidelines and procedures to apply to domestic and international students enrolled in tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Kia tau te rangimārie
Kia whaihua i a mātou mahi

Let there be peace amongst us
May our work together be fruitful

Terms

Alternative Arrangements: inclusive assessment of learning outcomes limited to tests of longer than 30 minutes and examinations; this term is used in Aotearoa New Zealand in place of 'reasonable accommodations' which is used in other countries.

Assessment: any process that demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme through standardised formative or summative assessment criteria used to gauge a learner's knowledge, skill, aptitude or competency. For the purposes of these Guidelines and Procedures, the term assessment refers to only that which is based on tests and examinations.

Disability: a temporary, long-term or permanent condition which may result in any substantial disadvantage in assessment of learning outcomes (§2 Human Rights Act, 1993) (see Appendix 1 Definition of Disability).

Impairment: the New Zealand Disability Strategy states that "disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments." Instead, "disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have."

Disability/Impairment: term used for the purposes of these Guidelines and Procedures in recognition that various definitions of disability exist.

Hauā Māori: a people-centred indigenous identity of impairment and difference. Māori peoples' approaches to disability/impairment within particular cultural disability frameworks, especially involving whānau hauā, are to be respected.

Kaiako: a teacher, lecturer or tutor, usually in a wānanga.

Inclusive Education: an educational environment in which diversity among students is valued and procedures are implemented to facilitate equitable access, participation and outcomes for all students.

Provision of Alternative Arrangements

Alternative arrangements processes are confined to accommodations which enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and ability without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind the provision of accommodations in tests and examinations is to alleviate substantial disadvantage without affecting the integrity of the assessment or fairness to all students. This does not preclude the ability of individual tertiary institutions to offer different assessment options to students within their own policy environments.

Alternative arrangements should seek to reflect best practice in policy and provision. Processes may vary between institutions, but it is expected that they are robust, consistent and regularly reviewed.

Students are required to apply for alternative arrangements according to the processes at the TEI in which they are enrolled. For example, some require that students first register with the Disability Services and Support office (hereafter called DSS to encompass this service) in their institution in order to apply for alternative arrangements, while others require that students apply to the Examinations Office. Individual TEIs provide assistance and web-based information on how to apply.

All applications must be supported by current documentation from an appropriate professional providing evidence of disability/impairment and a recommendation of appropriate alternative arrangements. It is the responsibility of each TEI to assess the application and supporting documentation to ensure the principles of equity and fairness are upheld. Each TEI will assess the application internally or request assessment from a Learning Assessor, according to its own processes.

The student must inform the TEI of any changes to their disability/impairment that may require new or revised arrangements. Changes to alternative arrangements are approved only upon receipt of updated documentation, according to the processes at the TEI in which they are enrolled.

The provision of alternative arrangements may be made in collaboration and, as such, information about the alternative arrangements may be made known to the appropriate academic, support, administrative and examination staff or kaiako (teacher). During all staff collaborations, details of each student's disability/impairment should be kept confidential, unless directly relevant to the provision of support and permitted with consent from the student, according to TEI processes.

Students may request a review if specific alternative arrangements have not been granted and they feel that the principles of fairness and equity have not been met. If they have an ongoing concern, students should follow the complaints procedure of the TEI in which they are enrolled.

Provision of alternative arrangements is not shown on a student's official transcript.

Procedure for Granting Alternative Arrangements

Every TEI will establish a clear Procedure for Granting Alternative Arrangements to outline steps which both students and staff take. It is imperative that appropriate arrangements are granted consistently and principles of equity and fairness are upheld.

When students request alternative arrangements, the usual steps are:

1. The student:
    a. registers with the TEI and/or DSS/Examinations Office for support as appropriate
    b. meets with a Disability Advisor as appropriate
    c. submits supporting documentation that indicates they have a disability/impairment or psycho/social disorder that affects their ability to study.

2. The DSS/Examinations Office:
    a. listens to the student describe their needs for alternative arrangements
    b. assesses the need for alternative arrangements
    c. requests supporting documentation if needed (from specialist/Learning Assessor)
    d. creates a student support plan
    e. actions the student support plan as required.

When alternative arrangements are granted, the usual next steps are:

1. The student:
    a. waits to be contacted by DSS/Examinations Office prior to the test and examination period if alternative arrangements are made automatically
    b. contacts the department administrator, as appropriate, to organise alternative arrangements for tests taken during term time

2. The DSS/Examinations Office:
    a. contacts the academic staff member or kaiako to outline the alternative arrangements in place and sends them a copy of the student support plan
    b. requests examples of technical or language text for the reader, writer or reader/writer, only as necessary
    c. informs the student of the location of the alternate venue, training sessions and/or further details as appropriate
    d. actions the provision of alternative arrangements within the DSS/Examinations Office protocols
    e. contacts the student to confirm the student support plan is in place as appropriate.

3. The academic staff member:
    a. sends supporting information such as text examples or plain language version of the test or examination paper to the DSS/Examinations Office.

