



# ACCOMMODATION AND EXAMINATION CONCESSIONS POLICY

**GREY COLLEGE SECONDARY**  
A SOUTH AFRICAN PARALLEL MEDIUM SCHOOL FOR BOYS

# ACCOMMODATION AND EXAMINATION CONCESSIONS

## I. INTRODUCTION

(The Accommodation Policy of Grey College Secondary School is based on the National Policy 'Dept. education doc.: *Alternative and adaptive methods for learners experiencing barriers to learning*'.)

### ***To whom is accommodation applicable?***

The Department of Education emphasizes the fact that accommodation and examination concessions are granted only with exception to mainstream learners. Accommodation is the last resort in an intervention strategy, and academic support (in the form of extra classes, study therapy, reading courses, medication, support and involvement of parents and teachers, etc.) must be proven ineffective before applying for accommodation and examination concessions. These accommodation measures and examination concessions relate to learners who, due to the nature of their learning barrier, require extraordinary concessions in regards to examinations.

### ***What is the purpose of accommodation?***

When considering alternative or adapted examinations/assessments, the aim should be to obtain an accurate reflection of the learner's knowledge and skills being assessed. The examination/assessment standards may not change and such a learner may not benefit unfairly. The sole purpose should be for the learner who has the necessary potential to be given a fair opportunity to demonstrate whether he can meet assessment requirements.

- **Alternative assessment may never be implemented to reflect an inaccurate image of a learner's scholastic potential.**
- **Accommodation will commence as conservatively as possible in order to maintain the independence of the learner.**

## 2. DIFFERENT TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION/EXAMINATION CONCESSIONS

- **Extended time:** Offered to learners who, due to a learning disability, are unable to complete an examination paper within the allocated time.
- **Prompter:** Learner is refocused by means of verbal or physical gesture.
- **Enlarged font:** The paper is presented in a customized font size and layout.
- **Resting period:** Additional time is granted to learners in the form of a resting period.
- **Reader:** In exceptional cases, a designated person reads the paper to the learner.
- **Audio aid:** Reading aid is offered by means of a computer or MP3 player.
- **Computer typing:** This is offered to learners whose handwriting is illegible.
- **Scribing:** In exceptional cases, an examination is completed with the help of a designated person who writes down the answers provided by the learner.
- **Reading and scribing:** In exceptional cases, a designated person reads the examination paper to the learner and also writes down the answers provided by the learner.

### 3. ACCOMMODATION PANEL

The final recommendation of candidates is made by a multi-disciplinary team. Applications for alternative assessment strongly rely on the integrity of those involved.

**The following individuals form part of the accommodation panel:**

- Deputy principal - Mr A. Els
- Head of academics - Mrs. T. Roos
- Counselling psychologist - Mrs. C. Cuyler-Greeff
- Accommodation coordinator - Mrs. L. Claassens

**Supporting staff:**

- Language teachers concerned
- Subject teacher(s) able to provide input

### 4. EXTERNAL REFERENCES FOR ACCOMMODATION

#### 4.1 Recommendations by external psychologists, therapists and medical specialists:

Many of our learners are evaluated outside of school (by external psychologists, therapists and medical specialists) and accommodation is recommended by these specialists. Their reports and knowledge are highly appreciated and are important for the final application to the Department of Education. In the case of such a referral, the following procedure is followed:

- The report is referred to the Learning & Support Centre (LSC) for consideration.
- The learner's teachers, especially his language teachers, are asked to record and submit evidence of his school work and progress to the LSC.
- The school psychologist evaluates the learner and compiles a report based on the results and recommendations.
- The complete procedure as in point 5 of the policy is followed.

#### 4.2 Recommendation by previous schools/educational institutions:

If a learner received accommodation at his previous school/education institution, such a learner will NOT automatically receive accommodation at Grey College Secondary School. In such a case the following procedure is followed:

- The reports from the previous school/education institution are presented to the LSC.
- The complete procedure as in point 5 of the policy is followed.

## 5. PROCEDURE

The following procedure applies to learners in grade 8 – 11.

