

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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Last updated: November 2019

This policy will be in place from January 2020, and replaces any previous versions. The new set of access provisions noted in Appendix A will apply to candidates in the UK and Ireland for all exams starting in January 2020. In all other countries candidates should consult their representative for relevant access codes.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are committed to providing all candidates with fair access to our assessments. This policy explains how to request access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for candidates with specific needs entering for Graded Exams in Music Performance and Music Theory, or Diplomas.
- 1.2 This information is aimed at teachers, parents and candidates prior to entering for an exam. It is also available in alternative formats; please contact the Access Coordinator for more information. Contact details for the Access Coordinator are listed in section 9 or on the [Contact Us](http://www.abrsm.org/contact-us) page at www.abrsm.org/contact-us.
- 1.3 Guidelines for candidates with specific needs are available at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. Please read these guidelines before making an entry for candidates with specific needs.
- 1.4 Applicants who have questions which are not answered in these guidelines should contact the Access Coordinator before making an entry. Contact details for the Access Coordinator are listed in section 9 or on the [Contact Us](http://www.abrsm.org/contact-us) page.
- 1.5 From January 2020, applicants will be able to choose from a wider range of access provisions when making exam entries in the UK and Ireland. These new provisions can be found in Appendix A of this policy. You will now be able to be more specific about your candidate's requirements.

2. What do we provide?

- 2.1 Applicants may request access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, or a combination of both, to enable equal access.
- 2.2 Access arrangements give fair access to our assessments without changing the parameters of the exam or the marking criteria. Supporting evidence is not normally required when requesting access arrangements.
- 2.3 Examples of access arrangements include:
 - Large print tests/exam paper (where no additional time is required)
 - Modified print tests/exam paper (where no additional time is required)
 - Test/exam paper printed on coloured paper
 - Test printed on separate sheet to allow the candidate to make notes
 - Use of a coloured overlay or filter
 - Step-free access
 - General extra time for practical exams (e.g. for candidates with mobility issues)
 - Rest breaks (e.g. for candidates with Asthma, ME or Hypermobility)
 - Use of an adapted instrument
 - Minor modifications to exam music for practical exams (e.g. for candidates with physical restrictions or disabilities)
 - Modified or simplified language to be used by the examiner in practical exams
 - An exam appointment in the morning or afternoon.

- 2.4 It is not possible to use a word processor in ABRSM Music Theory exams.
- 2.5 Applicants may request a chaperone in line with the guidelines available at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. No supporting evidence is required. However, prior permission must be obtained.
- 2.6 Reasonable adjustment refers to any change made to the parameters of an exam to give fair access. Applications for reasonable adjustments must be accompanied by supporting evidence (see section 5.)
- 2.7 Examples of reasonable adjustments for Graded Exams in Music Performance include:
- Extra time for sight-reading preparation
 - Braille/large print/modified print memory test in place of sight-reading
 - Aural repetition in place of sight-reading
 - Alternative aural tests for candidates with hearing impairment
 - Adaptations to the aural tests for candidates unable to speak or sing
 - Use of the scale book or lyrics for candidates with processing difficulties.
- 2.8 Examples of reasonable adjustments for Graded Exams in Music Theory include:
- Braille/large print/modified print exam paper with extra time
 - Extra time to complete the exam
 - Rest breaks (often known as stop the clock)
 - A separate room
 - Use of a scribe or reader.
- 2.9 We do everything we can to provide alternative tests or arrangements for candidates with specific needs, but cannot alter the marking criteria. Where a candidate's specific needs mean that they cannot fulfil the requirements of a Graded Exam in Music Performance or a Diploma exam, they may find that the Performance Assessment may be a suitable alternative. (More information can be found at www.abrsm.org/performance-assessment).

3. Additional information

- 3.1 Applicants are welcome to highlight any information that will help the examiner or invigilator to support their candidates as sensitively as possible. This is particularly relevant where there is no standard arrangement currently offered.
- 3.2 ABRSM only uses supporting evidence to determine candidates' eligibility for reasonable adjustments; no details of supporting evidence are shared with examiners or invigilators apart from the access provisions and any other requirements for the exam. Please see Section 8.
- 3.3 Examples of situations where additional information may be helpful include:
- If the candidate is particularly anxious in new situations
 - If the candidate has tinnitus and is particularly sensitive to notes above a certain range
 - If the candidate has physical or verbal tics

- If the candidate has a physical disability (that doesn't require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment).

