

Public Exams Accommodations Policy

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes its responsibility to provide reasonable accommodation to students with identified exceptionalities. The purpose of the “Public Exams Accommodation (PEA) Policy” is to establish guidelines to provide reasonable accommodation during public examinations for students with identified exceptionalities.

The PEA Policy lists and clarifies the most common accommodations used by students with identified exceptionalities during public examinations. In special circumstances other forms of assistance may be required depending on the particular needs of the student. Determination of the use of other types of assistance or procedures will be made on an individual basis by the Manager for High School Certification at the Department of Education in consultation with the District’s Education Officer for Student Support Services.

1. Students with identified exceptionalities will be provided with accommodations/adaptations.

These adaptations/accommodations **must be both**;

- (i) consistent with the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or Record of Accommodations
 - (ii) consistent with the accommodations outlined in this policy
2. Such accommodations refer to the use of any reasonable means or special arrangements in addition to those used generally for other students. These accommodations are appropriate to ensure all students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their achievement under suitable conditions. Special accommodations include but are not limited to:
 - extra time
 - dictation of responses
 - reading of the exam with clarification of instructions
 - transcribing
 - large print or Braille
 - sign language
 - alternate setting within the school
 - use of word processing software with spell check and grammar check
 - use of voice and text recognition software
 - use of other forms of assistive technology
3. Specific conditions for requesting accommodations in the public examinations are as follows:
 - Accommodations are provided to offset specific need(s) that have been acknowledged by program planning team members.
 - Accommodations requested must have been previously utilized effectively by the student.
 - Accommodations must be consistent with the student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP) and /or Record of Accommodations. These accommodations must be supported by the student’s comprehensive assessment results.
 - Accommodations to evaluation may include only such alternative means as are necessary for a fair and effective evaluation. The grading standards used will be the same as for all other students.
 - No course may be evaluated by means which exclude the use of skills that are considered integral or essential to the course. For example, in a Language Arts course, specific skills include reading and viewing, writing and speaking as well as listening.

- For the purpose of this policy, “reading” is the analysis, interpretation and critical evaluation of texts and text elements. At the high school level, a student may read” by utilizing many different cuing strategies. “Reading” may not require the student to decode print.
- Writing and other ways of representing are the integration and composition of information from many sources to convey meaning. They are also the articulation and justification of positions on an issue or text, showing an understanding of a range of viewpoints. At the senior high level, writing does not necessarily include the mechanical act of writing text on paper.
- Viewing is the analysis, interpretation and critical evaluation of images, media texts, and visual elements. Schools with students who are blind or severely visually impaired should consult with the Itinerant Teacher for the Blind/Visually Impaired for recommended individual students’ accommodations.
- For the purpose of English Language Arts (ELA), listening refers to the ability to attend, understand, analyze and then respond to a non-written, oral text. A student may listen by utilizing many different strategies such as hearing, ASL (American Sign Language) and speech reading. Therefore, listening may not require the student to hear or decode sounds.

4. Specific guidelines for accommodated evaluation in the public examinations are as follows:

(i) Extra time:

- Students who have been approved for extra time and are working productively can continue working to a maximum of 5 hours.
- In some cases, a student may require scheduled, supervised breaks. Where this accommodation has been approved, the time for breaks should not be included as part of the time allowed for writing the exam.

(ii) Dictation of Responses – Voice Recognition or Audio Recording:

- The use of assistive technology that the student is familiar with is the preferred option. Some examples may include, but are not limited to, digital recording, and speech recognition software.
- In cases where these accommodations are not possible, a scribe will be assigned. The scribe must follow the guidelines outlined on the scribe information sheet attached to this policy.

(iii) Reading of the Exam

- Test items may be read to a student for whom a comprehensive assessment report confirms such a need.
- The Department will supply exams in Kruzweil, Read and Write Gold or Word/Speak Q
- Both Kruzweil and Read and Write Gold will employ the path mapping feature where all text and symbol items including diagrams will be read. The student should be prepared for this format.

(iv) Clarification of Instruction

- The wording of exam questions may be clarified providing examinable terms are not defined for the student, thus compromising the integrity of the exam.
- The exam for which this accommodation has been approved cannot be read by:

- the teacher teaching that particular course, or
- any teacher who provided instructional support to the student in that course, or
- a relative of the student.

