



ST HILDA'S SCHOOL, GOLD COAST

# SENIOR SCHOOL

## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS and REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS (AARA)

*from QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook 2019 v1.2*

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) recognises that some students have disability, impairment and/or medical conditions, or experience other circumstances that may be a barrier to their performance in assessment. Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA) are designed to assist these students.

AARA minimise barriers for eligible students to demonstrate their learning, knowledge and skill in assessment. Schools use the information in this handbook to inform their decisions about appropriate adjustments and arrangements for Applied, Applied (Essential), General, General (Extension), Short Course and Senior External Examination assessments.

Access arrangements are action/s taken by the school so that a student with an eligible impairment that may not be covered by the definition of disability can access assessment. Reasonable adjustments are action/s taken by the school so that an eligible student with impairment as a result of disability and/or medical conditions or experiencing other circumstances creating a barrier to the completion of assessment can be assessed.

The [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA) and the [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(DSE\)](#) seek to eliminate, where possible, discrimination against people with disabilities. Compliance with these documents ensures students are provided with opportunities to realise potential through participation in education and training.

The application of AARA to student assessment is based on the functional impact of the condition for which AARA are sought. Students with the same condition may experience highly varied impacts on their education, and their ability to demonstrate their learning, knowledge and skill in assessments.

Adjustments required due to temporary medical conditions or injuries should be identified and managed as soon as possible to enable access within assessment timelines.

### Principles

The following principles inform the decisions St Hilda's School makes about AARA:

- Consultation — Decisions are made in consultation with the eligible student and, when appropriate, parents/carers, relevant school staff and the QCAA. St Hilda's School ensures it maintains respect for the dignity and privacy of the student, parents/carers and associates throughout the application and implementation of AARA

- **Timeliness** — AARA must be planned and negotiated as early as possible so that eligible students are supported appropriately to participate in, and complete the requirements for, a course of study and assessment
- **Standards-based assessment** — The relevant exit or reporting standards are used to make judgments about student achievement. St Hilda's School is required to maintain the intent and rigour of assessment and any other requirements or components that are inherent or essential to a course of study. Assessment standards and instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs) are used to make judgments about student work and are not modified. Actual achievement is assessed using evidence provided in student responses, rather than perceived ability or potential achievement
- **Effects of AARA** — St Hilda's School will consider the effect of AARA on the student, including the effect on the student's ability to achieve learning outcomes, participate in courses of study and the effect on her independence and demonstration of her knowledge and skills. Students should have opportunities to demonstrate a response to assessment that is their own work. AARA are applied on a case-by-case basis with both the individual student needs and the assessment technique or task taken into consideration. St Hilda's School will consider the identified disability, impairment and/or medical condition and the functional impact on the student's capacity to undertake particular requirements of an assessment. A student may not need or want adjustments for some assessment techniques or instruments, or may need different adjustments in different assessments
- **Flexibility** — St Hilda's School will review the AARA provided and assess whether changes are needed over the duration of a student's schooling to allow for the changing needs of the student over time. AARA are specific to the individual needs of each student, subject and assessment instrument.

St Hilda's School will make decisions about AARA for Units 1 and 2. It will ensure that for Applied, Applied (Essential) and General subjects the AARA implemented for an eligible student for assessment in Units 1 and 2 are aligned to those that are available for summative assessment in Units 3 and 4. The provision of AARA for assessment in Units 1 and 2 by a school is not a guarantee that students will be provided the same access or the same adjustments for assessment in Units 3 and 4.

## **Roles and responsibilities for AARA**

St Hilda's School is responsible for administering assessment within the requirements of the relevant syllabus and meeting quality assurance processes for Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension), General (Senior External Examinations) subjects and Short Courses, for its students. In making decisions about AARA, it will consider what access arrangements or adjustments to assessment conditions are reasonable in the context of the eligible student's disability, impairment, medical condition or circumstances.

For each application, AARA are considered for all the student's enrolled subjects. AARA may vary by subject depending on the assessment requirements of the subject.

St Hilda's School will:

- check the accuracy of information supplied in the AARA application
- consider whether a student's application for AARA is consistent with eligibility requirements and clarify with QCAA officers as required.
- complete the online application and submit supporting documentation by the due date via the QCAA Portal
- advise the student, parents/carers and assessment supervisor of any principal-reported and QCAA-approved AARA, including providing them with any written notifications from the QCAA
- advise any other learning providers who might be affected by the AARA applied for.

