



# **Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements: Additional guidance for colleges**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to assist colleges to comply with SQA's quality assurance requirements in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements in all SQA internal and external assessments.

It provides further guidance and exemplification for the seven types of documentary evidence that SQA requires colleges to have available to demonstrate that they have an effective internal quality assurance system for identifying and verifying their candidates' need for assessment arrangements.

This guidance has two sections:

**Section A** provides guidance and exemplification of the documentary evidence generally required to support the provision of any assessment arrangement.

**Section B** provides guidance and exemplification of the additional documentary evidence required to support the provision of some **specific** assessment arrangements.

Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 give some examples of good practice for the evidence requirements detailed in Sections A and B.

Please read this guidance in conjunction with *Quality Assurance of Assessment Arrangements: Information for Colleges* (publication code FA7265) and the exemplars of completed assessment arrangements quality assurance reports. These are available from our [assessment arrangements quality assurance web page](#).

If you are unsure about any of the information provided in this document, advice is always available from SQA. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss your query or concern.

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## Section A: Documentary evidence required to support the provision of any assessment arrangement

|   | Evidence requirement   | Rationale   | Suggested form of evidence   | Notes   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | Documentary evidence of the college's internal assessment arrangements (AA) verification meeting(s). | <p>An essential part of a college's internal quality assurance system is the AA verification meeting or meetings.</p> <p>All available evidence and information gathered is fully considered at the AA verification meeting by relevant staff prior to providing assessment arrangements in an internal assessment or submitting a request to SQA for assessment arrangements.</p> <p>The college needs to be confident that its 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.</p> <p>The AA verification meeting ensures that there is a robust evidence base which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) clearly demonstrates the candidate's need for the assessment arrangement,</li> <li>(ii) has been formally confirmed by the college, and</li> <li>(iii) justifies the decisions taken to provide, or not to provide, particular assessment arrangements.</li> </ul> | Minutes or detailed notes of the AA verification meeting(s) which are dated and signed with the names and positions of the personnel involved. | <p>Membership of the assessment arrangements verification meeting will vary across different colleges. In addition to extended learning support staff or access and inclusion staff, it should always involve a member of staff not actively involved in the support process.</p> <p>For example, the assessment arrangements verification meeting could include the access and inclusion team leader, the SQA co-ordinator and/or the college quality enhancement officer.</p> |

|          | <b>Evidence requirement</b>  | <b>Rationale</b>  | <b>Suggested form of evidence</b>   | <b>Notes</b>  |
|----------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>2</b> | Documentary evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to (i) the provision of assessment arrangements, (ii) the college submitting the request on their behalf, and (iii) the college sharing their personal data required for the request with SQA. | <p>It is important that candidates are fully involved and have agreed to the assessment arrangements being put in place.</p> <p>It is also very important that candidates have agreed to the college sharing their personal data required for the request with SQA.</p>   | A pro forma signed by the candidate (and countersigned by a parent/carer where appropriate). This should list all agreed assessment arrangements and a statement confirming that the candidate has agreed to the college sharing their personal data required for the request with SQA.                                   | <p>Colleges may wish to record details of any candidate who does not wish to use the proposed assessment arrangements.</p> <p>Colleges may wish to involve parents/carers where it is appropriate to do so.</p> |
| <b>3</b> | Documentary evidence of the candidate's disability/difficulty 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 have been assessed together with the impact on the candidate's access to learning and teaching in class and on assessment.</p> <p>The expectation is that assessment arrangements will be provided to candidates whose disability or difficulty has already been identified and who are being provided with appropriate additional support/intervention as part of their learning support plan.</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, and any relevant medical information. | In colleges, most evidence is likely to be part of the candidate's personal learning and support plan (PLSP) or individualised learning record (ILR).   |

|   | Evidence requirement  | Rationale  | Suggested form of evidence  | Notes   |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| 4 | Documentary evidence of need for current support, how this is met, and how it relates to the assessment arrangements requested. | <p>Assessment arrangements will usually be reflective of the arrangements normally provided to the candidate in class to ensure they are not disadvantaged during their course.</p> <p>If the college has determined that a candidate does not need support in class, then careful consideration needs to be given as to what other evidence is available to support the provision of an assessment arrangement.</p> | Evidence could include the relevant information in: personal learning support plans, review forms, progress review forms, pre-exit review forms, and summary support plans.   | <p>The following are key elements of the evidence required to support the provision of assessment arrangements.</p> <p>They answer the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How has the candidate been supported during the course?</li> <li>◆ Have you considered the varying assessment/ competence standards and evidence requirements of different subjects?</li> <li>◆ Have you evidence that the assessment arrangement requested is appropriate?</li> </ul> |
| 5 | Documentary evidence that varying needs across subjects have been taken into account.   | <p>As needs may vary across subjects, the need for assessment arrangements should be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.</p> <p>Subject lecturers should know the difficulties their students face in their class on a day-to-day basis and know and understand the assessment demands of their subject.</p>   | Evidence of consultation and negotiation with subject staff which takes into account different subject competence standards, assessments 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 student progress and the type of assessment |   |

|   | Evidence requirement  | Rationale  | Suggested form of evidence   | Notes   |
|---|---|--|--|---|
|   |   |  | arrangements students would require for their particular subject assessments.  |   |
| 6 | Documentary evidence for particular assessment arrangements (see Section B).  | The particular assessment arrangement must meet the candidate's individual needs. Some assessment arrangements may confer a very slight advantage which is only acceptable when it is balanced against the substantial disadvantage that the candidate would have without the arrangement. | Evidence of need for a particular arrangement (see Section B).   |   |
| 7 | Documentary evidence of a whole-college 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 extended learning support/access and inclusion staff. | For example, the provision of assessment arrangements could be part of an inclusive learning strategy which is in place in the college. |