### **Introductory thoughts**

Accommodation for learners in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases is granted only with exception. Each application/case is assessed individually. Accommodation in these phases is merely for support and learners should primarily be encouraged to develop basic scholastic skills.

### **Step 1: Identification**

- The class/subject teachers observe the learner's functioning and/or performance in class assessments and examinations. During the marks discussion at the beginning of the second and third term, teachers report potential candidates.
- Learners should be granted the opportunity to develop skills in order to achieve independence, and the necessary recommended interventions should be applied.
- Annual re-evaluation is required, as well as evidence of the implementation of all recommended interventions.
- Reports from professionals outside of school, in conjunction with school-based testing, are taken into consideration in order to determine whether or not the learner needs accommodation/examination concessions.

### **Step 2: Application**

- The "Personal Information Form" and the Department of Education "Parent/Guardian's Consent Letter" are completed by the parent/guardian and submitted along with the supporting documents and reports (medical and specialist reports, proof of any interventions, etc.). The relevant teachers complete the "Support Needs Assessment Form". An example of written scholastic work (an incomplete examination paper, illegible handwriting, spelling errors, etc.) must be attached. All reports and documents are submitted to the accommodation coordinator at the LCS.

### **Step 3: Evaluation/Testing**

- Secondary school learners are referred to the psychologist at Grey College Secondary School for evaluation in order to determine the need for accommodation/examination concessions and to identify the type of assistance required.
- The relevant report with recommendations is submitted to the accommodation coordinator at the LSC.
- The accommodation coordinator discusses the documents/reports and recommendations with the school psychologist.
- Record is kept of evaluations and supporting documents.

#### **Step 4: Meeting of accommodation panel**

- The deputy principal informs the relevant staff members of the date for the discussion of applications.
- Applications and recommendations are discussed in detail.
- The final decision is made by the accommodation panel.
- Selected applications are submitted to the Department of Education for approval.

#### **Step 5: Contact with parent(s)/guardian(s)**

- The deputy principal conveys the accommodation panel's recommendations to the parent/guardian by means of a letter.
- Parents, together with the learner, sign the "Counter Performance Clause" in order for the learner to qualify for accommodation/examination concessions.
- Record is kept of all communication and documents.

#### **Step 6: Follow-up**

- Each term, after marking the learner's paper, the teacher concerned completes the "Accommodation Revision Form" as follow-up in order to determine the effectiveness of the accommodation.
- The effectiveness of the accommodation/examination concession is discussed during the marks discussion. If any changes are proposed, the procedure as in point 5 will be followed.
- Record is kept of all communication and documents.

#### **Step 7: Examination concessions revision**

- The accommodation panel reviews each case on merit; evidence of interventions must be submitted.
- Learners are re-evaluated annually.
- If necessary, the accommodation panel makes a new recommendation (this may include revoking existing accommodation or suggesting different types of accommodation/examination concessions).
- Grade 8s are monitored and re-evaluated during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> term, as well as during their final year of primary school.
- Grades 9 to 12 are monitored and re-evaluated during the 1<sup>st</sup> term.
- Grade 12 applications for the NSC examinations are submitted to the Department of Education on the last day of the first term.

### **6. PROCEDURE FOR USE OF EQUIPMENT/APPARATUS**

The learner's parent/guardian is responsible for the provision of the reading aid device – computer, voice recorder, digital recorder, etc. If an external writer and/or scribe is used, the deputy principal must be contacted for the necessary criteria. The parent/guardian is responsible for the identification and compensation of a suitable candidate (compensation amounts to approximately R800.00/exam, though rates may vary depending on the service provider). Sufficient time must be provided for pre-approval of the candidates concerned. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing audio aid apparatus, as well as for the compensation of persons involved in the audio-recording of papers.

## 7. CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION TO EXAMINATION

(Read in conjunction with “Department education doc.: Alternative and adaptive methods for learners experiencing barriers to learning”).

