



Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements: Information for centres

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Overview of quality assurance of assessment arrangement in centres

To ensure that suitable assessment arrangements are provided on behalf of those candidates whose assessment needs have been appropriately identified, your centre must have an effective internal quality assurance system for identifying and verifying candidates' assessment needs.

Your centre's quality assurance system should include processes to:

- ◆ identify a candidate's assessment need
- ◆ determine the most appropriate assessment arrangement
- ◆ verify the candidate's need for the assessment arrangement
- ◆ authorise the submission of a request for an assessment arrangement in an external assessment

At all stages, professional dialogue is essential between teaching staff, learning support staff, those responsible for quality assurance and those responsible for submitting requests for assessment arrangements to SQA. In some cases, other key professionals, such as therapists, specialist teachers or educational psychologists, may also be involved.

However, in all cases, school and college SQA Co-ordinators should work closely with staff in learning support to ensure they are aware of the assessment arrangements that may be required for candidates.

Identify the candidate's assessment need

Wherever possible, a candidate's likely difficulties in accessing the Unit or Course assessment should be identified before he or she embarks on the Unit or Course. In some cases, however, the candidate's difficulties may only become apparent, or be disclosed, during the candidate's course of study. The need for assessment support could be identified by the candidate, by support for learning staff, or by the subject teacher or lecturer.

Determine the most appropriate assessment arrangement

This is the stage in your internal quality assurance system where you determine what assessment arrangements will be required. This could be quite straightforward (for example, the provision of a commonly requested assessment arrangement in the external assessment in a National Course) or it could require detailed discussion with SQA (for example, where the competence standard in a vocational qualification could be invalidated by the proposed assessment arrangement).

The specification for each Unit and Course lists the evidence that is needed to show that the Outcomes and assessment/competence standards have been

achieved. For example, candidates may be required to show that they have knowledge, practical skills, or the ability to work in a particular way.

The specification will also set out the assessment conditions and the evidence requirements. If your candidate is able to achieve the Outcomes and assessment/competence standards, but is unable to do so using the suggested assessment activities outlined in the specification, there is often scope to propose alternative ways of generating the necessary evidence.

Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of formats. Assessors should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge, and understanding of the candidate's additional support needs (in consultation with support for learning staff) to determine the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and the conditions and contexts in which they are used.

Verify the candidate's need for an assessment arrangement

This is a key stage in your internal quality assurance system. Documented evidence of your verification process, and the personnel involved, must be available to SQA. Verifying the candidate's assessment needs is extremely important for two reasons:

- ◆ You need to be assured that your decision to provide, or not to provide, a particular assessment arrangement can be justified, and that it accords with both SQA guidance and relevant equality legislation.
- ◆ We need to ensure that centres have in place their own robust internal verification process which ensures that all relevant information and evidence has been gathered and considered in determining the provision of assessment arrangements for a candidate in any internal or external assessment.

Appendix 1 provides a suggested checklist of evidence to support the provision of an assessment arrangement.

Authorise the request for assessment arrangements

The Head of Centre, or a member of senior management, is responsible for authorising any request to SQA for an assessment arrangement in the external assessment by the published deadline date.

In submitting a request for an assessment arrangement in an external assessment, your centre is acknowledging that it has met its responsibilities in terms of quality assuring the appropriateness of the request, and is confirming that it has obtained the written consent of the candidate to share their data and submit the request.

In providing an assessment arrangement in an internal assessment, your centre is acknowledging that it has met its responsibilities in terms of quality assuring the appropriateness of the provision.

Quality assurance by SQA

Every year, from September to December, SQA's Quality Enhancement Managers visit and monitor a sample of centres to ensure that there are effective internal quality assurance systems in place for the provision of assessment arrangements for candidates in both internal and external assessments.

If your centre is selected for an audit visit, you will receive feedback and advice from the Quality Enhancement Manager and, providing he/she is satisfied with your system, assessment arrangements can be provided as normal. Appendix 2 provides more information on the audit visit.

If the Quality Enhancement Manager is not satisfied that your centre's system and/or available evidence meet our requirements, you will receive further guidance and advice. A follow-up visit will be organised after which, providing your systems and evidence now meet our requirements, assessment arrangements can be provided as normal.

In the unlikely event that, after the second visit, your centre still does not meet our requirements, we will ask you to submit the documented evidence for all your candidates for whom assessment arrangements are being proposed. We will consider the supporting evidence and make a decision on a case-by-case basis.