The QCAA sets and amends the directions for assessment under its powers and functions listed in the *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014* and the *Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Regulation 2014* (QCAA Regulation). The QCAA is authorised to approve AARA for summative internal assessment, external assessment, Short Courses and Senior External Examinations.

## Eligibility

AARA are provided to minimise, as much as possible, barriers for a student whose disability, impairment, medical condition or other circumstances may affect her ability to read, respond to or participate in assessment.

These barriers fall into three broad categories:

- permanent
- temporary
- intermittent.

The QCAA uses broad application categories for AARA eligibility:

- cognitive
- physical
- sensory
- social/emotional.

Students may also be eligible for AARA where illness and misadventure (i.e. unforeseen circumstances) or other situations may prevent students from demonstrating their learning, knowledge and skill in internal and/or external summative assessment. The QCAA will also consider applications for certain cultural obligations or personal circumstances (eg: illness and misadventure).

## Ineligibility

Students are **not** eligible for AARA on the following grounds:

- unfamiliarity with the English language
- teacher absence or other teacher-related difficulties
- matters that the student could have avoided (e.g. misreading an examination timetable, misreading instructions in examinations)
- timetable clashes
- matters of the student's or parent's/carer's own choosing (e.g. family holidays or sporting events)
- matters that the school could have avoided (e.g. incorrect enrolment in a subject).

## Reporting and approving AARA

The QCAA is responsible for approving identified AARA for students undertaking summative assessment in Units 3 and 4 of Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension) subjects, summative assessment for Short Courses and for external assessment in General, General (Extension) and General (Senior External Examination) subjects, as defined in the table below.

QCAA-approved AARA are specific practical arrangements and adjustments that can only be approved by the QCAA following consideration of supporting documentation submitted with the AARA application.

Schools must submit applications for QCAA-approved and/or notify principal-reported AARA to the QCAA on a students' behalf.

## Summary of the adjustments for which schools are required to apply to the QCAA

Type of assessment	Adjustment
Summative assessment – internal examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extra time and/or rest breaks</li> </ul>
Summative external assessment or Senior External examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extra time and/or rest breaks</li> <li>• format of papers</li> <li>• assistance</li> <li>• assistive technology, including the use of a computer</li> <li>• a reader and/or scribe</li> <li>• a change of venue (changes to rooms should be recorded)</li> <li>• any adjustments not identified as principal-reported in the table in Section 6.4.4: Possible access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>

## Making decisions about AARA

St Hilda's School is responsible for making decisions about the type of AARA and for following guidelines about recording information and seeking QCAA approval. Decisions are based on the particular context for an eligible individual student, for a particular assessment. The limitations and restrictions and functional impact of the disability, impairment, medical condition or other circumstances and the specific types of adjustments that allow each student to access the assessment and/or demonstrate what she knows or can do. The decisions about adjustments may not be the same for every student or the same for each student for every assessment.

The decisions may involve an adjustment to:

- how the instrument is presented to the student (e.g. for a student with a hearing impairment verbal instructions may be provided as written instructions)
- how the student responds to the assessment (e.g. a student with dyspraxia may complete the assessment using a computer with approved software)
- the time allowed (e.g. a student with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have 5 minutes per half-hour extra time provided in supervised assessment)
- the scheduling (e.g. a student completes an assessment at a later time than others because of a car accident on the day of the assessment)
- the environment in which the assessment is undertaken (e.g. a student may sit in a different room to the other students as they need a reader)
- the mode of the assessment (e.g. a student with diagnosed anxiety may complete a spoken assessment by pre-recording their response, rather than responding in front of the class).

The table below outlines the time requirements for applications:

Type of AARA	Unit 3 and 4 General subjects — internal assessments	Unit 3 and 4 General subjects external assessments <i>and</i> General (SEE) subjects
Alternative format papers, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• braille</li> <li>• large print</li> </ul>	Due dates are determined by the school.	<b>Applications are due by the end of February in the summative year.</b> Late applications may not be considered, as significant advance notice is required for design and production.
QCAA-approved AARA (including in combination with principal-reported AARA)	For existing long-term and chronic conditions — <b>applications are due by completion of Units 1 and 2.</b> For all others, applications are due <b>as soon as possible</b> before the assessment event.	For existing long-term and chronic conditions — applications are due <b>by the end of Term 1</b> in the summative year. For short-term conditions or temporary injuries that are unlikely to resolve before mid-October — applications are due <b>by the end of Week 5 Term 3</b> in the summative year.
Principal-reported AARA only	Notification is due <b>before the relevant confirmation event</b>	<b>Notification is due by the end of Term 3 in the assessment year.</b>

### Student statement (optional)

The student may choose to submit a statement with the application for QCAA-approved AARA about how her disability, impairment and/or medical condition affects her in assessment. However, the absence of a student statement does not disadvantage an AARA application.

