

## How to ...

...facilitate exams accommodations.

### In general

Often pupils with learning difficulties may require testing and exam accommodations in order to participate effectively in a testing process on an equal basis with other peers. Such accommodations can also be provided for pupils with SLDs and it allows them to demonstrate skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to the effects of their learning disorder.

Testing accommodations are changes in testing materials or procedures that enable students to participate in assessments in a way that assesses abilities rather than disorders. They provide an opportunity for students with different challenges to demonstrate skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted because of a disorder.

The student's individual needs must drive the recommendation for testing accommodations, and it should alter the standard administration of the test to the least extent possible.

#### Testing accommodations, focus on:

- flexibility in scheduling/timing;
- flexibility in the setting used for the administration of assessments;
- changes in the method of presentation;
- and changes in the method of response.

#### Testing modifications, focus on:

- simplification, clarification, or explanation of test questions/items;
- use of spell-checking devices on a test of the student's spelling skills;
- and use of a calculator on a test of the student's computational skills.

## Facilitating accommodations

**Presentation accommodations** allow SLD pupils to access instructional materials in ways that do not require them to read standard print presented in a standard visual format. This may include:

- Verbal instructions
- Repetition of instructions
- Text/Instructions in audio-format
- Larger print
- Fewer Items per page
- Visual aids or cues (arrow pointing, use of post it stickers, etc.)
- Highlighted text
- Alternative answer sheet

Presentation Accommodations—Assessment during which they could use:

- Calculator
- Speech-to-Text and Text-to-Speech software
- Electronic dictionary database
- Spelling checker
- Grammar checker.

**Response accommodations** allow SLD pupils to use several alternatives for completion of tasks, tests, etc. SLD pupils are encouraged to present their abilities and skills in a different way, by using assistive technology equipment such organizers, tablets, large keys keyboards, etc. This may look like:

- Noting answers within a test book or an answering sheet
- Recording an oral response on a recorder
- Recording an oral response using a Livescribe pen
- Typing on a keyboard. (large keys, or regular)

**Setting accommodations** is understood as the specific location in which a test is going to be given or the conditions of a specific examination setting. This may include:

- Individual examination or within a small group of pupils with SLDs
- The reduction of any kind of distractions in classroom environment
- A different furniture arrangement, more suitable with the possible use of assistive technology equipment. (Laptops, printers, keyboards, etc.)

## Providing extra time

Depending on the SLD, and taking under consideration all above facts, a pupil may need some extra time to complete an exercise or a test during an examination.

Of course, depending on the nature of the examination, it may be an option to split the whole procedure in parts, in order for the pupils to have breaks, essential for them to re-organize their material, thoughts, etc.

It also may be the case that SLDs are coexisting with ADHD or ASD. In this case, special instructions regarding examination procedures have to be applied. (oral examination instead of a written one, assistive technology implementation, etc.)

Please bear in mind that after an official assessment, instructions on how to examine an SLD pupil at school are delivered by the professionals which carried out the procedure.

## Tools recommendation:

- Timer with audio signals – or a clock (not digital)
- Assistive Technology equipment (tablet – printer – keyboard – text to speech, speech to text software)
- Highlighting markers
- Calculator
- Audio (voice) recorder
- Organizer
- MindMap with steps of the exam