Note: Appeals against decisions involving assessment arrangements are covered in our general guidance on appeals, *The Appeals Process: Information for centres* (publication code: FF5480, April 2015).

Evidence to support the provision of assessment arrangements

The Quality Enhancement Manager's audit visit is based around seven key types of documented evidence:

1 Evidence of your centre's internal verification meetings

You should have documented evidence of the meetings/discussions at which relevant candidate information and evidence was considered before the provision of an assessment arrangement in an internal assessment and/or the request to SQA for an assessment arrangement in an external assessment. This might be the minutes or agreed notes from the verification meeting(s). They must be signed and dated.

2 Evidence that your candidates have agreed to the provision of assessment arrangements and to their details being disclosed to SQA

You should have confirmation from candidates that they have been involved in discussions about, and have agreed to, the assessment arrangements

being provided, and that they intend to use them. You must also obtain consent from candidates for relevant details of their disability/additional support needs to be disclosed to SQA. For some candidates, you may wish to involve parents/carers in this discussion.

3 Evidence of your candidates' disabilities/additional support needs and how this affects them in the learning and teaching situation

In all cases, there should be documented evidence of the nature and extent of the candidate's disability or difficulty, and how it has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom.

Information, where relevant, from professionals (for example, therapists, specialist sensory impairment teachers, subject teachers and educational psychologists) may also be available. The evidence might include a working file containing information about the candidate's disability and/or additional support needs, including for example: reports, assessments, minutes of meetings, notes of case conferences, ongoing consultations on the current teaching support and assessment arrangements used.

4 Evidence of their need for current assessment support, how this is met, and how it relates to the arrangements being requested or provided

Most candidates requiring assessment arrangements will need ongoing support to ensure they are not disadvantaged during their course. There should be documented evidence that links this support to the assessment arrangements needed for the assessment.

5 Evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account

As needs may vary across subjects, there should be documented evidence that the need for assessment arrangements has been considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

6 Evidence for specific types of assessment arrangements

For some types of assessment arrangements, there should be additional documented information/evidence of the need for the particular arrangement. For example, if a scribe is being provided, this evidence might include: speed, accuracy and legibility assessments by the specialist teacher/lecturer; spelling assessments; speed (wpm) for production of free, dictated, or word-processed work; some samples of work produced with and without a scribe.

7 Evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management

You should have documented evidence of a whole-school/whole-college approach to assessment arrangements, for example, as part of wider inclusive practices/policy, etc.

The following checklist, based around these seven types of evidence, is designed to help prompt you to find out if you have the appropriate evidence for the audit visit.

Quality assurance of assessment arrangements checklist

| Reference | Key questions | (✓) |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 Documented evidence of the internal verification meeting(s)¹ | Do you hold a formal verification meeting or meetings to ensure that all relevant information and evidence has been gathered and considered in determining the provision of assessment arrangements for candidates in both internal and external assessments? | |
| | Do you have a formal minute/note of the meeting(s) that has been signed and dated? | |
| | Is it clear which assessments your verification meeting(s) is for? | |
| | Are the meetings held at an appropriate time in the year? | |
| | Are appropriate personnel present? | |
| | Are requests for or the provision of assessment arrangements formally authorised by a senior member of staff? | |
| | Is this senior member of staff independent of the learning support structure in the centre? | |
| | Do you have a procedure for making late decisions? | |
| 2 Documented evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed (i) to the provision of assessment arrangements and (ii) for relevant details of their disability/difficulty to be disclosed to SQA | If your candidate is under 16, does an appropriate adult (eg parent, carer, etc) countersign for them? | |
| | Have your candidates signed in all cases? | |
| | Is it clear which assessments this agreement refers to? | |
| | Do you have a record of any candidate refusals of assessment arrangements? | |
| 3 Documented evidence of the candidate's disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation | Have you the relevant information/evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty? | |
| | Have you evidence how the disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and that subject staff are involved? | |
| | Is your evidence current? | |

¹ The verification meeting is the **key stage** in your internal quality assurance procedures. You need to be confident that your decisions to provide, or not to provide, an assessment arrangement in both internal and external assessments are in line with both SQA guidance and the relevant equality legislation. This is why having a senior member of staff who is independent of the support-for-learning process in your centre is so important; it adds rigour to the process.

