

Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements

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Introduction

This is a guide for teachers, lecturers, and trainers, and is about what to do when considering and making requests for candidates who require special assessment arrangements.

SQA is committed to equal opportunities for all candidates, and assessment arrangements should ensure that candidates have fair opportunities to show that they can achieve the standards required for Units and Courses.

Special assessment arrangements are alternatives to the assessment arrangements detailed in the published specifications for SQA's qualifications. They are intended for candidates who can achieve the national standards but cannot do so by the published assessment procedures — the reason for this might be a physical disability, a sensory impairment, a learning difficulty or a temporary problem at the time of the assessment.

Nevertheless, all candidates must be assessed against the published assessment criteria which state the standards for a Unit or Course. Concessions cannot be made for a candidate's inability to meet the standards.

Employers and educational institutions rely to a great extent on potential employees' and entrants' qualifications. SQA must be sure that the process of assessment leading to the certification of attainment:

- ◆ is rigorous and fair
- ◆ allows candidates to demonstrate the skills and knowledge required for the award

Special assessment arrangements must not compromise the credibility of the award. All interested parties, including candidates, must have confidence in the result. Alternative assessments must:

- ◆ measure the specified activity against the published standards (be valid)
- ◆ give consistent results (be reliable)
- ◆ operate within available resources, facilities and time (be practicable)

1 Quality Assurance

Special assessment arrangements and quality assurance

To be consistent in our procedures and fair to all candidates, we need information about any candidate for whom special assessment arrangements are requested. You need to provide us with details of the candidate's assessment need (ie the difficulty and how it affects the candidate's ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills being assessed) and the alternative assessment arrangements being proposed.

Your centre should have a system for ensuring that there is standard practice in identifying candidates who need special assessment arrangements, and for making requests to SQA. The system should include processes to:

- ◆ identify the need
- ◆ work out how to meet the need
- ◆ authenticate the need
- ◆ authorise the request for special assessment arrangements

We ask all centres to build these four processes into their own internal quality assurance systems. This should guarantee that special assessment arrangements are made only on behalf of those candidates whose difficulties and assessment needs have been appropriately and accurately assessed.

Identifying the need

Wherever possible, a candidate's likely difficulties in demonstrating attainment by the published assessment arrangements for a Unit or Course should be identified before embarking on the Course. In many cases, though, the difficulties will become apparent only during the course of study. The need could be identified by the candidate or by staff concerned with guidance, but it is most likely to be done by the subject teacher, lecturer or trainer.

Working out how to meet the need

This is the stage where the centre determines how or whether the candidate's difficulties can be met, and whether special assessment arrangements will be required. This could be quite straightforward, or it may require discussion with SQA.

The Arrangements for each Course and Unit specifications list the evidence that is needed to show that the outcomes of the Course or Unit have been achieved. For example, candidates may be required to show that they have knowledge, practical skills, and the ability to work in a particular way. The Arrangements or specification will also set out a standard way of generating this evidence. (In most

cases, there will be National Assessment Bank (NAB) items to support Unit assessments.)

If the candidate is able to achieve the outcomes, but is unable to do so in the standard way, there is often scope to propose alternative forms of assessment which will also produce the required evidence. The candidate's subject teacher, lecturer or trainer will normally develop any such proposals in consultation with learning support staff.

Authenticating the need

This involves taking an informed second opinion of the candidate's difficulties and assessment need. This is particularly important in the case of specific learning difficulties — where an educational psychologist would normally be involved in authentication — but it will also be important in determining the impact of physical and sensory impairments.

Authentication is important for two reasons. First, your centre may wish to be assured that your decision to provide or not to provide additional resources for special assessment arrangements is justified. Second, we need the information so we can be consistent in our judgements on proposals for alternative assessment arrangements which significantly change the nature of the assessment.

Authorising the request for special arrangements

The final stage should be carried out by a manager* who has responsibility for your centre's internal quality systems and can vouch that these have been adhered to in developing the proposal.