Section Two – Guidelines for Provision of Alternative Arrangements in Tests and Examinations

Alternate Venues

Alternate examination venues may be required to meet the disability/impairment related needs of some students during a test or examination. For example, when a student is unable to sit the examination under conventional circumstances or when the provision of accommodations may disrupt other students sitting in the main examination venue. These students normally sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group. Depending on individual student need and the local institution's arrangements, these venues may be shared with other students or these venues may be allocated to a student with a disability/impairment on their own.

Reasons vary and alternate venues may be granted if a student requires:

- Flat access
- Quiet location
- Natural light
- Extra time
- Venue close to bathroom facilities
- Use of a reader, writer or reader/writer
- Venue for anxiety, depression and mental health reasons
- Privacy for medical reasons
- Space for stretching
- Time for resting
- A NZSL interpreter
- Assistive technology
- Access to equipment or ergonomic equipment
- Other disability/impairment-related need

Procedures for Provision of Alternate Venues for Tests and Examinations

The TEI should ensure the following procedures for providing alternate examination venues:

- A venue should address the particular reason for its provision for the student.
- Alternate venues should be fully accessible to students with disability/impairment.
- Students who require only extra time may be roomed together in one alternate venue, except when, in exceptional circumstances, a student requires a separate room.
- The Examinations Office (or equivalent) will ensure that all announcements or amendments by lecturers, kaiako or academic staff will be conveyed to all students sitting tests or examinations in alternative examination venues.

Rest Breaks

Rest breaks should be considered as pauses in the test or examination during which time the clock is stopped. Rest breaks may be required to meet the disability/impairment related needs of some students during a test or examination. Rest breaks are not to be granted or used for the provision of extra time in a test or examination.

Reasons vary and rest breaks may be granted in the following circumstances:

- If the student's ability to complete the examination within the required time is significantly impacted by a medical, sensory, psychological or physical disability/impairment or disorder.
- If the student experiences fatigue in such a manner that concentration or communication is impacted for an extended period of time.
- If the student experiences a worsening of their physical or sensory disability/impairment with certain conditions likely to occur during the particular test or examination. For example, a student who experiences visual stress when reading the test paper or examination booklet may need a break.
- If the student requires extended time to access the bathroom because of physical or medical needs.
- If the student has a medical condition that requires management.

Procedures for Provision of Rest Breaks in Tests and Examinations

The TEI should ensure the following procedures in relation to providing rest breaks:

- The standard recommendation for a rest break is 10 minutes per hour of test or examination.
- Rest breaks may be allocated for up to 10 minutes per hour of test or examination at the discretion of the DSS/Examinations Office.
- During rest breaks students are not permitted to talk about, or work on, their tests or examinations.
- The test or examination script should be turned over during all rest breaks while the clock is stopped.
- The test or examination venue should be locked when left empty during rest breaks.
- A student who has been granted rest breaks will require a separate test or examination venue that may be shared.
- A student is responsible for managing their rest breaks and they may take as much or as little out of their allocation as required to meet their needs.
- The invigilator is responsible for ensuring the student does not exceed the rest break time allocation.
- The invigilator is responsible for accompanying the student in the instance that they need to leave the test or examination venue, for example, to use bathroom facilities, during the rest break. In most cases, it is appropriate for the invigilator to wait by the hand basin and accompany the student back to the test or examination venue. A male invigilator should not enter the female bathrooms and a female invigilator should not enter the male bathrooms; it is appropriate in such cases to wait outside the bathroom. The invigilator may carry with them the student's test or examination script during rest breaks if it is not locked inside the test or examination venue.

Extra Time Allowance

Students whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability/impairment may require an extra time allowance to complete tests and examinations.

Reasons vary and extra time may be granted in the following circumstances:

- If the student experiences a worsening of their disability/impairment due to stress and/or environmental variations.
- Where the student has an impairment related to their speech and is using a writer or taking oral tests or examinations and requiring more than the allotted time.
- Where the student's disability/impairment impacts on their ability to undertake practical tasks in the allotted time.
- Where the student's reading and/or writing is significantly weaker than average.
- Where the student's working memory and/or processing speed is significantly weaker than average.
- Where the student's disability/impairment or their psychological condition are deemed to constitute a significant barrier to performance.
- If the student is impacted by the effects of medication.

The standard for extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour of test or examination. In exceptional circumstances, and within the policy and guidelines set in the relevant local institution, this extra time standard may be extended.

- An example of exceptional circumstances is that on occasion a student may present with a significant disability/impairment and/or multiple disabilities/impairments and the additional time may be increased as appropriate.

Guidelines for determining extra time for students with an impairment involving a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are to be guided by the student's Learning Assessment and the DSS/Examinations Office recommendation.

Procedures for Provision of Extra Time in Tests and Examinations

The TEI should ensure the following procedures in relation to providing extra time:

- The recommended standard for extra time is 10 minutes per hour of test or examination.
- The invigilator is responsible for ensuring the student does not exceed the extra time allocation.
- The invigilator will not stop the clock in the event of the provision of extra time in a test or examination.
- A student who has been granted additional time will require a separate examination venue that may be shared.