| Reference | Key questions | (✓) |
|--|---|-----|
| 4 Documented evidence of need for current support, how this is met, and how it relates to the arrangements requested | Does your evidence show that decisions are made on the actual assessment arrangement proposed and based on the support provided? | |
| | Have you evidence that subject staff are involved? | |
| | Have you evidence to show that the assessment arrangement removes the disadvantage? For example, candidate work with/without support. | |
| | Is your evidence current? | |
| 5 Documented evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account | Have you evidence available for each subject? | |
| | Have you evidence that subject staff have been involved in gathering evidence? | |
| | Have you evidence that subject staff support the arrangement proposed? | |
| 6 Documented evidence for particular assessment arrangements | Is there specific evidence of how a particular assessment arrangement has been determined (for example, amount of extra time needed)? | |
| 7 Documented evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management | Is there evidence that there is a whole school/college policy in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements? | |

Additional guidance for schools

The following additional information is intended for guidance only. It gives examples of different types of evidence that can support the provision of an assessment arrangement.

Section 1A refers to evidence required for all candidates.

Section 1B refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements.

Section 1A: Evidence required for all candidates

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested form of evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Documented evidence of the internal verification meeting(s). | <p>Schools should have in place their own internal verification system which ensures that the information/evidence is available to support the provision of assessment arrangements in both internal and external assessments.</p> <p>An essential part of this process is the internal verification meeting or meetings, where all available evidence and information gathered is fully considered by relevant staff prior to submitting a request to SQA for assessment arrangements or providing assessment arrangements in an internal assessment. SQA's Quality Enhancement Manager will follow a similar process when visiting schools.</p> | <p>Minutes or notes of the verification meeting(s): dated and signed.</p> <p>Names and position of personnel involved.</p> | <p>Membership of the verification meeting will vary according to schools and Local Authorities. It should involve someone actively involved in the support process and someone who is responsible for quality assurance. It could, for example, involve the Principal Teacher of Learning Support, the local authority educational psychologist, and the SQA coordinator and/or a member of the senior management team in the school.</p> |
| 2 | Documented evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed (i) to the arrangements and are intending to use them and (ii) for relevant details of their disability/difficulty to be disclosed to SQA. | <p>It is important that candidates (and parents/carers or guardians where relevant) are fully involved and have agreed to the arrangements. It is also important that candidates have agreed to information about their disability and/or difficulty being passed on to SQA.</p> | <p>Pro forma or statement signed by the candidate and countersigned by a parent/carer where appropriate.</p> | <p>Schools may wish to involve parents/carers where appropriate.</p> <p>Schools may also wish to record details of any candidate who does not wish to use suggested assessment arrangements.</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 3 | Documented evidence of candidate's disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the candidate in the learning and teaching situation. | In order to determine the need for an assessment arrangement, the nature and degree of the difficulty will need to have been assessed together with the impact on learning and teaching and on and assessment. | Candidate files containing all relevant information such as psychological and other assessments, individual learning plans, support plans and records. For example, planning documentation such as Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs). | In schools the information may start in primary and be comprehensive. |
| 4 | Documented evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to any arrangements requested. | Most candidates requiring assessment arrangements will need on-going support on a regular basis to ensure they are not disadvantaged during their course. This support should link to the arrangement needed for the assessment. | Plan and record of support from Support for Learning staff in class and/or in support base and/or details of support regularly required from subject teachers in class. | The following are key elements of the evidence required to support the provision of assessment arrangements. They answer the questions: How has the candidate been supported during the course? |
| 5 | Documented evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account. | As needs may vary across subjects, the need for assessment arrangements should be considered on a subject-by-subject basis. | Evidence of consultation and negotiation with subject staff which takes into account the range of different subject assessment standards and evidence requirements. | Have you considered the varying assessment standards and evidence requirements of different subjects? Have you evidence that the assessment arrangement requested is appropriate? |
| 6 | Documented evidence for particular arrangements. (See Section B) | The particular arrangement should match the candidate's individual needs. | Evidence of need for a particular arrangement. (See Section B) | |
| 7 | Documented evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management. | Schools should have in place a whole school approach to assessment arrangements as part of each school's wider inclusive practices/policy etc. | There should be policy documentation and guidance for all staff in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements? The policy should outline the roles and responsibilities of relevant staff. | In almost all secondary schools, planning to meet identified assessment needs is a collaborative process between the class teacher and the support for learning teacher but process should also involve a senior manager. |

Examples of good practice for evidence requirements

Evidence of the internal verification meeting(s)

In St Barnabas's High School the internal verification meeting is held in November each year. It is chaired by the local authority psychologist. The Principal Teacher (Support for Learning) and the SQA Co-ordinator are also present. Relevant information/evidence available for each candidate requiring assessment arrangements is fully considered against the guidance from SQA using the SQA checklist (see Appendix 1).