*Some local authorities may wish to centralise this function for all schools in their area, but this is not an SQA requirement.

2 Requesting special assessment arrangements

Special assessment arrangements can be used in the internal assessments of Units, the internally-assessed components of Courses, and in external Course assessments.

Internal Assessments

If a Unit is being taken on a stand-alone basis

You must make a request to SQA for any special arrangement which significantly changes the published assessment requirements. You should send the request to SQA as soon as possible so there is enough time to establish whether the proposal is acceptable before the candidate undertakes the assessment. You should submit details by writing to SQA's Special Assessment Arrangements Section at the Dalkeith office.

An example would be where you make a request for a candidate to have the support of a scribe in a Unit assessment which directly assesses writing skills. You would not need to make such a request if the scribe is required simply to convey the candidate's knowledge and understanding of a subject.

If a Unit is being taken as part of a Course

You would not necessarily need to make a request for special arrangements in every Unit assessment — any special arrangement approved for the external Course assessment may also be used for the component Units. This is also the case for any special arrangements required in the **internally-assessed components** of a Course.

However, if the special arrangements required for a Unit assessment or for an internally-assessed component of a Course are different from those required for the external examination, and they significantly modify the published Assessment Arrangements, you **do** need to contact us. Requests for special arrangements should be submitted in writing to SQA's Special Assessment Arrangements Section at the Dalkeith office.

External Assessments

You must submit a request for all special arrangements in external examinations. Requests should be submitted to SQA's Special Assessment Arrangements Section at the Dalkeith Office, using the Special Assessment Arrangements Request Form. (Copies of these forms are issued to centres in August each year. Further copies can be provided on request.) Amendments to existing Special Assessment Arrangements should be made using the Special Assessment Arrangements Amendments form.

If you are in any doubt as to whether a special assessment arrangement would significantly modify the assessment requirements of any internal or external assessment, you should contact SQA for advice.

3 Examples of special arrangements

This section contains advice on the most commonly requested special assessment arrangements. It is important to remember that assessment arrangements should be tailored as far as possible to meet the individual assessment needs of the candidates concerned.

Each candidate's assessment need must be considered in relation to the assessment being undertaken. As assessment arrangements vary, depending on the Unit or Course, a candidate's need for special assessment arrangements may also vary. For example, although a candidate may need extra time in assessments which require extended written responses, his or her difficulties might not prove to be a barrier to demonstrating attainment in a practical assessment or in an assessment requiring short answers.

Examples of special arrangements include:

- ◆ alternative interpretation of an Outcome
- ◆ omission of an Element in a Standard Grade Course
- ◆ extra time
- ◆ linguistic support
- ◆ rest periods/supervised breaks
- ◆ using information and communication technology in assessments
- ◆ using a calculator in Non-calculator Papers in Mathematics
- ◆ signing in assessments
- ◆ assistance in aural assessments
- ◆ adapted assessment material for candidates with visual impairments
- ◆ assistance in practical assessments
- ◆ using a prompter
- ◆ transcription without correction
- ◆ referral of a script to the Principal Assessor
- ◆ bilingual dictionaries for candidates for whom English is an additional language

Alternative interpretation of an Outcome

If the candidate's difficulties relate to the wording of an Outcome in a Unit, it may be possible to approve an alternative wording of the Outcome. The suggested alternative Outcome must still allow the candidate to demonstrate all of the competences required by the Unit.

Example:

An alternative wording of an Outcome might indicate that a deaf candidate has used signed communication instead of oral communication.

It may not always be possible for SQA to approve an alternative interpretation of an Outcome if, for instance, a Unit is based on externally developed standards.

Example:

A candidate may not be permitted extra time in a mandatory shorthand Unit in a Higher National Certificate Course in Journalism. This is because the shorthand speed required to pass the Unit is based on industry standards.