Reader

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

A reader must follow strict protocols when communicating with the student and these protocols are consistent across TEIs according to the NZQA Guide, except in places in which the tertiary environment differs (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide). It is usually best if the reader is *not* involved in teaching or tutoring the student.

The tertiary environment differs to the secondary environment in that the reader *may* be a person teaching or tutoring the student. Occasionally the reader may be a student enrolled in or studying the same course as the student with a learning difficulty or disability/impairment. The familiarity which they have with the terminology and vocabulary being assessed is useful in the assessment. Conversely, if the reader and the student know each other, the nature of their relationship could advantage or disadvantage the student's answers.

Students may use assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software, to read the test or examination paper instead of a reader in person. Where the student is using assistive technology, an electronic copy of the test or examination paper will be required.

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

Guidelines for determining the provision of a reader for students with an impairment involving a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are to be guided by the student's Learning Assessment and the DSS/Examinations Office recommendation.

The student may require extra time of 10 minutes per hour when using a reader and this will be automatically allocated.

It is not the responsibility of the reader to check that the student is in the right room.

Procedures for Provision of a Reader in Tests and Examinations

- Where possible, the reader should be an independent person (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide).

- Extra time accommodation should automatically be included in the reader support arrangement[1] to allow for the test or examination questions to be read aloud.

- A separate examination venue is to be provided to accommodate the student and reader.

- In the case of a foreign language or specific technical terminology the reader should have prior knowledge of, or familiarity with, that terminology using examples provided by the academic staff member setting the test or examination.

- It is desirable that the reader has some knowledge of the subject of the test or examination.

- The reader and the student may request training and practice sessions before engaging in the test or examination environment, as necessary. Training should include clarification of boundaries.

- It is undesirable that the reader should also act as the invigilator for the examination. Independent of the reader, an invigilator or supervisor should be provided to protect staff, student and organisational integrity.

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[1] The extra time accommodation in the reader support arrangement is superseded by a reader/writer support arrangement.

Writer

A writer is required for a student who cannot handwrite clearly or who cannot use a computer due to the nature of their disability/impairment. A writer is sometimes called a scribe or amanuensis.

A writer must follow strict protocols when communicating with the student and these protocols are consistent across TEIs according to the NZQA Guide, except in places in which the tertiary environment differs (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide). It is usually best if the writer is *not* involved in teaching or tutoring the student.

The tertiary environment differs to the secondary environment in that the writer *may* be a person teaching or tutoring the student. Occasionally the writer may be a student enrolled in or studying the same course as the student with a learning difficulty or disability/impairment. The familiarity which they have with the terminology and vocabulary being assessed is useful in the assessment. Conversely, if the writer and the student know each other, the nature of their relationship could advantage or disadvantage the student's answers.

If assessment is that of competence in comprehension and communication, legibility may be best accommodated through use of a writer. If a core component of assessment is that of competence in spelling, grammar and written expression, this should be taken into regard in reaching a decision about the support to be provided to ensure inclusive assessment. Each TEI will be guided by the learning assessment and the DSS/Examinations Office recommendation.

The student will be provided with a separate venue when speaking the test or examination responses to a writer.

The student may require extra time of 10 minutes per hour when using a writer and this will be automatically allocated.

It is not the responsibility of the writer to check that the student is in the right room.

Procedures for Provision of a Writer in Tests and Examinations

- Where possible, the writer should be an independent person (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide).

- Extra time accommodation should automatically be included in the writer support arrangement[2] to allow for the exchange of information between the two parties.

- A separate examination venue is to be provided to accommodate the student and writer.

- In the case of a foreign language, or specific technical terminology the writer should have prior knowledge of, or familiarity with, that terminology using examples provided by the academic staff member setting the test or examination.

- It is desirable that the writer has some knowledge of the subject of the test or examination.

- The writer and the student may request training and practice sessions before engaging in the test or examination environment, as necessary. Training should include clarification of boundaries.

- The writer should have proficient literacy skills, including typing and/or legible writing skills, in order to be able to record answers at an appropriate speed.

- It is undesirable that the writer should also act as the invigilator for the examination. Independent of the writer, an invigilator or supervisor should be provided to protect staff, student and organisational integrity.

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[2] The extra time accommodation in the writer support arrangement is superseded by a reader/writer support arrangement.

Reader/Writer

A reader/writer accommodation is required for a student who takes more time to read the test or examination and who cannot handwrite the answers clearly or use a computer to write the answers.

A reader or writer may take the role of reader/writer for that student in the test or examination. A reader/writer must follow strict protocols when communicating with the student and these protocols are consistent across TEIs according to the NZQA Guide, except in places in which the tertiary environment differs (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide). It is usually best if the reader/writer is *not* involved in teaching or tutoring the student.

The tertiary environment differs to the secondary environment in that the reader/writer *may* be a person teaching or tutoring the student. Occasionally the reader/writer may be a student enrolled in or studying the same course as the student with a learning difficulty or disability/impairment. The familiarity which they have with the terminology and vocabulary being assessed is useful in the assessment. Conversely, if the reader/writer and the student know each other, the nature of their relationship could advantage or disadvantage the student's answers.

