

Introduction to AARA

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

This information is for students, parents/carers and school staff. It applies to students undertaking summative assessment in Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension), including Alternative Sequences and General (Senior External Examination (SEE)) subjects, and Short Courses.

Every year, there are students undertaking senior school studies in Queensland who have a disability, impairment, medical condition or who experience other circumstances that may be a barrier to their performance in assessment. AARA are designed to assist these students.

Student eligibility for AARA

Eligibility for AARA falls within the following categories:

- long-term and chronic conditions (e.g. intellectual disability, hearing or vision impairment, physical impairment, specific learning disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, diabetes)
- mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression
- short-term conditions, which may improve or deteriorate over time depending on a range of factors, and temporary injuries (e.g. broken limb)
- illness (e.g. flu-like symptoms, gastroenteritis) and misadventure (e.g. flooding, death of a close family member).

For episodic conditions that *may* occur during timed assessment (e.g. migraines), QCAA-approved AARA will *not* be approved on a 'just in-case' basis. If symptoms occur at the time of a scheduled internal assessment, a comparable assessment may be administered when the student is well. If symptoms occur at the time of an external assessment, an illness and misadventure application may be submitted or a late AARA request may be made.

AARA are applicable for students who have completed required learning as outlined in the relevant syllabus or course.

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 parents'/carers' own choosing, e.g. family holidays or sporting events
- matters that the school could have avoided, e.g. incorrect enrolment in a subject.

AARA cannot be used to compensate for learning that has not occurred, or to exempt a student from the learning or knowledge and skill requirements of a subject or course.

Principles of AARA

In making decisions about AARA, schools:

- consult with students and parents/carers
- confirm the current functional impact/s of the disability, impairment, medical condition or circumstance for individual students in timed assessment. (Impacts may vary significantly for different students with the same diagnosis, condition or circumstance)
- consider adjustments that address functional impacts to enable students to access and complete assessment on the same basis as other students. (AARA cannot confer an advantage)
- consider adjustments that will allow students to participate in assessment as independently as possible
- monitor and regularly review the effectiveness of adjustments in addressing current functional impacts and enabling access and participation on the same basis for all students
- balance the interests of all parties affected, including other students, staff and the school itself
- consider alternative reasonable adjustments that are less disruptive and intrusive but no less beneficial for the students, as needed
- maintain the academic requirements of subjects and ensure the integrity of assessment requirements and processes. (All inherent requirements and components of the course must be maintained at the same standard for all students.)

When providing students with adjustments prior to summative assessment, schools are encouraged to take these principles into account, to ensure that enacted adjustments are consistent with AARA for Units 3 and 4.

Adjustments may be made to:

- how assessment is presented to a student, e.g. a student who cannot hear or process verbal instructions may be provided with written instructions
- how the student responds to the assessment, e.g. a student with physical impairment impacting handwriting, may need to complete some assessment using a computer
- the time allowed, e.g. a student with disability may require five minutes per half-hour extra time to complete timed assessment on the same basis as other students without disability
- the scheduling, e.g. a student may complete an internal assessment at a later time than others, because of a car accident or illness 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 because they need a reader or scribe
- the mode of the assessment, e.g. a student with an injury may perform a different physical activity from the rest of the Physical Education class, so they can demonstrate the unit objectives.