Omission of an Element in a Standard Grade Course

If, due to an assessment need, a candidate cannot complete all of the Elements in a Standard Grade Course, permission may be given to omit an Element or Elements and still gain an overall subject award. This award will be based on the Element(s) which have been satisfactorily completed.

Example:

A candidate with severe speech difficulties may be allowed to omit the assessment for the Speaking element in Standard Grade French and still gain an overall subject award based on the results for the other Elements, Reading and Listening. The element Speaking would not be reported on the candidate's Scottish Qualifications Certificate (SQC).

Extra time

Extra time is normally permitted in external assessments and in internally-assessed set tasks. You must seek approval for extra time in any external assessment. However, you need only seek approval for extra time in those internal assessments where the performance of a task in a specified time is an assessment requirement.

Example:

You must seek approval from us for a candidate who requires extra time in the Unit *Word Processing 1* at Intermediate 2, outcome 5 of which states that the candidate can 'produce mailable copy of approximately 300 words in a one-hour working period'.

The amount of extra time required may vary according to the individual candidate's needs — you should say how much additional time is required when you make your request. Bear in mind that too much extra time in an assessment may be tiring to the candidate.

Rest periods/supervised breaks

Rest periods and/or supervised breaks may be permitted where needed. The duration of the break will not be deducted from the time allowed for the assessment.

Example:

A candidate with ME may be permitted rest breaks of 15 minutes duration in each hour of an external examination.

Linguistic support

Linguistic support is a general term which includes:

- ◆ use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to assist a candidate to access the assessment material and/or produce written responses
- ◆ a reader to read the assessment material to a candidate (see Guideline 1 in Section 4)
- ◆ a scribe to write a candidate's dictated responses (see Guideline 2 in Section 4)
- ◆ transcription, with correction of spelling and punctuation, of a candidate's completed work (see Guideline 3 in Section 4)
- ◆ the use of a tape recorder for a candidate to record responses

Linguistic support may be permitted in both internal and external assessments.

Internal assessments

In Units or internally-assessed examination components where reading and/or writing skills are **not being assessed**, you do not need to seek approval for linguistic support. Any candidate appropriately identified as having significant reading or writing difficulties which prevent them demonstrating their attainment may use linguistic support.

In such a case, we would expect there to be clear evidence of a reading and/or writing difficulty which prevented the candidate from demonstrating attainment in the published way and that the candidate has had ongoing reading and/or scribing support as part of normal classroom practice.

In Units or examination components where reading and/or writing **form part of the skills under assessment**, you must seek approval from SQA for linguistic support.

Example:

You must seek approval for a candidate who needs to use a computer with voice recognition software to produce a piece of writing in the *Language Study* Unit of Intermediate 2 English. Outcome 2 states that the candidate must 'compose a piece of writing in a particular genre'. Technical accuracy, including spelling and punctuation, is assessed.

External assessments

You must make a request to SQA for any candidate who requires linguistic support in an external examination whether or not reading and writing skills are assessed.

If there is any doubt about whether the use of linguistic support would be permitted, you should seek advice from SQA.

Using Information and Communication Technology in assessments

For many candidates with assessment needs, computers and other forms of assistive technology (including voice recognition/activated systems) provide an effective means of communication. We recognise the importance of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting independence in both internal and external assessments — ICT can allow candidates to demonstrate their attainment more independently than would be possible with support such as readers and scribes, and can therefore often provide a more accurate assessment of attainment.

Internal Assessments

The use of word processors in internal assessments is accepted, and we place no restrictions on the use of software such as spellcheckers or voice recognition in assessments where the formal skills of written communication are not being assessed.

Where these formal/technical writing skills (including spelling) are being assessed, you must seek approval, unless the published Arrangements or the Unit specification states that particular software is permitted.

Example:

It is not necessary to seek approval for a candidate to use a word processor with spellchecker when producing a Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies report.