It is not the responsibility of the reader/writer to check that the student is in the right room.

Procedures for Provision of a Reader/Writer in Tests and Examinations

- Where possible, the reader/writer should be an independent person (see Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide).

- Extra time accommodation should automatically be included in the reader/writer support arrangement[3] to allow for the exchange of information between the two parties.

- A separate examination venue is to be provided to accommodate the student and reader/writer.

- In the case of a foreign language, or specific technical terminology the reader/writer should have prior knowledge of, or familiarity with, that terminology using examples provided by the academic staff member setting the test or examination.

- It is desirable that the reader/writer has some knowledge of the subject of the test or examination.

- The reader/writer and the student may request training and practice sessions before engaging in the test or examination environment, as necessary. Training should include clarification of boundaries.

- The reader/writer should have proficient literacy skills, including typing and/or legible writing skills, in order to be able to record answers at an appropriate speed.

- It is undesirable that the reader/writer should also act as the invigilator for the test or examination. Independent of the reader/writer, an invigilator or supervisor should be provided to protect staff, student and organisational integrity.

NB. See Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide for the procedures that a reader/writer must follow.

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[3] The extra time accommodation in the reader/writer support arrangement is the recommended standard of 10 minutes per hour of test or examination.

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Interpreter

NZSL is an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand. A sign language interpreter translates oral based language into New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) so a Deaf person can understand what is being communicated verbally.

Where a Deaf student's first language is NZSL an interpreter may, if requested, be made available to translate (sign) the written test or examination paper into NZSL.

A sign language interpreter may also be made available to a student whose first language is NZSL so that NZSL may be used by the student to answer (sign) the test or examination questions in NZSL. This can be done in one of the following ways:

- the student may sign his/her examination and have this simultaneously transcribed by a sign language interpreter/writer
- in exceptional circumstances where learning outcomes cannot be assessed by any other mode, the presentation of assignments or examination answers in NZSL by the student and recorded on videotape may be permitted.

If a Deaf student signs the test or examination responses to a NZSL interpreter assisting as a writer, or to a video camera to be recorded, then extra time, a separate examination venue and appropriate invigilation will be granted to ensure inclusive assessment. The invigilator is responsible for the test or examination paper, the venue, the duration of the test or examination and extra time allocation.

It is undesirable that the NZSL interpreter should also act as the invigilator for the test or examination. Independent of the NZSL interpreter, an invigilator or supervisor should be provided to protect staff, student and organisational integrity.

It may be required that the test or examination be video/audio recorded in case of an appeal when translation into and from NZSL is involved.

Procedures for Provision of a NZSL Interpreter in Tests and Examinations

- If eligible for this support, the student may request that the interpreter translate questions from the written test or 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. The interpreter's translation must not change the meaning or provide inappropriate explanation. Any further clarification that is sought by the student should be referred to the examiner by the invigilator and must not be offered by the interpreter. Where a student's first language is NZSL, an interpreter may, if requested and appropriate, offer a translation of NZSL vocabulary into English; this may include offering the spelling of word in English using NZSL fingerspelling.

- Technical and subject specific terms may be finger spelt, when appropriate, but not signed. The interpreter must not provide additional examples, contextual information nor should he/she attempt to provide guidance or explanation to the student in answering a question.

- The NZSL interpreter should be familiar with the subject being examined. This will ensure that the meaning of the question is not changed and that technical and subject specific terms are recognised and finger spelt. (Technical and subject specific terms must not be signed. The student's ability to recognise and understand the English version of the technical or subject specific terms within a subject is part of the assessment. If such terms are signed instead of finger spelt, then the demands of the question may have been compromised.)

- If a student is eligible to sign his/her examination (taking account of the student's assessed needs and course requirements) and to have this simultaneously transcribed by a writer, the interpreter may seek clarification, as is normal in interpreted interaction. If the interpreter is seeking frequent clarification, the matter should be raised with the DSS/Examinations Office at the earliest opportunity, and a suitable replacement interpreter sought.

- The NZSL interpreter is not a reader. However, the same person may act as a reader and a NZSL interpreter, if permission has been given for the student to receive both kinds of support, with the agreement of the NZSL interpreter, and if the rules with regard to both kinds of support are followed.

- In English, Māori, other language and certain academic skills examinations, the NZSL interpreter may sign the instructions, but not the questions.

- The NZSL interpreter should not sign texts, source materials or literary extracts.

- In some contexts, students may only sign their answers where it is possible to fingerspell the answers or where the answers involve single words to ensure that what is written reflects the student's own use of English or other language.

- Extra time should always be considered when a NZSL interpreter is used to take account of the extra time required for repetition.
- Where necessary, a separate room will be provided for the test or examination and a separate invigilator or supervisor is also required.
- Under controlled circumstances, the test or examination paper may be made available to the interpreter up to one hour prior to the start of the test or examination to allow him/her to prepare for the test or examination.

NB. See Appendix 5 New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter Guide for the procedures that NZSL interpreters must follow.

Use of a Computer during Tests and Examinations

Computer-based tests and examinations are becoming more common for use by all students. There are specific circumstances in which a student with a disability/impairment may require a computer even if the other students are not using one during a test or examination.