### Medical report

Notifications require the submission of a medical report that provides:

- diagnosis of disability and/or medical condition
- date of diagnosis
- date of occurrence or onset of the disability and/or medical condition
- symptoms, treatment or course of action related to the disability and/or medical condition
- information about how the diagnosed disability, impairment and/or medical condition affects the student participating in assessment, particularly timed assessment when considering external assessment
- professional recommendations regarding AARA.

The medical report may be completed by a relevant practitioner who is a general practitioner (GP), medical specialist, or psychologist (registered under Queensland's *Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001* and/or Queensland's *Psychologists Registration Act 2001*), **and who is not related to the student or employed by the school.**

### Evidence of verified disability

When a student has been verified as part of the Education Adjustment Program (EAP) or an equivalent process, the formal notification of EAP provided by the relevant education authority may substitute for a medical report. This may be considered only when the notification covers the duration of the student's enrolment in subjects for Units 3 and 4 in Applied and General subjects, or the General and General (Extension) subject summative external assessment and Senior External Examination schedules in November, as applicable.

## **Other evidence**

For eligible students, supporting documentation may also include:

- teacher observations
- results from standardised academic testing.

Where the condition is not medical, students may supply other relevant evidence including:

- police reports
- official notices.

## **Currency of supporting documentation**

School statements should be current — they should be written at the time the application for AARA is submitted.

The currency of supporting medical documentation depends on the diagnosed disability, impairment and/or medical condition.

## **Long-term conditions that are unlikely to improve over time**

Except in exceptional circumstances, and with the prior written agreement of the QCAA, for long-term conditions when the student is not covered by current Education Adjustment Program (EAP) verification or equivalent, medical documentation must be dated no earlier than 1 January of the year of the student's Year 10 enrolment. This means that from the perspective of her Year 12 external assessment schedule, the maximum age of supporting medical documentation allowable is two years and 10 months.

Where an application has been submitted in the case of a student with a long-term condition and the condition deteriorates subsequent to the application decision, a further application may be submitted that provides updated information regarding the student's condition.

## **Short-term conditions or temporary injuries**

Short-term conditions may improve or deteriorate over time depending on a range of influences and factors. Except in exceptional circumstances, and with the prior written agreement of the QCAA, supporting medical documentation for short-term conditions or temporary injuries, including mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, is to be dated:

- for summative internal assessments in all subjects and Short Courses, no earlier than six months prior to the relevant Unit 3 or 4 assessment event
- for summative external assessments, or the Senior External Examination, no earlier than 1 April of the assessment year. The QCAA may require an updated medical report closer to the assessment schedule.

The following table is a summary of documentation requirements for AARA. The list of possible AARA is not exhaustive and depends on a student's individual circumstances.

Eligibility category	Examples of possible AARA	Supporting documentation required	Currency of supporting documentation for AARA applications — Units 3 and 4	
			Summative internal assessment	Summative external assessment and SEE
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer</li> <li>• Extra time</li> <li>• Reader</li> <li>• Rest breaks</li> <li>• Scribe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical report or EAP verification covering Unit 3 and 4 assessments</li> <li>• School statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No earlier than Year 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No earlier than Year 10</li> </ul>
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance</li> <li>• Computer</li> <li>• Extra time</li> <li>• Rest breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical report or EAP verification covering Unit 3 and 4 assessments</li> <li>• School statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> <li>• Temporary conditions: No earlier than six months prior to the relevant assessment event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> <li>• Temporary conditions: No earlier than 30 April of the assessment year. An additional, updated medical report may be required.</li> </ul>
Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative format papers</li> <li>• Assistance</li> <li>• Assistive technology e.g. amplification system, magnification applications</li> <li>• Extra time</li> <li>• Individual instructions</li> <li>• Rest breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical report or EAP verification covering Unit 3 and 4 assessments</li> <li>• School statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> <li>• Temporary conditions: dated within six months preceding the relevant assessment event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> <li>• Temporary conditions: No earlier than 1 April of the assessment year</li> </ul>
Social/emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative venue</li> <li>• Varied seating</li> <li>• Assistance</li> <li>• Rest breaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical report Or EAP verification covering Unit 3 and 4 assessments</li> <li>• School statement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety and depressive conditions: No earlier than six months prior to the relevant assessment event.</li> <li>• Other conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety and depressive conditions: No earlier than 30 April of the assessment year. An additional, updated medical report may be required.</li> <li>• Other conditions: No earlier than Year 10</li> </ul>

## Illness and misadventure

Students whose ability to attend or participate in an assessment is adversely affected by illness or an unexpected event may be eligible for provisions for illness and misadventure. Illness and misadventure can affect a single student or a group of students.