External Assessments

In external assessments, you must seek approval to use word-processing or other software. As in internal assessments, approval to use such software depends on the nature of the assessment.

Example:

A candidate would not be permitted to use a Computer-Aided Design program in the external assessment of *Drawing Abilities* in Standard Grade Graphic Communication in which manual drawing skills are assessed. However, the same candidate could use a program with drawing capabilities to help with drawing graphs in the external examination of Standard Grade Science.

Augmentative speech equipment

A candidate with speech difficulties may use augmentative speech equipment, but we will require details of how the candidate will use it in a particular assessment.

Example:

A candidate with very limited speech using a voice output system may be able to fulfil the assessment requirements for the Elements of *Talking* or *Alternative Communication* in Standard Grade English or the *Oral Communication* Unit in English.

If there is any doubt as to the acceptability of the use of any form of ICT in a particular assessment, especially in assessments which specify a mode of communication, you should consult with SQA.

You should also refer to Unit and Course documentation to check whether or not particular computers or software packages could be permitted.

Using a calculator in Non-calculator Papers in Mathematics

You must seek approval for this special assessment arrangement — we would expect that an Educational Psychologist had been involved at some stage in the diagnosis of the candidate's difficulties.

Example:

Candidates who experience difficulties such as directional confusion; sequencing problems; visual perceptual problems; or short-term (working) memory and long-term memory problems may be permitted the use of a calculator in any Non-calculator papers in Mathematics.

Signing of assessment material to a candidate

Internal assessments

You can sign assessment material to a candidate in any internal assessment. You do not need to seek prior approval from SQA, unless signing would significantly change the outcome.

Example:

In the Access 2 Unit: Using Mathematics in Everyday Situations, deaf candidates can have the assessment material signed to them. However, in any internal assessment where reading is an assessment objective, deaf candidates are required to read the assessment material independently.

External examinations/Course assessments

Deaf candidates may have some or all of the contents of a question paper signed to them by a communicator. This applies to all external examinations with the exception of examinations in English, Gaelic and Modern Languages. You must seek approval for this special assessment arrangement. The candidate and communicator should each have a copy of the question paper. The candidate should indicate which questions/parts of questions the communicator is to sign. Candidates must independently study and interpret any reference maps, diagrams, graphs etc. Only at the candidate's request, may the communicator sign any labels or text connected with reference material.

Signing of candidates' responses

Internal assessments

Candidates can sign their responses in internal assessments. You do not need to seek prior approval from SQA, unless signing would significantly change the outcome.

Example:

Where an outcome is concerned only with communicated knowledge and understanding of a subject, this may be conveyed by signing. However, where an Outcome is concerned with oral or aural skills, you must submit a proposal for an alternative interpretation of the Outcome which allows the candidate to sign.

External examinations/Course assessments

Candidates are permitted to sign responses to external examination question papers. You must seek approval for this special assessment arrangement. Candidates may opt to sign some responses and write others. They can also supplement their signed responses with additional written or graphic material. Candidates should indicate to the communicator which questions/part of questions they wish to sign. As all signed responses in the final examination must be recorded on video, it is very important to practice using the video from an early stage. In preparation for the external examinations, it is important for the candidate and the communicator to work together, so that all concerned feel comfortable with the procedure.

It is important that the candidate is aware of, and is prepared to work within, the time constraints of the examination (including any agreed extra-time allowance).

Assistance in aural assessments

Any technological aid which amplifies sound may be used in an aural assessment. An aural test which is normally presented to candidates on tape may be presented live to enable the candidate to lip-read.

Example:

In the external assessment of *Listening* in Standard Grade Modern Languages, where the passage is normally presented on tape, a candidate with hearing impairment may have a live presentation. This should, where possible, be given by a native speaker in the language concerned.

Adapted assessment material for candidates with visual impairment

Internal assessments

You do not need to apply to SQA to produce large print or Braille assessment material, provided the adapted material still meets the same assessment objectives as the original.