Students whose ability to handwrite is significantly impacted by a disability/impairment may require a computer for typing during tests and examinations.

Decisions determining use of a computer for students with a specific impairment involving a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are to be guided by the student's Learning Assessment and the DSS/Examinations Office recommendation.

- Guidelines should be made available to the student on how their computer-based test or examination will take place. This should outline what is and is not available for their use and should highlight the expectations of staff, kaiako and students, including timeframes.

- The student should have access to the environment and any software or technology to be used during the test or examination prior to the test or examination session to familiarise themselves with the computer and to identify any potential issues.

Voice Recognition Software for Tests and Examinations

A student who is unable to type but who is eligible for use of a computer and/or a writer may use voice recognition software providing the student can already use this software fluently.

The use of a computer with voice recognition software requires a separate examination venue and invigilator for the test or examination.

- The student should have access to the environment and the voice recognition software to be used during the test or examination *prior to* the test or examination session, where possible, to familiarise themselves with the computer and to identify any potential issues.
- The student should transfer their voice profile to the computer to be used during the test or examination.
- Pre-programmed responses to command prompts, or macros, that insert pre-written text into a document should be turned off ahead of the test or examination period.

Procedures for Provision of Computer-Based Tests and Examinations

Provision of Computer

- The computer should be located away from other sources of distraction; either singly in a room or in a low distraction environment with other computers to be used in test or examination taking.

- The computer should provide a 'clean environment' for the student's use that controls the student's access to applications, parts of applications, data, and network resources on or from the computer as appropriate for the test or examination to be undertaken. (This may be via means of an Operating System Image loaded onto the computers that only contains the specific apps, parts-of-apps, data, and network resources that the student is allowed to utilise or via a Group Policy applied to regular computers that 'locks' down the environment to meet the same goal.)
    - A usual image/group policy will limit students to accessing just the word processing application with all other applications and all network access both deactivated.
    - It is also common to restrict access to the word processor's spelling, grammar and thesaurus functionality unless access to these is provided via another test or examination provision.

- Different Operating System Images or Group Policies may be provided that alter the student's access to applications, parts-of-applications, data, or network resources as is required for their test or examination provision.

- Appropriate time should be provided during the setup of the computer facilities for the loading of the correct Operating System Image or Group Policy and for testing to ensure the setup is correct and functional.

- Technical assistance should be readily available during any test or examination session and invigilators or supervisors should be aware of the computer provisions and of any contingency plans in place should unexpected circumstances occur.

- At least one replacement computer should be available during the test or examination period and a contingency plan should be established in case of computer malfunction.

- The software used during the test or examination should be set, wherever possible, to auto-save progress every 3-5 minutes. Auto-save should be to external storage media, such as a portable USB drive. This should be confirmed as working before each test or examination session. This media should be cleared of any data before each use in a test or examination session and should, ideally, be administered by the invigilator or supervisor.

- It is not the role of the reader/writer to administer the use of the computer or adaptive/assistive software or technology (AT).

Provision of Adaptive/Assistive Technology (AT)

- When a student requires a specific piece of adaptive/assistive software or technology (AT) to sit a computer-based test or examination, the provision of this AT should not compromise the intent of the test or examination, and where reasonably possible, this AT should be provided and incorporated into the computer to be used by this student for the duration of their test or examination period.

- If provision of the AT is not reasonably possible then a student should be able to utilise their own AT in examination and test situations as long as it can be demonstrated that (i) the technology in question is not network or data-retention capable, (ii) its use will not compromise the intent of the test or examination, and (iii) due to the nature of the student's disability/impairment, the use of the technology is essential to the student's ability to interact with or complete the test or examination. Examples of such technology include portable CCTVs, braille displays, hardware document readers, tactile keyboards, screen magnifiers and screen readers.

- For consistency, legitimate licensed software and not freeware should be required of all students using AT. This must be checked ahead of the test or examination period.

- The guidance of an AT professional may be required to help ensure that consistency in test or examination conditions is upheld where a specific AT has raised concerns.

- The provision or allowance of certain AT may require more specific supervision of the student during the test or examination session.

- Invigilators or supervisors should be made aware of the AT the student will be using and any points to be aware of.

- The provision of AT must also include the provision of extra time, in order for the student to read a magnified screen or use a mouse to activate onscreen calculations when compared to students not using a screen magnifier to read or not using a mouse to enact answers in maths software.

Technology, both general computer technology as well as Adaptive Technology (AT), is constantly evolving and what is provided for use in test and examination situations should be reviewed annually to ensure the provision keeps pace with the technology that the students are using.

Test Paper or Examination Booklet in Alternative Formats

Students who are vision impaired may require a test paper or an examination booklet in enlarged print. Students who are vision impaired may require graphs, diagrams, maps or other visual elements of the test paper or examination booklet presented in a tactile format. Students who are blind or vision impaired and fluent Braille readers may require a Braille version of the test paper or examination booklet.

Students who are Deaf may require a test paper or examination booklet written in plain English if this is appropriate in the assessment context.

