

Reasonable Adjustments for Reading and Writing Assessments: Guidance for ESOL Skills for Life Centres

This guidance is for centres with learners who require reasonable adjustments to complete their assessment. Reasonable adjustments can only be applied after approval from English Speaking Board (International) Ltd.

If the accommodation is potentially distracting for other learners (e.g. a reader or scribe), or other learners leaving the assessment room may cause disturbance for learners who have additional time, then use an additional room and invigilator.

Please prepare learners for their assessments by practising and completing mock assessments using the adjustment that has been agreed with ESB International. The adjustment should reflect the normal way of working for learners.

Note: A Special Consideration is different to a Reasonable Adjustment and can only be applied after an assessment has happened. A Special Consideration involves making an adjustment to a learner's mark or grade after the assessment has been completed. If you have learners who you think require a Special Consideration because of a temporary disability, illness or indisposition, or some other event outside of their control that occurred at or near the time of the assessment, please use a Special Consideration Request Form.

Contents

Paper-based ESOL Skills for Life Reading assessments.....	3
1. Use of a reader.....	3
2. Additional time.....	3
25% additional time.....	3
Paper-based ESOL Skills for Life Writing assessments.....	4
1. Additional time.....	4
25% additional time.....	4
2. Use of a laptop.....	4
3. Use of a scribe / amanuensis.....	4
4. Use of a transcriber / copier.....	5
Other accommodations.....	7
1. Supervised rest breaks between each section of the paper.....	7
2. Practical assistant.....	7
3. Prompter.....	7
4. Use of assistive software, assessment materials and/or responses in Braille, assessment materials in audio format.....	8
5. Modified papers.....	8
Frequently Asked Questions.....	8

Paper-based ESOL Skills for Life Reading assessments

1. Use of a reader

Example

Learners who are blind or partially sighted may require a reader, in addition to or instead of using a Braille paper. In some situations, learners with severe dyslexia may also use a reader.

A reader reads aloud the instructions and the questions verbatim, without expression or explanation. The Reading texts may not be read to the learner. You may read the instructions and the questions aloud twice only.

2. Additional time

Example

Learners with specific learning difficulties that require longer processing and/or completion time, e.g. dyslexia, may have additional time.

This is usually 25%, because more than this can make the assessment long and tiring. If more time is required, contact ESB International for specific instructions.

25% additional time

Level	Length of Reading assessment	Additional time	Length of assessment including adjustment
Entry 1	30 minutes	7 minutes 30 seconds	37 minutes 30 seconds
Entry 2	45 minutes	11 minutes 15 seconds	56 minutes 15 seconds
Entry 3	60 minutes	15 minutes	75 minutes
Level 1	60 minutes	15 minutes	75 minutes
Level 2	60 minutes	15 minutes	75 minutes

Paper-based ESOL Skills for Life Writing assessments

1. Additional time

Example

Learners with specific learning difficulties that require longer processing and/or completion time, e.g. dyslexia, may have additional time.

This is usually 25%, because more than this can make the assessment long and tiring. If more time is required, contact ESB International for specific instructions.

25% additional time

Level	Length of Writing assessment	Additional time	Length of assessment including adjustment
Entry 1	40 minutes	10 minutes	50 minutes
Entry 2	45 minutes	11 minutes 15 seconds	56 minutes 15 seconds
Entry 3	60 minutes	15 minutes	75 minutes
Level 1	90 minutes	22 minutes 30 seconds	112 minutes 30 seconds
Level 2	100 minutes	25 minutes	125 minutes

2. Use of a laptop

Example

Learners who are unable to write down their answer independently due to a physical or cognitive disability, or their handwriting is illegible.

- Disable all spelling and grammar-checking functionality.
- Ensure there is no internet access.
- When the learner has finished, print out one copy of the completed writing task and identify it with the learner's name and learner number. Insert it into a writing booklet which has the learner's name, learner number, centre number and qualification level on the front cover. Do not use staples or paper clips. Return the booklet in the usual way.

3. Use of a scribe / amanuensis

Example

Learners who are unable to write down their answer independently due to a physical or cognitive disability.

A scribe (also called an amanuensis) writes from speech, i.e. what the learner dictates, without making any changes.

The learner may make a written plan before dictating their answer to the scribe. This must be written in the 'Plan' section of the Writing paper and be clearly identified as a plan made by the learner and not part of their answer or written by the scribe. This must be submitted with the rest of the assessment paper.