The District Education Officer for Student Support Services must contact the Department's Manager for High School Certification in situations where the guidelines regarding who may and may not clarify instruction pose a problem for a student with significant anxiety.

(v) Transcribing:

- The student will write his or her response to the exam question. A teacher will read the student's written answer back to the student. The student orally tells the teacher of any required changes to his or her answer and the teacher writes those changes on the exam paper.

(vi) Use of Word Processing Software:

- When using word processing software, desktop computers or lap top computers may be used by a student to type or dictate responses to an exam. These computers must be supplied by the school. A student is not permitted to use his/her personal computer. Spell check and grammar check, consistent with the students IEP and/or Record of Accommodations, are permitted in exams. Other features must be disabled. **Internet access is prohibited.**
- The file must be saved on a CD, DVD or memory stick using the file name d:/student exam # name of exam (e.g. d:/51403Math3200).
- A printed copy of the file, together with the CD, DVD or memory stick, must be sent to the Department of Education. The file must not be saved on the hard drive. No electronic or print copy of this file shall be kept at the school.

(vii) The following assessment practices are recognized for English Second Language (ESL) Learners:

- Bilingual dictionary (the dictionary must not have any definitions)
- Extended time
- Clarification of instructions

5. Procedures for requesting accommodations are as follows:

- (i) Requests for accommodations outlined in this policy are to be submitted to the district by **February 14th** for June. Accommodation requests not outlined in this policy that require consultation with the Manager for Evaluation must be submitted to the district by **October 31st**.
 - Unless circumstances have changed, any accommodations approved for June will be allowed for August.
 - For those students writing a supplementary in August who have not written an exam the previous June, or who did not have an approved accommodation, this application should be submitted by **June 30th**.
- (ii) Forms must be signed by the student, parent and principal. These forms are to be submitted to the District's Education Officer for Student Support Services for signature. The Education Officer decides whether the application is approved, not approved, or if it requires further consultation with the Manager for High School Certification. The Education Officer must then forward these forms to the Department of Education.

Scribe Information Sheet

Only individuals having professional qualifications in teaching or testing may be approved to act as scribes. Student assistants are not permitted to act as scribes.

The exam for which the accommodation has been approved cannot be scribed by:

- the teacher teaching that particular course, or
- any teacher who provided instructional support to the student in that course, or
- by a relative of the student.

The District Education Officer for Student Support Services must contact the Department's Manager for High School Certification in situations where the guidelines regarding who may and may not scribe pose a problem for a student with significant anxiety.

An approved scribe shall record only what the student dictates, without prompting. In any examination for which the conventions of written language are an integral aspect of the course (e.g., Language Arts) the student's dictation must be complete with grammatical usage and writing mechanics. The guidelines below must be followed.

- Where audio taping is used to complete examinations in which writing is integral, e.g., Language Arts, the student must provide dictation which indicates the writing mechanics, as noted above, to the qualified scribe or a written transcript of the oral presentation which indicates the conventions of written language.
- An approved scribe performing graphical or mathematical processes shall write only as directed by the student. However, scribes may utilize electronic calculators or mathematical instruments provided that students direct their use.
- All scribed sessions must be accompanied by an audio recording of the session.
- Language Arts
 - The student should have experience using a scribe so that conventions are easily interpreted by the scribe (e.g., the ending of a sentence indicated by a prolonged pause). The student should not have to spell every word or indicate the beginning and end of each sentence. The student should, however, indicate when a new paragraph is to start.

Technology and Public Exams Accommodations

Tablets and other electronic devices may be used for students with documented accommodations in Public Exams under the following conditions.

1. The exam may not be transmitted to or from the device over the Internet in any way, this includes but is not limited to email or cloud services.
2. Internet must be disabled on the device.
3. Students may not under any circumstances use their own devices. The device must be the property of the School, District or Province.
4. The device must not, at any time, have been taken out side of the school building for use by students or teachers.
5. The memory must be purged at the end of the exam. For iPad tablets, some text unrelated to the exam must be copied into memory. This will remove any copying or pasting that occurred during the exam. iPad tablets will remember the last copied text even if it is turned off and back on.
6. Printing from the tablet directly to a printer is permitted.
7. All references to the exam are to be removed from the device once the exam is completed. If this is not possible then the device cannot be used.