If there is any concern that, in adapting material for transcription into Braille, you have changed the nature of the assessment, you should seek advice from SQA.

Example:

If the assessment demands interpretation of diagrammatic material or production of graphs and charts, or is concerned with keying in text from typed/manuscript sources, you should contact us.

A range of National Assessment Bank (NAB) items has been produced in Braille. A catalogue of available materials has been issued to centres. If you would like further information about what is available, or would like copies, please contact the Dalkeith Office on 0131-561 6939.

External assessments

You can request the following types of adapted question papers.

- ◆ Enlarged print question paper — this is the standard A4 paper enlarged to A3
- ◆ Question paper printed on a specified colour
- ◆ Modified print paper — this involves the paper being adapted to simplify visual complexity and layout and, where necessary, reducing visual content while still meeting the same assessment objectives as those tested in the original paper
- ◆ Brailled paper — this involves a similar process of modification to that outlined above, with the paper then being produced in Braille
- ◆ Raised diagrams — simple tactile diagrams are produced using heat expanded Minolta paper; these are supplied with Braille papers but can also be supplied with a modified print paper

Due to the time and cost involved in the production of adapted question papers, it is essential that requests are submitted only where absolutely necessary and as early as possible, and that the modification required is correctly identified. If your requirements change (for example, a change in the grade or level for which the candidate is entered), you must tell us as soon as possible.

Assistance in a practical assessment (helper)

A helper may be permitted to assist candidates who have difficulties which prevent them from carrying out practical assessments safely and independently (for example, practical work in Physics or in Home Economics). Approval to use

this special arrangement depends on the published assessment criteria and the degree of assistance provided by the helper.

The aim should be to ensure that a true assessment of the candidate's attainment can be made without compromising the assessment requirements. For example, if manipulating apparatus or making accurate visual observations are the skills being assessed, the candidate will not be eligible for the marks concerned if the helper performs these tasks.

Example:

A classroom auxiliary may be permitted to assist a candidate with a physical disability in Standard Grade Home Economics *Practical Abilities*. The auxiliary may be permitted to fetch and carry dishes and ingredients, under instruction from the candidate. However, a candidate may not be permitted to instruct the helper to cut and chop vegetables, as the practical skills of cutting and chopping are being assessed.

Discussion with SQA before the candidate undertakes any practical assessment is advisable. (See Guideline 5 in Section 4).

Using a prompter

To alleviate a severe attention deficit problem, a prompter may be permitted in an external Course assessment to ensure that a candidate is attending to the task. The prompter should do no more than draw the candidate's attention back to the examination task.

Example:

A candidate with high incidence mild epilepsy or a neurological or cognitive disability affecting attention may be allowed to have a prompter in the examination room. This would normally be someone known to the candidate who can recognise when his/her attention is no longer on the examination task.

You must seek approval for such an arrangement.

Transcription without correction

To alleviate the problem of illegibility, transcription without correction of a candidate's responses may be permitted in all external assessments and most internal assessments.

Example:

A candidate with very poor handwriting skills and who is not proficient in typing or word processing could have his/her script transcribed after an external examination. The same candidate could have any written work produced in an internal assessment transcribed if necessary.

The exceptions would be in any Unit where, for example, the ability to produce legible manuscript records is being assessed. (See Guideline 4 in Section 4.)

Referral of a script to the Principal Assessor

In external Course assessments, candidates who have particular difficulties with writing may have their examination scripts, in certain subjects, referred to the Principal Assessor.

The purpose of referral is to ensure that a marker does not unduly penalise a candidate's script. The Principal Assessor will be informed of the candidate's difficulty and will scan the script to ascertain whether a re-assessment is necessary. If there is evidence that the marker has imposed a penalty, other than that which might be imposed upon all other candidates, then the script will be re-marked.

Only those scripts which require the candidate to produce significant amounts of extended writing may be referred.