Only assessment arrangements for those candidates whose evidence is complete are verified. Where evidence is unclear or incomplete, decisions are made as to whether it is possible to reasonably produce the evidence, whether the provision of the assessment arrangement is appropriate, or if there is a need to contact SQA for further guidance.

Minutes of the meeting are taken, noting those present and the decisions taken. The minutes are dated and signed by the SQA Co-ordinator.

The Local Authority Psychological Services also takes responsibility for trying to achieve a consistent approach to the provision of assessment arrangements across the Authority. It does this by monitoring the provision of assessment arrangements and suggesting common approaches and processes.

Evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to the assessment arrangements and are intending to use them

In Castle Semple High School, the Support for Learning Department devised a pro forma for each candidate which summarises the assessment arrangements to be put in place for both internal and external assessments in each subject.

The pro-form also explains that relevant information about the candidate's difficulties may be passed on to SQA. This is fully discussed with each candidate. All candidates are encouraged to discuss the arrangements with their parents or carers before signing. For candidates under 16, a parent or carer is also asked to sign.

Subject teachers also use parent evenings as an opportunity to discuss with parents/carers the assessment arrangements required for the candidate in their particular subject.

Evidence of disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation

Craignure High School keeps relevant information on candidates in two main places. A pupil file contains general information, including details transferred from primary school, medical records, educational psychologist reports, Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) and Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) etc. The Support for Learning department also has its own files containing current evidence including details of assessment of need, records of support given etc. Together these files give details of the

difficulty each candidate has experienced and how it affects the candidate's learning and teaching.

Evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to the arrangements requested

In Dundee Grammar School, the Support for Learning department keeps detailed records of those pupils who are currently receiving additional learning support. This also includes relevant information from subject teachers about support needed and provided in class.

In one pupil's case, the file indicates that he has scribing support from an auxiliary for some of his subjects (National 4 Modern Studies and National 4 RMPS). He also attends the support base for one hour a week to finish off work he cannot complete in other classes. Subject teachers also record that they have needed to act as a scribe for this pupil on occasion.

Evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account

In Lammermuir High School the detailed records kept in the Learning support base show that, for one candidate with specific learning difficulties, all subject teachers have been consulted. Teachers in subjects where extensive writing is required (for example, in the class assessments for Higher History, and Higher Modern Studies) confirm that the candidate has access to a computer with spellcheck software in class. In Maths and Physics, however, it is felt that the candidate is able to hand write his own responses and prefers to do so.

Evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management.

In St Joan's High School, there is policy documentation and guidance which provides all staff with relevant information on the school's approach to providing appropriate evidence for assessment arrangements. This highlights the need for partnership working across the school and clarifies roles and responsibilities of subject and learning support staff.

Section 1B: Evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

For some candidates, the evidence for their need for a particular assessment will be well established and recorded in the evidence base outlined in Section 1A — for example, for a visually impaired candidate using braille, a deaf candidate using BSL, a candidate with a specific learning difficulty using ICT, a candidate with an autistic spectrum condition using a prompter, or a severely physically disabled candidate using assistive technology.

This section refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements.

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|---|---|
| <p>Use of computer/human reader</p> <p>Schools should have clear evidence that a reader is needed.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has difficulty with accessing written text.</p> | <p>Recent test of reading speed and accuracy.</p> <p>Reading comprehension test.</p> <p>Evidence from dyslexia screening packages.</p> <p>Evidence of class work completed with and without the use of a computer/human reader.</p> <p>On-going use of a computer/human reader for support in class noted in support records.</p> |
| <p>Use of scribe/voice recognition software</p> <p>Schools should have clear evidence that a scribe/voice recognition software is needed.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has significant difficulty with writing.</p> <p>For candidates who are unable to produce any written work at all, written confirmation of this from a specialist teacher will be acceptable.</p> | <p>Speed, accuracy and legibility assessment by specialist teacher (which might include spelling assessment, speed of production of free, dictated, or word processed work).</p> <p>Example of class work produced with and without scribe/voice recognition software.</p> <p>Ongoing use of scribe/voice recognition software for support in class noted in support records.</p> |
| <p>Transcription with correction</p> <p>Schools should have clear evidence that transcription is needed. This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with written communication but who are unable to use appropriate ICT.</p> | <p>Same types of evidence as above.</p> |
| <p>Extra time</p> <p>If extra time is required for other assessment arrangements — for example, candidates using scribes, readers, signing — no additional evidence is required.</p> | <p>Samples of work which indicate a difference in candidate's performance given extra time.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for subject teachers to allocate extra time for assignments and assessments and</p> |

When extra time is the only assessment arrangement required there should be evidence of an ongoing significant difficulty in completing tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) in normal allocated time.