The learner may also check what the scribe has written at various points during the dictation. If the learner asks the scribe to amend part of the text, the scribe must only correct what has been dictated to them by the learner.

- Before the assessment starts, say:
I am going to write down exactly what you tell me. You have to tell me when to start and finish every sentence. You also have to tell me all the punctuation marks, including full stops and capital letters. You have to tell me when to start a new paragraph, start a new line, or leave a line. If you do not tell me what punctuation marks to use, I will not use any. I will also ask you to spell less common words.
- During the assessment, you may say:
Please repeat that.
How do you spell ...?
- You may not ask any other questions, e.g. Shall I start a new paragraph? or use gestures to help the learner.
- Write the response in the answer booklet and print 'Written by scribe' and your name and date at the top of the response. Write the learner's name, learner number, centre number and qualification level on the front cover. Do not use staples or paper clips. Return the booklet in the usual way. ESB International may request this assessment to be recorded for auditing purposes.

4. Use of a transcriber / copier

Example

Learners who are unable to write down their answer independently due to a physical or cognitive disability.

A transcriber copies a written response into the format required by the assessment, without making any changes to content or style, e.g. a transcriber may type a handwritten response into a digital format, or make a legible version of an illegible response.

- The learner should complete the assessment under the standard secure assessment conditions.
- After the assessment, the learner should stay in the room while you transcribe the written response.
- Write down exactly what the learner has written, including anything that you think is incorrect or a mistake.
- While you are transcribing, you may say:
What is this word?
How do you spell it?
- You may not ask any closed questions, e.g. Is this ...?
- The learner must remain silent unless you ask a question.

- Print 'Written by transcriber' and your name and date at the top of transcriber's copy. Put the transcriber's copy and the learner's original response into a writing booklet which has the learner's name, learner number, centre number and qualification level on the front cover. Do not use staples or paper clips. Return the booklet in the usual way.

IMPORTANT: If readers, scribes or transcribers are needed, there must be **one allocated per learner**. This is to ensure learners do not have to wait for one to become available and could therefore be put under additional stress.

Other accommodations

1. Supervised rest breaks between each section of the paper

Example

Learners who have a disability which means they struggle to concentrate for sustained periods of time may require one or more supervised rest breaks.

Note the time at the beginning and end of the break and calculate the end time of the assessment. If 25% additional time has been agreed then these breaks are not included in that time. During the supervised rest break the learner is not allowed to discuss the assessment with anybody or use any electronic devices.

2. Practical assistant

Example

Learners who need physical support to access the assessment room and materials.

A practical assistant offers physical assistance as instructed by the learner, e.g. organising materials, helping them move around the room and ensuring they keep safe.

- Prepare the room and organise the materials before the learner arrives.
- Do not speak to the learner about the content of the assessment.

3. Prompter

Example

Learners who have difficulty following instructions and/or maintaining focus/concentration for sustained periods of time.

A prompter reminds learners what they are required to do during the assessment and keeps them on task.

- Familiarise yourself with the assessment format by looking at sample papers before the assessment day.
- Sit where learners can see you but you do not distract them.
- Do not read the instructions aloud. Use gestures to point at what the learners should be doing.
- Do not speak to learners about the content of the assessment.

4. Use of assistive software, assessment materials and/or responses in Braille, assessment materials in audio format

Example

Learners who have cognitive, audio or visual impairments which make them unable to complete the tasks in the normal way.

Assistive software (also called adaptive software) refers to computer programs and specialised hardware, e.g. text-to-speech software and assistive listening systems. ESB International will provide specific instructions in these cases.

5. Modified papers

Example

Learners with visual impairments.

Centres may enlarge papers or print them on coloured paper.

Frequently Asked Questions

- What do I do if a learner turns up on the day of the assessment with a recent injury, e.g. a broken arm?

If the learner is still keen and able to take the assessment without any assistance and is in possession of a medical certificate that confirms the condition, please proceed with the assessment as normal and submit a special consideration form for this learner – whilst marking we will review the impact of the situation on the learner's performance

If the learner is not able to complete the assessment without an accommodation please inform the learner that they will be able to sit the assessment at a later date.

- What do I do if a previously approved Reasonable Adjustment has not been provided by the venue staff (i.e. Invigilator did not allow extra time for the learner affected)?

Please provide the details on the Incident Report Form.