- Independence, not scholastic achievement, must be prioritized in the selection of learners.
- The learner should have sufficient cognitive ability to be able to benefit from accommodation/ examination concessions.
- Accommodation is provided to learners with severe reading and spelling lags and not as compensation for lags in language comprehension, sentence construction and/or slight lags in reading and spelling.
- In general, application for accommodation is not allowed for individual subjects. However, each application will be considered on merit.
- Accommodation may not be allowed in order to compensate for a lack of language proficiency in a first additional language. Each candidate’s request will be assessed on merit, and motivation for such a request will be considered in order to make a final decision.
- Accommodation is selected strictly in accordance with the manpower and facilities available at Grey College Secondary School.
- Applications/requests from parents will not be considered as this may create a precedent. Parents/guardians should make an appointment with the head of academics to discuss the possibility of accommodation/examination concessions. Accommodation/examination concessions are provided only in order to enable the learner to develop as an independent individual.
- The diagnosis of the learner by a professional outside the school will be considered *in conjunction with* the evaluation at the LSC to determine whether the learner needs accommodation.

### 7.1 Extended time

*Description:*

A maximum of 20 minutes per hour is allowed (depending on the learner’s diagnosis).

*Criteria:*

- Learners who have physical and/or neurological disabilities and who have a slow work pace.
- The learner’s reading/comprehension lags are of such a *severe* degree that his reading and/or writing pace is too slow to answer papers within the time allocated.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and proof of interventions **MUST** be provided.

### 7.2 Prompter

*Description:*

A prompter refocuses the learner who suffers from severe concentration problems and who is easily distracted. It is applied by means of a verbal or physical gesture.

*Criteria:*

- Learners who are easily distracted by external and internal stimuli.
- Learners with severe anxiety conditions that lead to disorientation and lack of concentration.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions **MUST** be provided.

### **7.3 Enlarged script**

*Description:*

Font and layout of worksheets/papers are enlarged and increased.

*Criteria:*

- May be applied to learners from grade 8 to 12.
- Learners with severe visual problems.
- Learners with physical disabilities, severe hand-eye coordination barriers and/or severe visual motor integration barriers.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions **MUST** be provided.

### **7.4 Audio aid**

*Description:*

This compensatory measure supports serious reading lags as it pertains to home language and/or first additional language by means of an audio recording of the paper, along with the written version.

*Criteria:*

- Only learners from grade 10 onwards, who have a history of interventions that have been proven ineffective, will be considered. Learners **MUST** be allowed to develop the necessary skills. Ad hoc cases will be considered for learners in lower grades.
- Learner receives this accommodation **ONLY** if audio aid is used as a study method.
- Learner's comprehension and reading speed per minute will be compared to standard norms in order to make a recommendation.
- Should the learner qualify for an audio aid accommodation, it **MUST** be applied to all subjects.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions **MUST** be provided.

### **7.5 Resting period**

*Description:*

- Additional time as resting period for learners with specific medical needs. The time allocated for resting is granted in addition – i.e. learners may not continue with the paper during the resting period.

*Criteria:*

- Learners with specific medical conditions, who require extra time to rest, stretch, move and/or take medication.
- Reports on professional diagnosis **MUST** be provided.

### **7.6 Reader**

*Description:*

A designated person reads the paper to the learner in a separate room.

*Criteria:*

- Allowed only in extreme cases.
- Learners with *severe* problematic reading skills who do not benefit from audio aid. Physical and neurological disabilities e.g. epilepsy and Tourette's.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions **MUST** be provided.

## 7.7 Computer typing

### *Description:*

A computer is used as a tool by learners who experience *severe* handwriting difficulties.

### *Criteria:*

- This accommodation is granted with caution and only in extreme cases (learner must NOT be alienated from the conventional writing medium, especially in lower grades).
- Learners whose handwriting is completely illegible.
- Learners with a severe speech impairment or who cannot communicate verbally, e.g. apraxia.
- Learners with physical disabilities may use a special device in conjunction with a computer.
- Before utilised in examination procedures, the learner must be familiar with the software and hardware involved and use these as study aid on a permanent basis.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions MUST be provided.

## 7.8 Scribe (Writer)

### *Description:*

The scribe (a designated person) writes down the learner's answers as dictated by the learner.