It is not expected that schools will have absolute values for the extra time needed. It is important, however, that evidence is available to show that the extra time being provided is reasonable and reflects, on average, the candidate's needs.

NB Evidence that extra time is used when given, for example in a timed assessment, is **not** sufficient evidence on its own of the need for additional time.

that this extra time has been used on an on-going basis.

Evidence that the amount of extra time requested is reasonable and appropriate.

Examples of good practice for evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

Use of a computer/human reader

In St Barnabas's School, a number of candidates have difficulty with reading. In addition to recording the evidence detailed in Section A, the Support for Learning staff also assess reading speed and accuracy regularly, and maintain records of when a computer/human reader is used in class and in assessments.

One pupil has had reading difficulties since primary school. On a yearly basis, support staff have tested his reading and although there have been improvements which enable him to cope with some tasks independently, testing shows that he still has difficulty with reading and comprehension. This information is retained on file and his support plan shows that he has access to text to speech software in English and History. Notes from other subject teachers show that he uses text to speech software, on occasion, to help him with reading in class. The Support for Learning department records this information and ensures that he has access to text to speech software for all class tests and he has a regular time in the support base where he can be helped to complete assignments and homework.

Transcription with correction

In Castle Semple High School there is one pupil who has a well-documented writing difficulty — samples of writing are available on file. Her writing is extremely untidy and gets very hard to decipher when she is under any time pressure, especially in timed assessments. As she gets more nervous and anxious, she stammers and this makes using a scribe difficult. She is not sufficiently competent in the use of ICT, and a decision is taken to request transcription with correction in her external assessment. Her Support for Learning teacher knows her writing sufficiently well to be able to transcribe her written responses in her external assessments.

Extra time

One pupil at Lammermuir High School has recently been assessed as having a specific learning difficulty. In her case she is slow at interpreting written information and producing text. Her Support for Learning file contains examples of her work in class completed with and without extra time. There are also timed examples of her writing. In the classroom she is frequently unable to complete tasks within the lesson time and this is reported to the Support for Learning staff. A support strategy is put in place which suggests a variety of tactics minimising the pupil's need for writing without affecting her learning. This is recorded.

Evidence is also available which shows that giving extra time improves her performance in timed assessments. This also shows that, on average, she requires 20% extra time for extended writing tasks.

A pupil at Dundee Grammar School was assessed as having a mild specific learning difficulty in primary school. He is just about to enter S4 and start his National 4 Courses. He has received no extra support in the classroom in secondary school but his mother has raised the question of whether he should have extra time in his Unit assessments. He is assessed by a member of the Support for Learning department who find that he still has a slight problem with spelling but that this has no marked effect on the time he needs to produce work. Subject staff are also consulted and confirm that he has no difficulty finishing tasks in class. There is no evidence available to support the need for extra time.

Additional guidance for colleges

The following additional information is intended for guidance only. It gives examples of different types of evidence which can support the provision of an assessment arrangement.

Section 2A refers to evidence required for all candidates.

Section 2B refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements.