Bilingual dictionaries for candidates for whom English is an additional language

Internal assessments

In internal assessments, where a candidate's knowledge of English makes it difficult to communicate his or her attainment, the use of a bilingual dictionary may be allowed, with the exception of assessments in English.

External assessments

In external Course assessments, where a candidate's knowledge of English makes it difficult to communicate his or her attainment to the marker, the use of a bilingual dictionary may be allowed, with the exception of assessments in English.

An extra time allowance of ten minutes per hour can be allowed for using the dictionary if the candidate has not gained an award of grade 3 or better in Standard Grade English Reading, or Intermediate 2 English. If the candidate has been or is being entered for Higher English, this extra time allowance would not be permitted. An exception to this might be made for a candidate who has until recently been taught in the subject concerned in a language other than English.

The use of a bilingual dictionary is only appropriate to candidates who are literate in their mother tongue.

You must seek approval from SQA for this special arrangement. You should do this by completing the English as an Additional Language Form.

Note on special assessment arrangements and 5–14 National Testing

Formal guidance to teachers on arrangements for pupils with special educational needs is given in the *Framework for National Testing* published by the Scottish Examination Board in 1993. In essence, pupils with special educational needs taking a National Test should be given the sort of support which they normally receive in the classroom for individual work — for example, extra time to complete the tests, assistance with reading the questions, a scribe to record answers, enlarged print version of test Units. In Reading tests, pupils may not have the passage read to them, as these tests are of reading comprehension and not listening. In Maths tests, pupils

with specific learning difficulties and who have an Individual Educational Programme may use a calculator in any Unit at any level.

The pupil's class teacher, in consultation with the Head Teacher or Principal Teacher, should decide on the appropriate type of support. Approval from the 5–14 Assessment Unit is not required, although Head Teachers may discuss the matter with the 5–14 Assessment Unit if any clarification is necessary. While special arrangements should be tailored as far as possible to the particular circumstances of the pupil, they should be no more than necessary to allow the pupil to show his or her level of achievement.

It is important to bear in mind that National Tests are not external examinations. They are, essentially, assessment instruments designed to complement and confirm teachers' continuous assessment of pupil progress in the key curricular areas of reading, writing and mathematics in relation to defined national standards.

4 Guidelines

This section of the document provides guidance to those individuals responsible for operating the following special assessment arrangements:

1. Reader
2. Scribe
3. Transcription with Correction
4. Transcription without Correction
5. Helper in Practical Assessments
6. Communicator

1 Guidelines for a reader

General

The reader should be an adult familiar with the requirements of the subject concerned but must not have any personal interest in the success of the candidate or be a relative or a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject. The reader's diction should be clear and preferably in an accent familiar to the candidate.

The reader should aim to ensure that, as far as possible, the candidate is not disadvantaged by his or her difficulty but must not provide the candidate with an unfair advantage. The object is to enable a true assessment of the candidate's attainment to be made.

For a candidate who is allowed a scribe and reader, the same person can act as both. (See *Guidelines for a scribe*.)

Duties

The reader may read through the assessment material with the candidate, ensuring that each word is recognised. The candidate may ask for parts of the assessment material to be read again, as often as necessary, but the reader may not suggest or choose parts without the candidate's direction. The reader may also read back any part of the candidate's answers. The reader must **not** give the meaning of words or amplify what is given.

Where a dictionary is allowed in examinations, the reader may consult this at the candidate's request and read out entries.

The reader must refer any problems in communication during the assessment to the invigilator. If in doubt over any matter, the reader should always ask the invigilator.

Practice with the candidate

It is advisable that the reader and the candidate should have some previous practice at working together.

Accommodation and invigilation

Where a reader is used in an external assessment, separate accommodation and additional invigilation will be required. You should take account of this when you submit details of your accommodation and invigilation arrangements to us.

Responsibility of the presenting authority

In external assessments, it is the responsibility of the presenting authority to make the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader, including advising the candidate of these arrangements. The SQA will not be responsible for the payment of fees and/or expenses to a reader.