4. How do I request access arrangements or reasonable adjustments?

- 4.1 When making an entry, there is a section for candidates with specific needs. Please select the most relevant access provision from the list when making an entry. A full list can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.2 It is not possible to change an exam entry once it has been made, so it is important to be aware of your candidate's specific needs before making an entry.
- 4.3 If your candidate's needs are not met by any of our standard arrangements, please contact the Access Coordinator before making an entry.
- 4.4 Please note that the relevant access provision must be selected each time an exam entry is made for a candidate with specific needs, even if access arrangements or reasonable adjustments have been requested previously for that candidate.
- 4.5 The access arrangements and reasonable adjustments that are requested for the exam should reflect the usual way of working for the candidate.

5. Supporting evidence

- 5.1 Supporting evidence is required the first time a candidate is entered for an exam with reasonable adjustments. We do not usually require supporting evidence for subsequent exams, but reserve the right to request this.
- 5.2 Supporting documents should be sent by email to supportingdocuments@abrsm.ac.uk at the time of entry.
- 5.3 Where a reasonable adjustment is requested without supporting evidence, the exam will be administered with the adjustment in place, but we will not issue the exam result until the relevant documentation has been received.
- 5.4 Obtaining suitable supporting evidence can take time and should ideally be arranged well in advance of making an exam entry. Please refer to Sections 6 and 7 below.
- 5.5 Examples of acceptable supporting evidence are:
 - A letter or email from a Head Teacher or Principal
 - A letter or email from a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
 - A letter or email from the Disability Support Unit at a Further or Higher Education establishment
 - A letter or email from a suitably qualified healthcare professional
 - A report from an Educational Psychologist or other suitably qualified assessor.
- 5.6 The supporting evidence should:
 - Be dated
 - State the author's job title and contact details
 - Give the full name and date of birth of the candidate
 - Confirm the candidate's specific needs and include details of any formal assessments

- Where possible, provide details of reasonable adjustments allowed for statutory exams
 - Outline the candidate's usual way of working.
- 5.7 Adult candidates who may not have access to the options above should contact the Access Coordinator to discuss the most appropriate alternative.
- 5.8 We are unable to accept JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) forms or confirmation from JCQ of reasonable adjustments as supporting evidence. This is because such documents rarely contain the detail we need to ensure that our provision is appropriate. ABRSM is not currently a member of JCQ.
- 5.9 Supporting evidence **cannot** be accepted by examiners or stewards on the day of the exam.
- 5.10 Failure to submit appropriate supporting evidence may be considered maladministration in accordance with our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy:
www.abrsm.org/malpractice-and-maladministration-policy.

6. Late notice requests for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

- 6.1 All access arrangements and reasonable adjustments must be requested at the time of entry. It is not possible to add access arrangements and reasonable adjustments after an entry has been made.

7. Changes to entries

- 7.1 It is not possible to amend entry details after entries have been made and retain all the accommodations for a candidate's access requirements. Changes can be made to Practical appointment dates and times online, by logging in to your ABRSM account. If changes are made to an appointment for a candidate with access requirements, any extra time allowance will be transferred to the new appointment time. However, other arrangements, including alternative or enlarged tests cannot be transferred to the new appointment and will not be available for the exam. For Music Theory exams, only extra time allowances will be transferred if the total exam time does not exceed three hours. Please consider this before making any entry changes. In this case, applicants have two choices:
- To continue without the access arrangement or reasonable adjustment, or
 - To cancel the exam and request a refund: www.abrsm.org/withdrawals-non-attendance-and-fee-refund-policy.

8. Data protection

- 8.1 We recognise that applicants requesting access arrangements and reasonable adjustments may need to disclose personal and sensitive information about a candidate as part of the entry process. We are committed to handling this information discretely and confidentially. Our Privacy Policy can be found here: www.abrsm.org/privacypolicy.
- 8.2 Applicants should send copies of supporting evidence by email to:
supportingdocuments@abrsm.ac.uk.

- 8.3 Documents and emails containing supporting evidence are saved on a secure server until the closing date for appeals and are then destroyed a maximum of six months after they are received.
- 8.4 We keep details of any access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, and brief details of the supporting evidence given, for compliance purposes. This information is kept indefinitely, but records are deleted if the candidate has not taken an exam for five years. Systems used to store supporting documents have restricted access, in line with ABRSM's privacy policy.
- 8.5 We share details of candidate's access arrangements and reasonable adjustments with Honorary Local Representatives, examiners, stewards or invigilators. We only share additional information about candidates' specific needs where we have been requested to do so. Please see Section 3.