Section 2A: Evidence required for all candidates

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested form of evidence | Notes |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Documented evidence of the internal verification meeting(s). | <p>Colleges will have in place their own internal verification system which ensures that the information/evidence is available to support the provision of assessment arrangements in both internal and external assessments.</p> <p>An essential part of this process is the internal verification meeting or meetings, where all available evidence and information gathered is fully considered.</p> | <p>Minutes or notes of the verification meeting(s): dated and signed.</p> <p>Names and position of personnel involved.</p> | <p>Membership of the verification meeting will vary across different colleges. In addition to support for learning or access and inclusion staff, it should always involve a member of staff not actively involved in the support process. For example, the verification meeting could include the Access and Inclusion Team Leader, the SQA coordinator and the college Quality Enhancement Officer.</p> |
| 2 | Documented evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed (i) to the arrangements and are intending to use them and (ii) for relevant details of their disability/difficulty to be disclosed to SQA. | <p>It is important that candidates are fully involved and have agreed to the assessment arrangements being put in place. It is also important that candidates have agreed to information about their disability and/or difficulty being passed on to SQA.</p> | <p>Pro forma or statement signed by the candidate.</p> | <p>Colleges may wish to record details of any candidate who does not wish to use the proposed assessment arrangements.</p> |
| 3 | Documented evidence of disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation. | <p>In order to determine the need for an assessment arrangement, the nature and degree of the difficulty will need to have been assessed together with the impact on learning and assessment.</p> | <p>Candidate files containing all relevant information such as Dyslexic Screening Profiles, Individual/Personal Learning Support plans, Summary Support Plans and Records, correspondence and /or confirmation from schools of assessment arrangements having previously been provided, correspondence from Doctors and Psychiatrists etc.</p> | <p>In colleges, evidence is likely to be part of the candidate's Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP) or Individualised Learning Record (ILR).</p> |

| | Evidence requirement | Rationale | Suggested form of evidence | Notes |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| 4 | Documented evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to any arrangements requested. | Most candidates requiring assessment arrangements will need on-going support on a regular basis to ensure they are not disadvantaged during their course. This support should link to the arrangement needed for the assessment. | Evidence could include: Personal Learning Support Plans, Review Forms, Progress Review Forms, Pre-exit Review Forms, and Summary Support Plans. | The following are key elements of the evidence required to support the provision of assessment arrangements. They answer the questions: How has the candidate been supported during the course? |
| 5 | Documented evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account. | As needs may vary across subjects, the need for arrangements should be considered on a subject-by-subject basis. | Evidence of consultation and negotiation with subject staff which takes into account different subject assessment and competence standards and evidence requirements. For example, adjustments could be discussed at Course Team Meetings., Access and Inclusion staff could request written feedback from relevant curriculum staff about candidate progress and the type of assessment arrangements candidates would require for their particular subject assessments. | Have you considered the varying assessment/competence standards and evidence requirements of different subjects? Have you evidence that the assessment arrangement requested is appropriate? |
| 6 | Documented evidence for particular arrangements. (See Section B) | The particular arrangement should match the candidate's individual need. | Evidence of need for a particular arrangement. (See Section B) | |
| 7 | Documented evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management. | There should be documented evidence that there is a whole college policy in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements. | There should be policy documentation and guidance for all staff in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements. The policy should outline the roles and responsibilities of subject and learning support staff. | For example, The provision of assessment arrangements could be part of an Inclusive Learning Procedure which is in place in the college |

Examples of good practice for evidence requirements

Evidence of the internal verification meeting

In Thomas Carlyle College the internal verification of assessment arrangements is a two stage process:

Stage 1: all candidate files are checked by the college Quality Manager (who is independent of the Access and Inclusion team) to check there is sufficient and appropriate evidence to meet SQA's evidence requirements. The outcome of these checks is recorded on a spreadsheet.

Stage 2: The results of the internal verification check from stage 1 and the shortfalls in evidence are discussed fully at the internal verification meeting, and actions/outcomes are detailed in the minute of the meeting. The college Quality Manager, the SQA Co-ordinator and the Access and Inclusion Team Leader are present at this meeting.

Only assessment arrangements for those candidates where the evidence is complete are verified. Where evidence is unclear or incomplete, decisions are made as to whether it is possible to reasonably produce the evidence, whether the provision of the assessment arrangements is appropriate, or if there is a need to contact SQA for further guidance.

Minutes of the meeting are taken, including details of those present and the decisions taken. The minutes are signed off by the college SQA Co-ordinator.

Evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to the assessment arrangements and are intending to use them

At John Logie Baird College all candidates with support needs meet with their support tutor mid-session to review their Personal Learning and Support Plans. At this meeting, proposed assessment arrangements are fully discussed. Candidates then sign their Summary Support Plan to confirm they have agreed to the assessment arrangements and that they agree to any relevant information about their disability and/or difficulty being passed on to SQA where necessary.

Evidence of disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation

In Conan Doyle's College, it is the usual practice to ask schools for information on candidates with additional support needs who are transferring to college. Most schools complete a pro forma, but in other cases information is relayed by phone and notes are taken. This informs the college's own full needs assessment that is undertaken to assess the candidate's support needs in the college situation and the new support plan. All this information is available in the candidate's Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP).