### *Criteria:*

- Scribe consideration takes place ONLY from grade 10 onwards (ad hoc cases for lower grades will be considered only in exceptional cases; room must be allowed for independent development).
- Learners who suffer from severe physical disabilities, who cannot write independently and who cannot work with a computer or handle instruments and/or devices used in certain subjects.
- The teacher/examiner is unable to read written work; learner's handwriting is illegible. Phonetic spelling is acceptable and such a learner does *not* qualify for this accommodation.
- Exemption for mathematics is allowed only if a learner's physical disability prevents him from writing mathematics independently, using a computer, a calculator and/or handling mathematical instruments.
- Ad hoc cases where learner's spelling and handwriting are problematic (ONLY exceptional cases).
- Learners who cannot write independently due to a temporary injury; a medical certificate is required.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions MUST be provided.

## 7.9 Reader and scribe (writer)/Amanuensis

### *Description:*

Learner is supported by a designated person who reads the question paper and writes down the answers as dictated by the learner.

### *Criteria:*

- Reading and scribing are considered only from grade 10 onwards (ad hoc cases as regards lower grades will be considered ONLY in exceptional cases; room must be allowed for independent development).

- If a learner who qualifies for a scribe also experiences serious reading problems and usually receives reading assistance, a reading accommodation may be granted.
- Learners who suffer from severe physical disabilities, who cannot work with a computer or handle instruments and/or devices used in certain subjects.
- The teacher/examiner is unable to read written work; learner's handwriting is illegible.
- Exemption for mathematics is allowed only if a learner's physical disability prevents him from writing mathematics independently, using a computer, a calculator and/or handling mathematical instruments.
- Ad hoc cases where learner's spelling and writing are extremely problematic (ONLY exceptional cases).
- Learners who cannot write independently due to a temporary injury; a medical certificate is required.
- Reports on professional diagnosis and interventions MUST be provided.

## 8. METHOD OF PRESENTATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- **Internal examination**

Although accommodation arrangements are an internal matter, departmental recommendations are still required. Professional reports and evidence of interventions as early as Foundation/Intermediate Phase must be retained/submitted.

- **External examination – NSC examination (grade 12 only)**

- Learners who write the NSC examination may not receive or apply for accommodation for the first time in grade 12. Professional reports and evidence of interventions from as early as Foundation/Intermediate Phase must be retained/submitted.
- The accommodation coordinator compiles the motivated application for each suitable candidate. Applications are submitted to the Department of Education at the end of the first term.

- **Examination arrangements pertaining to learners who receive accommodation/examination concessions:**

1. **The deputy principal will make the necessary arrangements** for the completion of internal examinations in advance.
2. During the NSC examination, if a compensatory measure(s) is implemented for a candidate, ***no information may be written on the examination script***. A copy of the departmental letter of authorization is attached to the examination script and sent to the Department of Education along with the other candidates' examination scripts.
3. **During the NSC examination, if a candidate completes the examination with the assistance of a scribe or audio aid** or if the font has been enlarged, the scribe, audio tape reader or the person responsible for enlarging the paper, must sign the ***departmental confidentiality statement for examiners and invigilators***.
4. **If a candidate completes the examination with the assistance of a scribe**, all answers and everything that is said in the examination room must be recorded on audio tape. (NB: Papers may be read to learners only with the written consent

from the Department of Education). At the end of the examination session, the audio tape must be submitted along with the examination script.

5. **If a candidate utilises a computer during the examination**, a copy of the departmental letter of consent is attached to the candidate's printed examination paper. In the case of the NSC examination, it must be sent to the Department of Education in a sealed envelope along with the other candidates' examination scripts.
6. **During the NSC examination, if the examination paper has to be enlarged**, the head invigilator may, after the sealed envelope has been opened, take one of the examination papers to be enlarged. This must be done immediately. Only during internal examinations may the paper be enlarged and kept safe ahead of time.
7. **If candidates receive *extra time* as compensatory measure**, the extra time will be added at the end of the time allocated for the examination.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY PAPERS BE HANDLED OR  
TRANSPORTED BY LEARNERS BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF THE  
INTERNAL AND/OR EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS.**