

February 2025

Reaching out

NCW Outreach Termly Bulletin — Supporting V.I. Education

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Practical advice for students with a VI doing external exams

Please note that all advice is based on the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/JCQ-AARA-24-25\_FINAL\_accessible.pdf

Please discuss issues relating to exams with your exam officer and SENCO who put in the requests to the Assessment Organisations.

## Access arrangements

### Options for Modified Papers

* 18pt A4
* 24pt A4
* 24pt A3
* 36pt A3
* Tactile Diagrams (if relevant) with print labels
* Non-interactive electronic (pdf)

N.B. papers are usually modified at source

You can get tactile diagrams with large print papers as well as the braille papers, so don’t think you need to order the Braille, just to get the tactile diagrams. Tactile diagrams are an option for all exam boards.

Do check the situation with models with the relevant Assessment Organisation. For Edexcel, Maths models no longer come as standard with any large print modified papers (they do with Braille orders), and have to be ordered separately.

### Options for the candidate

* This should be based on the candidate’s usual method of work. If the candidate is able to type/write their own answers then they should do, although typing maths is not easy.
* If you are the person who usually works with the student then ideally you wouldn’t be the person reading/scribing for the actual exam. If you are the only person who can do this them there has to be an invigilator in the room with you at all times, observing you with the candidate. (JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations 13.7)

### Examples allowing for the use of a Reader:

* Rapid and/or fluctuating changes in students VI resulting in student unable to access their normal method of modified paper and is student’s normal way of working in class
* Student is between mediums of work – currently 36pt to 48pt, is learning Braille but not up to the standard needed to take exams in this format
* ENSURE THAT the Reader is reading from the Braille transcript so the papers match.
* A reader may decode symbols and unit abbreviations in Mathematics and Science examinations where it reflects the candidate’s current and normal way of working within the centre. ‘Decoding’ means naming the symbol. It does not involve explaining when or how the symbol is to be used or describing the symbol.
* BE AWARE that a Human Reader may not read the sections of an English Language or MFL paper which assesses the candidate’s reading ability, nor can the Human read out any Musical notation so the candidate needs to be encouraged to follow the braille paper whilst being read to interpret the symbols). The rules for a reader (JCQ AAaRA) section 5.5.10 state that the reader must not decode any symbols in a music exam; this means that you would read ‘mp’ and not ‘mezzo piano’.

### Examples for a Scribe:

* Learning support uses a word processor to record a student’s answers in class and so student’s normal way of working
* Plotting points on a diagram that have been marked at the student’s instructions.

## Advice for a scribe/reader

* Try to put the students at ease without being over friendly.
* Ask the students how they want you to support them.
* Remember that you cannot over support the student; ‘are you sure’, ‘is that your final answer’, ‘do you want to check that’ are not allowed.

## Additional time

* Any time allowance over 25% requires proof of need.
* Do not assume that 100% is necessary
* Largest amounts of additional time are usually needed where there are many diagrams
* Too much additional time can lead to over-tiredness and the production of over-long answers in literary subjects which can be counter-productive

## Additional points to remember for Maths and Science

* Conduct mock exams to check exam requirements, support requirements, time allowance.
* Exam training for all support staff.
* Must be maths competent in terms of being able to read the mathematics and write answers using correct notation. (Maths dept should be able to help)
* You can type calculator buttons for the student if they give you the order in which to type them.
* Mark diagrams for the student using bumpons, wickistix, pins etc as long as the student indicates where they want them.
* Draw around any bumpons, pins, wikistix etc because they will fall off the paper during transit.
* Prepare an exam tray for each student with all necessary equipment: Calculator – iPad with app; Tactile ruler; German film, dead pen, rubber mat; Graph board with a box of pins and elastic bands
* With regards to diagrams, it is important that a reader/scribe reads the relevant information in the question to the student before the student accesses the diagram so they have some idea of the context of the diagram with respect to the question.
* The reader/scribe should closely watch the student access the diagram to see that they are identifying/finding all the parts.
* If the reader/scribe needs to direct a student’s hand to a particular part of a diagram they should use the hand-over technique having first asked if they can show the student by taking their hand – some students may not like to have their hand held by a potential stranger!
* For a graph, if they are describing it to a student they should go through the parts in a logical order whilst the student locates each part: title first (to aid orientation); y-axis label with units; y-axis scale by describing min and max values and division value (e.g. 2 divisions represents 10); x-axis label with units; x-axis scale by describing min and max values and division value; and finally the shape and direction of the curve/line
* At the end of the exam:
1. Check all paperwork is handed in, this might include annotated graphs and diagrams. Attach it all together with a treasury tag.
2. If the student has worked on a Brailllenote or laptop, print off their work before they leave the room. Check it matches what is on their screen. Do not let them leave with it just saved on a USB drive!
3. Remember that any Braille needs to be transcribed before being sent to the Assessment Organizations.

## Recent changes to remember

* headphones used have to be non-electronic
* a candidate cannot be given as many supervised rest breaks as they like for as long as they like. The duration of the rest break must be determined by the SENCo and should reflect their normal way of working within the Centre

Upcoming Courses

* 4th March 3.30-4.30pm

Online Independent Living Skills – Avoiding the Hot Hob

Avoiding the Hot Hob: For young people with a VI, there are ways to avoid the potential dangers, and fears, of using a hot hob. The session will focus on strategies to support the use of microwaves and air fryers.

* 19th June Outreach Open Day 2025

Our informal days at our Worcester campus are designed for education professionals supporting students with vision impairment (VI) or parents of VI children. These sessions provide a great introduction to how NCW supports and teaches VI students.

During the day, you’ll have the chance to meet subject teachers and receive practical support and advice on specific curriculum areas of your choice.

You can also choose to attend a half-day Mathematics session as part of the program.

* 10th July Preparing Tactile Diagrams

This course, being held on our campus in Worcester, will provide hints and tips on how to produce tactile diagrams for Science, Maths and Geography.