Each year, there are a number of candidates who only disclose their disabilities once they are on the course and they refer themselves for support. There are also a number of candidates who are referred by subject lecturers who notice they are having difficulties in class. Staff from the Access and Inclusion team work with each candidate to assess and

identify their difficulties, the most appropriate support, and any assessment arrangement that may be needed. This is all recorded in their PLSPs.

Evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to the arrangements requested

In Maryhill College, the Access and Support Service staff regularly assess how candidates are coping in the learning and teaching situation to determine the most appropriate form of support. This is done in full consultation with the subject lecturer and the candidate. This is recorded in the candidate's Personal Learning and Support Plan (PLSP). The plan also outlines the candidate's need for any assessment arrangements. Subject lecturers are asked to record any support regularly provided in class as evidence of need for assessment arrangements.

The PLSP for one student records that he is partially sighted. Tests show that he can manage confidently with text if it is font size 18. Subject lecturers are informed of the need to ensure that all hand-outs and assessments are enlarged to the appropriate size.

Evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account

In Robert Adam's College, Access and Inclusion staff routinely consult individual subject lecturers about each candidate's need for assessment arrangements. The particular assessment requirements for each subject are taken into account. Records of this consultation and the decisions taken are kept on file. For some candidates, it is noted that assessment arrangements are not required due to the inherent flexibility of the internal assessments being undertaken.

Section 2B: Evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

For some candidates, the evidence for their need for a particular assessment arrangement will be well established and recorded in the evidence base outlined in Section 2A — for example, for a visually-impaired candidate using Braille, a deaf candidate using BSL, a candidate with a specific learning difficulty using ICT, a candidate with an autistic spectrum condition using a prompter, or a severely physically disabled candidate using assistive technology.

This section refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements.

| Arrangement | Suggested forms of evidence |
|---|--|
| <p>Use of computer/human reader Colleges should have clear documented evidence that a reader is needed. There should be documented evidence that a candidate has difficulty with accessing written text.</p> | <p>Recent test of reading speed and accuracy. Evidence of class work or assessments done with and without the use of a computer/human reader. On-going use of a computer/human reader for support in class noted in support records.</p> |
| <p>Use of voice recognition software/scribe Colleges should have clear evidence that voice recognition software /scribe is needed. There should be documented evidence that a candidate has difficulty writing. For candidates who are unable to produce any written work at all, written confirmation of this from a specialist teacher will be acceptable.</p> | <p>Speed, accuracy and legibility assessment by specialist teacher (which might include spelling assessment, speed of production of free, dictated, or word processed work). Example of class work or assessments produced with and without voice recognition software/scribe. Ongoing use of voice recognition software/scribe for support in class noted in support records.</p> |
| <p>Transcription with correction Colleges should have clear evidence that transcription is needed. This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of candidates who have substantial difficulties with written communication but who are unable to use appropriate ICT.</p> | <p>Same types of evidence as above.</p> |
| <p>Extra time If extra time is required for other assessment arrangements — eg candidates using scribes, readers, signing — no additional evidence is required.</p> | <p>Samples of work which indicate a difference in candidate's performance given extra time. Evidence of the need for subject lecturers to allocate extra time for assignments and assessments and</p> |

When extra time is the only assessment arrangement required there should be evidence of an on-going and significant difficulty in completing tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) in normal allocated time.

It is not expected that colleges will have absolute values for the extra time needed. It is important, however, that evidence is available to show that the extra time being provided is reasonable and reflects, on average, the candidate's needs.

NB Evidence that extra time is used when given, for example in a timed assessment, is **not** sufficient evidence on its own of the need for additional time.

that this extra time has been used on an on-going basis.

Evidence that the amount of extra time requested is reasonable and appropriate.

Examples of good practice for evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

Use of a computer reader/reader

In Thomas Carlyle College, some candidates every year have significant difficulty in accessing written text. In addition to recording the evidence in Section A, support staff also specifically assess reading speed/reading comprehension and produce a support plan. All of the candidates are given the opportunity to be trained in the use of text to speech software, and although many do take this up and use it regularly in internal assessments, some are not competent or confident to use the ICT in their external assessments.