Students who experience visual stress when reading the test paper or examination booklet may require coloured overlays or they may require that the test paper or examination booklet is printed on coloured paper.

Students who are using a computer to write their test or examination responses may require the test or examination in electronic *and* paper formats.

Procedures for Provision of Alternative Formats

- All of these alternative formats for tests and examinations should be requested and confirmed before the test or examination.
- For tests taken during term time, the student should contact the department administrator, as appropriate in the TEI in which they are enrolled, to organise alternative formats.

Flexible Test/Examination Arrangements

Flexible test/examination arrangements refer to any alteration in the standard form of assessment in order to accommodate a student's disability/impairment. These arrangements are normally made after discussion, and in agreement, with kaiako or academic staff.

These arrangements might include:

• provision of an oral test or examination instead of a written test or examination,

• some flexibility around the scheduling of tests or examinations, such as allowing more time between tests and/or examinations for a student with a physical disability who experiences fatigue, and/or

• tests or examinations split into more than one session.

It should be noted that flexible test/examination arrangements are granted in exceptional circumstances only. Such arrangements should be made via consultation between the student, DSS/Examinations Office staff and the academic staff member or kaiako and take into account the student's supporting documentation of their disability/impairment. In the event of provision of an oral test or examination, it may be required that the assessment be video/audio recorded in case of an appeal.

When a student is provided with flexible test or examination arrangements, it may be required that the student sign a Statutory Declaration stating that they will not communicate with other students involved in the same assessment who sit the assessment at one designated assessment time.

Ergonomic Furniture and Equipment in Test and Examination Venues

Students with disability/impairment may require alternative furniture (i.e. chair support, writing board, standing desk, footstool etc.) in test or examination venues and these should be provided ahead of the commencement of the test or examination.

Students with disability/impairment may require ergonomic peripherals, such as keyboards and mice, if a standard keyboard and/or mouse is not usable due to disability/impairment. If an appropriate ergonomic peripheral is not available then, wherever possible, the student's own ergonomic peripheral should be used where the peripheral in question does not pose an issue to the integrity of the computer setup for the test or examination.

- Personal ergonomic peripherals should be assessed on case-by-case basis by the DSS/Examinations Office for suitability.

Personal Assistants in Test and Examination Venues

Students who have a Personal Assistant may require the Personal Assistant to be in attendance at the test or examination venue. Personal Assistants are required to maintain examination conditions.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Definition of Disability

Disability/impairment is an evolving concept. Within the New Zealand context there are various definitions of disability.

The legal definition as prescribed in the **Human Rights Act 1993** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability, which it defines as:

- physical disability or impairment,

- physical illness,

- psychiatric illness,

- intellectual or psychological disability or impairment, or

- any other loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function; reliance on a guide dog, wheelchair, or other remedial means; the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing illness.

Statistics NZ defines disability as "any self-perceived limitation in activity resulting from a long-term condition or health problem; lasting longer or expected to last longer than six months or more and not completely eliminated by an assistive device." Statistics NZ also draws on the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** functional definition of disability as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner of within the range considered normal for a human being."

The **Ministry of Health** definition of disability as: "a person with a disability is someone who has been assessed as having a physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory disability (or a combination of these) that is likely to continue for a minimum of six months and result in a reduction of independent function to the extent that ongoing support is required."

'Disability' should be seen as the result of the interaction between a person and their environment. It is the disadvantage or restriction of activity for that person caused by social, economic, political and environmental factors which exclude full participation in their communities.

As such it is the responsibility of TEIs to ensure that people living with disability/impairments, including reading, writing or spelling difficulties, have equal rights and access to products, goods and services. Access is best facilitated through equitable, inclusive standards and practices to support the active engagement of people of all abilities in tertiary education.

Appendix 2 Guidelines for Granting Alternative Arrangements to Students with a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty

The Guidelines in this Appendix are informed by the criteria applied for managing national assessment in schools by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). These Guidelines are intended to assist TEIs when determining the alternative arrangements in tests and examinations that may be required by tertiary students with a disability/impairment who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty and by non-disabled students who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty.

The need for a particular accommodation is determined through the Procedure for Granting Alternative Arrangements, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability/impairment in a test or 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 arrangements may be granted based on the expertise, and at the discretion of, the Disability Services and Support office, Learning Support Manager or Examinations Office, depending on the local TEI environment.

Students with disability/impairment who demonstrate a lower than average writing speed or reading speed or working memory or processing speed (as evidenced in a current assessment) may require extra time in tests and examinations.

Students with disability/impairment who demonstrate one or more of the following may require a computer in tests and examinations:

      (i)   a lower than average writing speed (below 15 wpm)

      (ii)   a speed of processing or working memory significantly below peer standards

      (iii)   a level of legibility that would make the paper unreadable to an examiner

Students with a disability/impairment who demonstrate a spelling attainment that would impede a fair assessment may require the use of a writer.

Students with a disability/impairment whose reading speed, accuracy or comprehension is currently assessed significantly below age expectations may require a reader in tests and examinations.