2 Guidelines for a scribe

General

A scribe is a person who, in coursework and/or in an examination, records a candidate's dictated answers to questions. The scribe should be familiar with the requirements of the subject concerned, but must not have any personal interest in the success of the candidate or be a relative or a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject. The scribe should be an adult with good hearing and have legible handwriting or good word processing skills.

The scribe should aim to ensure that, as far as possible, the candidate is not disadvantaged by his or her difficulty. The object is to enable a true assessment of the candidate's attainment to be made.

Unless specifically agreed by SQA the scribe must **not** read any of the assessment material to the candidate.

For a candidate who is allowed a scribe and reader, the same person can act as both. (See *Guidelines for a reader*.)

Duties

The scribe should record responses exactly as they are dictated by the candidate. No advice must be given regarding which questions to answer, in which order the questions should be answered etc. Refinements must not be added to the candidate's response but discretion may be used regarding spelling, punctuation, etc except where technical or scientific terminology is required or where there is doubt regarding responses in a foreign language. In such instances, the scribe must follow detailed instruction from the candidate with regard to formulae and spelling. The scribe may read back any responses as requested, and should only converse with the candidate to clarify his or her instructions if necessary.

If the candidate is unable to draw maps, graphs, diagrams etc, the scribe could assist in this connection but reference should be made to the invigilator, as SQA's letter authorising the services of a scribe may detail limitations.

The scribe must refer any problems in communication during the assessment to the invigilator. If in doubt over any matter, the scribe should always ask the invigilator.

Practice with the candidate

It is advisable that the scribe and the candidate should have some previous practice at working together.

Accommodation and invigilation

Where a scribe is used in an external assessment, separate accommodation and additional invigilation will be required. Account should be taken of this when you submit details of your accommodation and invigilation arrangements to us.

Responsibility of the centre

It is the responsibility of the presenting authority to make the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe in an external assessment including advising the candidate of these arrangements. We will not be responsible for the payment of fees and/or expenses to a scribe.

3 Guidelines for transcription with correction of spelling and punctuation

- 1** Transcription **with correction** permits the transcriber to correct errors of spelling and punctuation only. The transcript must otherwise be a copy of the candidate's original work.
- 2** The transcriber should be familiar with the candidate's handwriting, but must not have any personal interest in the success of the candidate or be a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject.
- 3** The candidate should not be present during the production of the transcription.
- 4** The transcript must be produced under secure conditions as soon as possible after the assessment.
- 5** The transcription may be handwritten or word processed. If it is to be handwritten, the transcriber should have legible handwriting.
- 6** Diagrammatical material should not be transcribed. Assessment of such material will be based on the candidate's own work.
- 7** The transcript should be produced on a separate answer booklet and must clearly indicate that it is a transcript of a candidate's work.
- 8** On completion, the transcript must be signed by the transcriber.
- 9** The transcript should be attached to the back of the candidate's script and both passed to the Chief Invigilator for dispatch to SQA in the normal way.
- 10** The centre must not inform the marker of the reason why transcription was necessary.

4 Guidelines for transcription without correction in assessments

- 1** The purpose of transcription **without correction** is to remove illegibility of a candidate's handwriting to aid in the marking of a script.
- 2** The transcriber should be familiar with the candidate's handwriting, but must not have any personal interest in the success of the candidate or be a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject.
- 3** The candidate should not be present during the production of the transcription.
- 4** The transcript must be produced under secure conditions as soon as possible after the assessment.
- 5** The transcription may be handwritten, or wordprocessed. If it is to be handwritten, the transcriber should have legible handwriting.
- 6** Diagrammatical material should not be transcribed. Assessment of such material will be based on the candidate's own work.
- 7** The transcript should be produced on a separate answer booklet and must clearly indicate that it is a transcript of a candidate's work.
- 8** On completion, the transcript must be attached to the back of the candidate's script.
- 9** The transcript should be attached to the back of the candidate's script and both passed to the Chief Invigilator for dispatch to SQA in the normal way.
- 10** The centre must not inform the marker of the reason why transcription was necessary.