One candidate, an adult returner, has referred herself to the Learning Support staff. She has significant difficulty with reading. Initial testing shows that she reads very slowly. The test results are filed. Arrangements are made for formal diagnostic testing for specific learning difficulties. The candidate is very anxious about her difficulty and does not want personal support in the classroom. The option of using text to speech software is raised and she is keen and agrees to use it in class. As part of her support plan, a number of strategies are developed to overcome her reading difficulties. Subject lecturers are made aware of her difficulty and allow her to complete class tasks in her own time. For all of her assessments, support staff ensure she has access to a computer reader. The above details are included in the student's PLSP.

Extra time

In Robert Adam's College, they have a number of candidates who, for a variety of reasons, have difficulty completing work on time. As outlined in Section A, evidence is available in their files about their difficulty and the need for ongoing support. In addition, the college ensures that evidence is available to support the amount of extra time required and that it makes a difference to the candidates' performance.

A candidate at Maryhill College experiences mental health difficulties. He has difficulty in prioritising his work and managing time. Subject lecturers record that he rarely completes tasks in class. He regularly attends the support base to complete work and this is recorded in his Personal Learning and Support Plan. Support staff are working with him to develop strategies to improve his time management. The evidence on file shows that in timed exercises he is unlikely to finish in the allocated time. It is noted in the records that 25% extra time is usually sufficient. The student is happy with this.

Appendix 1: Suggested checklist for internal verification process

Checklist of evidence to support the provision of an assessment arrangement

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Centre | |
| Candidate | |
| Assessment arrangement | |
| Date | |

| Types of evidence | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Documented evidence of the verification meeting | |
| Documented evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to the assessment arrangements and are intending to use them | |
| Documented evidence of disability/additional support needs and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation | |
| Documented evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account | |
| Documented evidence for particular arrangements | |
| Documented evidence of need for current support, how it is met and how it relates to the proposed arrangements | |
| Documented evidence of a system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management | |

Appendix 2: Commonly asked questions

Why has my centre been chosen?

The selection of centres is normally carried out on a random basis, making sure that we cover local authority schools from each authority, independent schools and colleges.

What will happen with my current assessment arrangement requests in the meantime?

Your access to the software for submitting assessment arrangements requests in external assessments (AAR) will be temporarily placed on hold until the conclusion of your audit visit. During this time, if you wish to seek any advice regarding the assessment arrangements that you are planning to request once your access to the system has been released again, or to provide in internal assessments, you should contact the Assessment Arrangements team.

Can you choose another centre instead of mine?

No, the selection has been made and approved, but we are flexible as to when we come to visit.

When will the visit take place?

Audit visits are likely to take place during September/October of each year and will involve a retrospective review of your available evidence to support the provision of assessment arrangements.

There will also be general discussion regarding the assessment arrangements you propose to provide for your candidates in internal and external assessments.

How long will the visit take?

The length of the visit will vary and be dependent on many factors. On average we will be with you for about three hours.

Who should attend?

It is for you to decide the most appropriate staff to attend. Under normal circumstances, it should be someone who has responsibility for the support provided to candidates and someone responsible for quality assurance. For example, in schools it could be the Principal Teacher for Support for Learning, the SQA Co-ordinator, and any other relevant members of staff or other key professionals. Subject teachers do not have to attend unless you think it's necessary. In colleges, it could be someone from learning support /student services, the SQA Coordinator and the Quality Manager.

What do I need to do in preparation for the meeting?

Please make sure that you have to hand all the relevant information and evidence on which you based your decisions on the provision of assessment arrangements. This doesn't mean

that you have to have everything in one place, just that you know where it is and ensure that we can access it quickly, if required.

Will you look at evidence for all of our candidates?

Not necessarily. If you have a lot of candidates for whom assessment arrangements have been provided, we will not be able to discuss every one. We will decide during our visit which specific candidate evidence we will look at. Please ensure that you can access evidence for all your candidates.

Will you be able to approve my current requests during your visit?

No, we are visiting to look at your processes for managing the provision of assessment arrangements and the supporting evidence you have.

Will you be able to comment on the appropriateness of an arrangement for an individual candidate?

No, any queries regarding the appropriateness of arrangements should continue to be discussed with the Assessment Arrangements team at aarequests@sqa.org.uk or by phone on 0345 213 6890.

If we discover any issues during our visit, we will discuss these with you and make arrangements to come back and visit the centre again.

What is the reporting mechanism?

At the end of the visit, we will discuss our findings with you. This will form the basis of a report that is sent to the Assessment Arrangements team and copied to you. At the end of the session, copies of the report are also sent to the local authority where appropriate.