## Section B: Additional documentary evidence

This section refers to the additional evidence required to support specific assessment arrangements. Please note that the following assessment arrangements are only acceptable when balanced against the substantial disadvantage that the disabled candidate would face without the arrangement.

| Arrangement   | Suggested forms of evidence   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Use of computer/human reader</b><br/>Colleges should have clear documented evidence that the candidate needs to use a reader.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has significant 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>Ongoing use of a computer/human reader for support in class noted in support records.</p> <p>Evidence of class work completed with and without the use of a computer/human reader can often show the difference that the support makes<sup>1</sup>.</p>   |
| <p><b>Use of scribe or voice recognition software</b><br/>Colleges should have clear evidence that a scribe or voice recognition software is needed.</p> <p>There should be documented evidence that a candidate has significant difficulty writing.</p> <p>For candidates who are unable to produce any written work at all, written confirmation of this from appropriate extended learning support staff will be acceptable.</p> | <p>Recent test of writing speed and/or accuracy and/or legibility assessment (which might include spelling assessment, speed of production of free, dictated, or word processed work).</p> <p>Examples of class work or assessments produced with and without scribe/voice recognition software can often show the difference that the support makes<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>Ongoing use of scribe or voice recognition software for support in class, recorded in support records.</p> |

<sup>1</sup>Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases, such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way. For example, if there is evidence of the difference that the support makes in one subject then this may evidence the difference the support makes in another subject with similar assessment demands.

| Arrangement   | Suggested forms of evidence   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Transcription with correction</b></p> <p>Colleges should have clear evidence that transcription is needed. The purpose of transcription is to remove the illegibility or the 'unreadability' of a candidate's written responses to aid in the marking of a script. It is an arrangement which can be requested for candidates where a marker would have difficulty in deciphering their written responses and this is why it is permitted. This arrangement is designed to meet the needs of candidates who have <b>substantial</b> difficulties with written communication but who are unable to use appropriate ICT.</p>                  | <p>Same types of evidence as above.</p>   |
| <p><b>Extra time</b></p> <p>When extra time is required there should be evidence of an on-going and significant difficulty in completing tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) in normal allocated time.</p> <p>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 <b>not</b> sufficient evidence on its own of the need for additional time.</p> | <p>Recent tests of speed of reading and/or speed of reading comprehension and/or speed of writing and/or speed of processing or working.</p> <p>Evidence of the need for subject lecturers to allocate extra time for assignments and assessments and that this extra time has been used on an on-going basis. This might include samples of work which indicate a difference in candidate's performance given extra time<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>Evidence that the amount of extra time requested is reasonable and appropriate.</p> |

<sup>2</sup> Considerable care needs to be taken when gathering such evidence to ensure that the candidate is not unduly disadvantaged or that it becomes an overly onerous task in terms of staff time. In the majority of cases such evidence should be naturally occurring and should be gathered in a reasonable way. For example, if there is evidence of the difference that the support makes in one subject then this may evidence the difference the support makes in another subject with similar assessment demands.

## Appendix 1: Examples of good practice for evidence requirements

### **Evidence of the internal assessment arrangements (AA) verification meeting**

In College A, internal AA verification 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 assessment arrangements verification check from stage 1 and the shortfalls in evidence are discussed fully at the internal assessment arrangements verification meeting, and actions/outcomes are detailed in the minutes 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 whether 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 and dated.

### **Evidence of confirmation from the candidate that they have agreed to (i) the provision of assessment arrangements, (ii) the college submitting the request on their behalf, and (iii) the college sharing their personal data required for the request with SQA**

At College B, all candidates with support needs are made aware at induction of the availability of assessment arrangements. They 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/difficulty and how this generally affects the learning and teaching situation**

In College C, it is the usual practice to ask schools for information on disabled candidates or those identified as having additional support needs and 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 some 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 this is met, and how it relates to the assessment arrangements requested**

In College D, 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 support by way of 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 College E, the access and inclusion staff always consult individual subject lecturers about each candidate's need for assessment arrangements in their area. The particular assessment requirements for each subject are taken into account. Records of this consultation and the decisions taken are kept on file and clearly show that all subject lecturers have been consulted even when specific evidence has been gathered from a similar subject area. For some candidates, it is noted that assessment arrangements are not required due to the inherent flexibility of the internal assessments.

**Documented evidence of a whole-college system for the management of SQA assessment arrangements which is supported by senior management**

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

## Appendix 2: Examples of good practice for evidence required for specific assessment arrangements

### Use of a computer reader/human reader

In College A, some candidates every year have significant difficulty in accessing written text. In addition to recording the evidence in Section A, extended learning 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 ICT with 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 extended 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 have been 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 College B, there are some 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 College C 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. Extended learning 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 sufficient.