9. Further information and contact details

- 9.1 Guidelines for candidates with specific needs can be found at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds.
- 9.2 If you have any questions which are not covered by these guidelines please contact the Access Coordinator:

Access Coordinator
ABRSM
4 London Wall Place
London
EC2Y 5AU
T +44 (0)20 7467 7342
E accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk

- 9.3 ABRSM's exam regulations can be found at www.abrsm.org/examregulations

Appendix A: List of access provisions for exams from 2020

Note: The table below shows the access options available when booking exams online.

Only the options applicable for the selected exam will be visible.

n/a: not applicable

0: no additional time is available.

Varies according to grade: See the note below.

The additional time for memory tests in place of Sight-reading varies according to the grade as follows:

Grades 1-3: 5 minutes

Grades 4 and 5: 10 minutes

Grades 6 and 7: 15 minutes

Grade 8: 20 minutes

The additional time for Music theory exams varies according to the grade as follows:

Grades 1-3: 30 minutes

Grades 4 and 5: 40 minutes

Grades 6-8: 1 hour.

For further details on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, please refer to our Fair Access Guidelines at

www.abrsm.org/specificneeds

Description	Extra Time for Practical exams	Extra time for Sight-reading (Practical exams)	Extra Time for Music Theory
Amanuensis required for theory exam (due to specific learning difficulties)	n/a	n/a	Varies according to grade
Amanuensis required for theory exam (due to autistic spectrum disorder)	n/a	n/a	Varies according to grade
Amanuensis required for theory exam (due to visual impairment)	n/a	n/a	Varies according to grade
Amanuensis required for theory exam (due to neurological condition)	n/a	n/a	Varies according to grade
Amanuensis required for theory exam (due to physical disability)	n/a	n/a	Varies according to grade

Dyslexia	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Delay)	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Processing difficulties (Slow processing speed)	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Mears-Irlen Syndrome/Scotopic Sensitivity	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Sensory processing difficulties/disorders	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Specific Learning Difficulties with associated Autistic Spectrum Disorder	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Specific Learning Difficulty requiring large notation tests/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Specific Learning Difficulty requiring modified print tests/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Specific Learning Difficulty requiring tests/paper to be printed on coloured paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Other Specific Learning Difficulties (requiring extra time)	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Specific Learning Difficulty) requiring Aural Repetition test instead of sight reading	5	n/a	n/a
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (inc. Asperger's Syndrome)	5	0	Varies according to grade
Autistic Spectrum Disorder with associated specific learning difficulties	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Autistic Spectrum Disorder requiring large notation test/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Autistic Spectrum Disorder requiring modified print test/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Autistic Spectrum Disorder requiring Aural Repetition test instead of Sight Reading	5	n/a	n/a
Social or communication disorder	5	0	0
Selective mutism	5	0	0

Braille memory tests/paper	3	Varies according to grade	Varies according to grade
Sight difficulties - requiring no alternative tests/paper	5	0	0
Visual impairment requiring aural repetition test instead of sight reading (practical only)	5	n/a	n/a
Visual impairment requiring large notation test/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Large print tests/paper (no additional time)	0	0	0
Visual impairment requiring modified print tests/paper	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Visual impairment requiring large print memory test (practical only)	3	Varies according to grade	n/a
Visual impairment requiring modified print memory test (practical only)	3	Varies according to grade	n/a
Hearing impairment - no alternative tests/paper required	5	0	0
Hearing impairment requiring Alternative aural tests (practical only)	5	0	n/a
BSL interpreter required (but no alternative tests)	5	0	0
BSL interpreter and alternative aural tests for candidates with hearing impairment (practical only)	10	0	n/a
ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	5	Up to 3 minutes	Varies according to grade
Multiple sclerosis	5	0	Varies according to grade
Epilepsy including juvenile absence seizures	5	0	Varies according to grade
Narcolepsy	5	0	Varies according to grade
Cerebral Palsy	5	0	Varies according to grade
Tics (including Tourette's syndrome)	5	0	0
Stammers	5	0	0
Post traumatic stress disorder	5	0	Varies according to grade

Generalised anxiety disorder	5	0	Varies according to grade
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	5	0	Varies according to grade
Emotional or behavioural difficulties	5	0	Varies according to grade
Cystic Fibrosis	5	0	Varies according to grade
Diabetes	5	0	Varies according to grade
Step-free access required	5	0	0
Wheelchair access	5	0	0
Mobility problems	5	0	0
Physical disability (no alterations to tests/paper)	0	0	0
Arthritis (including trigger finger)	5	0	Varies according to grade
Ehlers-Danlos syndrome	5	0	Varies according to grade
Hypermobility	5	0	Varies according to grade
Physical disability requiring extra time	5	0	Varies according to grade