5 Guidelines for helpers in practical assessments

- 1 A helper is a person who, in the assessment of practical tasks, **assists** in some or all of the tasks as identified by the candidate. The helper should be familiar with the requirements of the subject concerned but must not be a relative or a teacher who is involved in the candidate's study of the subject.
- 2 The helper should aim to ensure that, as far as possible, the candidate is not disadvantaged by his or her difficulty but must not provide the candidate with unfair advantage. The object is to enable a true assessment of the candidate's attainment to be made without the Unit or Course requirements being significantly compromised. In some cases, for example, the manipulation of apparatus or the making of accurate visual observations may be the ability being assessed. In these cases, the candidate will not be eligible for the marks concerned if the helper performs these tasks.
- 3 Assistance may not be required throughout the whole assessment, as there may be parts of the assessment that the candidate can do without help and thus gain credit for the required abilities.
- 4 The helper must carry out instructions exactly as they are given, unless to do so would cause a hazard. No factual help or suggestions regarding what has to be undertaken should be given. If the helper does not understand the candidate's instructions, he or she may ask for clarification. Where incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the candidate, this must be reflected in the marks awarded for the assessment.
- 5 Any problems arising during an assessment must be referred immediately to the teacher/lecturer in charge.

6 Guidelines for communicators

General

A communicator is the person who communicates in sign language the contents of a question paper to a candidate. It is essential that the communicator can communicate effectively with the candidate and is familiar with the requirements of the subject concerned. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the communicator has the requisite level of skill in sign language. All signed responses must be recorded on videotape (VHS or Digital). Centres should prepare one video per candidate/subject and clearly label it with centre, candidate, subject/level details.

In order to meet processing deadlines, SQA requires the videos, transcriptions and any additional material written by the candidate to be submitted to SQA **within one week of the examination concerned.**

Duties

In an external assessment, the communicator should, under the supervision of an invigilator, have access to the question paper up to one hour prior to the start of the examination. This time is to allow the communicator to prepare for signing of the question paper. If more time is needed by the communicator to prepare for signing of a particular question paper, then this should be negotiated with SQA in advance.

During the examination, both the candidate and communicator should have a copy of the question paper. The candidate should be given spare paper for taking notes during the examination. The communicator may sign the contents of the question paper to the candidate as requested. The candidate should indicate to the communicator which questions or parts of questions they wish to have signed and if appropriate, which questions/parts of questions they wish to respond to in sign. The candidate can choose to sign some responses and write others. The candidate can request to review their signed responses on video. Signed responses can be supplemented with written and graphic material. The candidate can ask for questions/parts of questions to be signed again as often as required; however the communicator must only sign as requested. The communicator should give no additional explanations.

Practice with the candidate

It is very important that the candidate and communicator work together before the external examination, so that any potential problems can be addressed. This is especially important if the candidate is signing their responses, as every signed response in the external examination must be recorded on videotape and the video sent to SQA. Prior to the examination, the candidate should feel comfortable with this procedure, to the extent that they are almost unaware of the video recording.

Accommodation and Invigilation

Where a communicator is used, separate accommodation and invigilation will normally be required. The accommodation must be suitable for filming and signing.

Responsibility of the centre

It is the centre's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements for the provision of a communicator, including making sure that both the candidate and the communicator are advised of, and sufficiently well prepared for, these arrangements. SQA will not be responsible for the payment of any fees/or expenses to a communicator. For every external examination where the candidate has signed their response, a transcript should be prepared from the video by someone with the appropriate level of signing skill. This should be sent to SQA for marking. At a later stage, a sample of the transcripts/videos will be reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. SQA will not be responsible for the payment of any fees/or expenses to a transcriber.