All student assessments may include criterion-referenced or psychometric tests and may take into account the history of the student. Support provisions should be reviewed at least every two years.

Appendix 3 Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts from Students with Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD)

Due to the nature of a student's specific learning difficulty (SLD) it may be appropriate to advise the Examination Marker so that reasonable accommodation can be provided during the marking process. Instances where this would be appropriate are:

- the student has a verified disability/impairment and has been permitted the use of a writer for their examination
- the student has a verified disability/impairment and is entitled to examination support in the form of marking dispensation in lieu of using a writer and/or extra time.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to ensure students are not disadvantaged during the marking process as students who have a specific learning disability or are using a writer due to an exceptional circumstance (for example, due to having a fractured dominant arm) may find one or more of the following challenging:

- spelling,
- grammar,
- syntax,
- punctuation,
- sentence structure,
- paragraph structure.

If knowledge is being assessed then marks should be awarded for core information and not deducted for spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, sentence structure and/or paragraph structure. However, if clarity of expression and accuracy in spelling is an integral part of that which is being tested then errors as described above cannot be ignored.

Appendix 4 Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide

The Reader, Writer and Reader/Writer Guide that follows is drawn substantially from the Information and Procedures used in NCEA and NZ Scholarship Examinations in secondary schools and amended for the tertiary environment.

Working as a Reader and/or Writer

Your aim as the reader, writer or reader/writer is to assist the student to accommodate their learning difficulty during an assessment activity for a test or examination. You may be reading the activity brief/questions for the student or writing answers for the student or reading *and* writing for the student.

Who may not be a Reader and/or Writer?

To avoid conflict of interest the role of a reader, writer or reader/writer in the tertiary environment cannot be undertaken by:

- a relative
- a friend
- a close family friend
- anyone else with a reasonably close personal relationship to either the student or their family.

During the Assessment

- You **must only** do the task(s) approved for alternative arrangements for that student.
- You will be in separate accommodation away from the other students. Unless the alternative arrangements permit, do not allow the student to move around. If you feel that the student is not following normal procedures or is not using the alternative arrangements you should make a written report. In some TEIs this is called an Incident Report. The report is given to the test or examination invigilator or supervisor to be forwarded to the DSS/Examinations Office (for examinations) and the academic department (for tests).

The Job of the Reader

- As a reader you are the eyes of the student.
- You and the student will each have a copy of the assessment.
- You will read the assessment to the student clearly and at a speed they can follow.

- Make sure that they can easily hear what you are reading.
- They may ask you to re-read instructions or a passage. Do so clearly and wait for them to ask you to read again. You are not allowed to interpret the question or words for the student. To do so will invalidate their results.
- Please be patient if the student works slowly and avoid giving the student facial expressions or being hesitant if you see mistakes being made.
- The student may use a computer for writing their answers. A reader is not allowed to use a computer for a student.
- A reader is not allowed to encourage or prompt the student to work harder or faster in the assessment. To do so will invalidate their results.

The Job of the Writer

- You are the hands of the student and it is your responsibility to write the answers for the student.
- You and the student will each have a copy of the assessment.
- Make sure that you are writing any answers in the correct place.
- Make sure that the student can easily see what you are writing.
- Only write the words that they use and in the order that they **say** them to you.
- You are not allowed to interpret or to make suggestions about what you think the student is trying to write. To do so will invalidate their results.
- The student must dictate all punctuation, including full stops. You may capitlise the first letter of a new sentence.
- You are to spell all words correctly.
- You **must not** copy any sentences that the student has written. They **must** speak their words to you.
- A student may sketch out a few ideas for long answers or essays in the working/planning space in their booklet. They may then read from this.
- The student **must not** write out a complete answer and then read it to you or have you copy it.
- The student may ask you to re-write, edit or amend an answer they have already given.
- Please be patient if the student works slowly and avoid giving the student facial expressions or being hesitant if you see or hear mistakes being made.
- A student may be required to draw a diagram or map etc. to show an independent command of the skill being shown. A writer may add words or labels only as directed by the student.
- A writer is not allowed to encourage or prompt the student to work harder or faster in the assessment. To do so will invalidate their results.

- For physically-disabled/impaired students, non-English answers may be written in a language assessment, but the student must spell each word and add accents as required.

The Job of the Reader/Writer

- As a reader/writer you are the eyes and hands of the student.
- You and the student will each have a copy of the assessment.
- Make sure that you are writing answers in the correct place.
- You will read and write the answers for the student. Make sure that they can easily hear and see what you are reading or writing. Read instructions clearly at a speed they can follow.
- Only write the words that they use and in the order that they say them to you.
- You are not allowed to interpret the question or words for the student or to write what you think they are trying to say or to make suggestions about what they might write. To do so will invalidate their results.
- The student must dictate all punctuation, including full stops. You may capitlise the first letter of a new sentence.
- You are to spell all words correctly.
- You must not copy any sentences that the student has written. They **must** speak their words to you.
- A student may sketch out a few ideas for long answers or essays in the working/planning space in their booklet. They may then read from this.
- The student **must not** write out a complete answer and then read it to you or have you copy it.
- The student may ask you to re-write, edit or amend an answer they have already given.
- Please be patient if the student works slowly and avoid giving the student facial expressions or being hesitant if you see or hear mistakes being made.
- A reader/writer is not allowed to use a computer for a student when reading, but may type the answers on a computer in the role of writer.
- A student may be required to draw a diagram or map etc. to show an independent command of the skill being shown. A reader/writer may add words or labels only as directed by the student.
- A reader/writer is not allowed to encourage or prompt the student to work harder or faster in the assessment. To do so will invalidate their results.
- For physically-disabled/impaired students, non-English answers may be written in a language assessment, but the student must spell each word and add accents as required.

