

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL CONCESSIONS / ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WRITING LOCAL EXAMINATIONS:

Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA); National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE); Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE).

Q: What are special concessions or alternative arrangements for examinations?

A: Special Concessions are the arrangements made:

1. To the standard format of an examination paper
2. Or to the conditions under which an examination / assessment is done, in order to accommodate the special need(s) of the student.

Q: Why are special concessions granted?

A: Special concessions are designed to provide equity not advantage, and to serve to 'level the playing field' for students with physical, learning and other disabilities and other special challenges. Concessions increase the student's access to instruction and assessment by addressing identified needs therefore, reducing or eliminating the effects of a student's challenge/disabilities. Furthermore, concessions do not reduce the student's learning expectations.

Q: What categories of special concessions are available?

Concessions offered can be categorized in four ways:

1. **Presentation Accommodations** adjust the presentation of test material and / or test directions e.g. (Instructions in Sign Language, Braille, Large Print). These may include the use of specific personnel (Interpreter, Reader)

2. **Response Accommodations** adjust the manner in which students respond to or answer test questions (Oral responses transcribed by a Scribe; Braille).
3. **Setting Accommodations** adjust the place in which the testing normally occurs (Separate Room, Preferential Seating)
4. **Scheduling Accommodations** adjust the time allowance or scheduling of test (Extended and/or Compensatory Time, Scheduled Breaks).

For the assessment of subjects requiring practical or performance activities, such as the Continuous Assessment Component (CAC), where applicable, identifies students who may need adaptive tools or methods in order to access tasks fully and to show competence.

The process, the environment and / or presentation of this component of the examination may need to be adapted to meet the needs of each student. These students may require special concessions or arrangements, particular to their identified need. Identified students with documented impairments may qualify for exemption from an examination, or specific components of an examination.

Q: Who may qualify for a special concession?

Student may qualify for special concessions under the following circumstances:

1. Students with Medical, Physical and Sensory Impairments:

Applications for student with medical, physical and sensory impairments must be accompanied by bona fide documentation from a recognized medical institution or licensed professional.

2. Students with Learning Disabilities:

Applications for students with learning disabilities must be accompanied by bona fide documentation (valid for a maximum of three years from the date of assessment) from a professional / organization qualified to do psycho-educational assessments. Alternatively, students without documented disabilities who receive classroom support or use instructional tools or accommodations in the classroom are not automatically eligible for this special arrangement.

3. Other special circumstances:

Any other special circumstances, under which a special concession may be required for students writing local exams (**SEA, NCSE, National Tests and PSLCE**) should be submitted for the consideration of the Ministry. These may include **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS** that can adversely affect students' performance, on the day of the exam e.g. (Broken arm, illness, family trauma).

Q: Will every student with a special need automatically be granted a concession?

A: No. The provision of special concession / alternative arrangements that are not required by the student to access the test may actually interfere with the student's performance and adversely impact student achievement as measured by the assessment / examination.

Q: Which documents must be submitted with the application?

A: Documents to be submitted include:

- Concession Application Forms A & B
- **Copies of the following documents**
 - . Birth Paper
 - . Sample of Student's Work (Language Arts, Mathematics, Creative Writing)
 - . Student's Cumulative Record
 - . Assessment Reports from qualified professionals
 - . Medical Report from qualified professional
- Any other document that may support the request / application

Please note, some reports are valid for a determined period, for example, psycho-educational assessments should be completed every three years. Medical reports may be valid for one year.

Q: How can a parent or teacher apply for a special concession?

A: A parent or teacher may apply by completing and submitting the prescribed forms to school administrators (principals) by the given deadlines. Applications must be submitted with the relevant supporting documents.

Q: How can a student be prepared to benefit from the granted concession prior to the examination?

The student should:

- Understand the nature of the concession
- Be afforded opportunities to use the accommodations and thereby

ensure that the concessions granted meet his/her identified needs.

- Be allowed to make regular use of the special arrangement(s) to ensure that they achieve optimal benefit.