The following principles apply:

- The illness or event is unforeseen and beyond the student's control
- An adverse effect must be demonstrated
- The situation cannot be of the student's own choosing or that of their parents/carers, such as a family holiday
- Schools implement principal-reported AARA when possible, before considering an application for illness and misadventure
- An illness and misadventure application cannot be made for the same condition or circumstances for which QCAA-approved AARA have been approved, unless it can be demonstrated that a significant deterioration or complication of the condition occurred that diminished the student's performance in external assessment.
- When a group of students is affected by an illness or adverse and unforeseen event leading up to or during the summative internal assessment schedule, or during an external session, the above principles apply.

## **Illness and misadventure — internal assessment**

An illness and misadventure application should only be made once all principal-reported AARA have been exhausted.

A student who is ill and unable to attend school for internal assessment should inform the Head of Senior School or their Head of Year as soon as practical. This may be before, during or immediately after the assessment session.

A Principal-reported AARA will be implemented to provide opportunities for the student to complete the assessment. Arrangements such as comparable assessment and extensions may be considered when illness or misadventure is established.

Where the school has attempted to implement principal-reported AARA, or principal-reported AARA is unable to be implemented due to the illness or event, and therefore the student is unable to provide a response to a summative internal assessment, the school may use evidence gathered by the student's teacher during the assessment preparation time, for example, draft work, to make a judgment about the student's work.

Where the school is unable to provide any evidence of a student response gathered during the assessment preparation time, and the student is unable to provide a response to a summative internal assessment with AARA, but has completed the required learning as outlined in the relevant syllabus or course, the school or student should complete an application for illness and misadventure provisions.

## **Illness and misadventure — external assessment and senior external examinations (SEE)**

The QCAA advises students to attend every external assessment. However, the QCAA does not expect students to attend an external assessment against specific written medical advice. When students are in doubt about attendance to complete an external assessment, they should contact the Head of Senior School or Assistant to Head of Learning and Teaching.

### **Illness during external assessment**

A student who is ill but able to attend the external assessment should inform the external assessment supervisor of her illness as soon as practical. This may be before, during or immediately after the external assessment session.

### **Submitting an application for illness and misadventure for external assessment**

A submission for illness and misadventure may be made by a student, or by the school on behalf of the student or groups of students. The submission may be made when performance in an external assessment is affected by an illness or circumstances beyond their control, occurring in the lead up to, or during, the external assessment schedule.

An illness and misadventure application cannot be made for the same condition or circumstances for which QCAA-approved AARA have been approved unless it can be demonstrated that a significant deterioration or complication of the condition occurred that diminished the student's performance in external assessment.

The QCAA will seek background information and a recommendation from the principal's delegate, observers and invigilators where relevant, to verify a student's application for illness and misadventure.

### **Submitting an application for illness and misadventure for the Senior External Examination**

Students must attend all components of the examination to receive a result in a Senior External Examination. If a student is absent from either the written or oral component of a language examination, no result is issued.

No alternative arrangements can be made if a student does not attend a scheduled written examination.

A student who cannot attend the oral component of a language examination must notify the QCAA as soon as practical. Reasons for non-attendance may include illness or misadventure. A telephone examination for the oral component only may be arranged in extenuating circumstances.

### **Supporting documentation**

To make an informed decision about an illness and misadventure application, the QCAA requires a report that includes the following details:

- the illness, condition or event (including details of a diagnosis, where applicable)
- date of diagnosis, onset or occurrence
- symptoms, treatment or course of action related to the condition or event
- explanation of the probable effect of the illness, condition or event on the student's participation in the assessment
- for non-medical claims, written evidence from a relevant independent professional or other independent third party, such as a police report.

### **Currency of supporting documentation**

Supporting documentation must cover the date of the assessment for which the application is made.

### **Timelines for applications**

Applications for internal assessments must be submitted as close to the assessment event as possible, and where relevant, before submitting provisional marks for confirmation.

Applications for external assessments can be submitted from 14 days before the start of the assessment period, to 7 days after the assessment.