Procedures for Reader, Writer or Reader/Writer to Follow

- The examination invigilator or supervisor provides the test or examination paper and answers books to the reader/writer 30 minutes in advance of the test or examination. If the reader/writer takes this role, then they will collect the examination paper and answers books from the DSS/Examinations Office as appropriate in the TEI.

- The invigilator and the reader/writer will then meet the student at the test or examination venue booked for them. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they will meet the student at the test or examination venue booked for them in their dual role.

- The invigilator or supervisor will advise the student of the timeframes for the test or examination; establish the start and finish time, and advise 15 minutes and 5 minutes before the finish time. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they will advise on timeframes and timing in their dual role.

- The invigilator or supervisor will read all instructions in the test or examination paper before the reader/writer commences to read the questions. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they will read all instructions in the test or examination paper in their dual role. The instructions may be repeated whenever the student requests it.

- The reader/writer will not provide advice to the student on which questions to attempt, when to move onto the next question, or which order to attempt the questions in.

- The reader/writer will not comment on, use any intonation to emphasise or make any interpretation of the test or examination questions. They will also not discuss any matter with the student during the examination unless it relates to the re-reading of a test or examination question, as requested by the student.

- When working with visually impaired students, the reader/writer will help the student with the use of tactile maps/ diagrams/graphs/charts in order for the student to extract the information from the paper. The reader/writer will help the student locate the item.

- The reader/writer is required to produce an accurate written record of the student's answers and to write/type at an appropriate speed. The student may elect to write/draw sections of the examination paper themselves.

- Any notes, essay plans, diagrams produced by the student during the examination should be submitted with the examination answers books.

- If using a computer, the examination answers will be recorded on an institutional computer or laptop, or on a device owned by the student that has been checked ahead of the test or examination period. The computer will be set to automatically save content every 3-5 minutes.

- If the student needs a rest break, including a toilet break, the invigilator or supervisor will accompany them. In most cases, it is appropriate for the invigilator or supervisor to wait by

the hand basin and accompany the student back to the test or examination venue. A male invigilator should not enter the female bathrooms and a female invigilator should not enter the male bathrooms; it is appropriate in such cases to wait outside the bathroom. The invigilator or supervisor may carry with them the student's test or examination script during rest breaks if it is not locked inside the test or examination venue. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they will accompany the student on a rest break in their dual role.

- The completed examination answers books, examination paper (unless the student is instructed they can keep it) and other related documentation are to be returned to the test or examination invigilator by the reader/writer and returned to the DSS/Examinations Office by the invigilator or supervisor. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they will return all examination material as above in their dual role.

- Any difficulties during the test or examination should be reported by the reader/writer to the invigilator or supervisor following the test or examination. If the reader/writer takes the role of invigilator or supervisor, then they should report any difficulties arising during the test or examination to the DSS/Examinations Office in their dual role. Each TEI should have a transparent process in place for handling and responding to such incident reports. Clear roles and processes are required to protect staff, student and organisational integrity.

Appendix 5 New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter Guide

Procedures for a New Zealand Sign Language Interpreter to Follow

- The interpreter is responsible for the following procedures:
  - The interpreter should arrive before the commencement of the examination to make seating arrangements and to interpret interactions between the invigilator and/or the examiner and all students.
  - The interpreter and the student should use the time before the commencement of the examination to become familiar with each other's communication styles.
- After the commencement of the examination process:
  - The interpreter should translate (sign) all announcements and information given by the invigilator and/or the examiner prior to and during the examination.
  - The interpreter should translate (sign) all interaction between the examiner and the student, including questions and clarifications.
  - The interpreter should not interpret any other speech/sign and should not go beyond the student's communications or the invigilator's and/or examiner's communications.
- The interpreter stays until the student has completed the test or examination timeframe, including rest breaks or extra time as relevant to the student's alternative arrangements.

Memory aid for a Sign Language Interpreter

(from Joint Council of Qualifications, UK)

I am here to sign the questions in New Zealand Sign Language.

I can't sign words or phrases that the examiner thinks you should have learnt, but I can fingerspell them.

I can't sign anything the examiner did not write (e.g. text from a book, maps, tables, etc.).

I can sign the questions more than once, but I can't explain the questions.

I can't explain what the examiner wants you to write.

In an English, te reo Māori, other language or academic literacy assessment:

I can sign words, phrases and sentences in the writing part of the paper, but I can't sign anything in the reading part.

You can fingerspell answers or sign an answer if it is one word only and I will write it for you.