Guidelines for use of Exact in examination access arrangements

In accordance with JCQ regulations September 2020 to August 2021

This document has been reviewed by JCQ, Communicate-ed and Patoss.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify how *Exact* may be used when assessing students for examination access arrangements, which are governed by regulations set out in the document *'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'* published annually by JCQ (hereinafter referred to as *'JCQ AARA'*).

General

Exact is a fully computerised, UK nationally standardised suite of literacy tests for the age range 11 years 0 months to 24 years 11 months. It can be used by Access Arrangements Assessors as an integral part of their assessment of students who may require examination access arrangements and the results from *Exact* can be entered into Part 2 of JCQ Form 8.

- an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment [see *JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 7.3.3*] or

- a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or Patoss and listed on the SASC website [see *JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 7.3.3*] or

- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council [see *JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 7.3.3*]

The sections below outline exactly how the results from *Exact* may be used for this purpose.

1. **No single test on its own is adequate and *Exact* must not be viewed as the complete assessment solution; results from other tests are likely to be required.** Candidates needing access arrangements may have difficulties in any one of a number of skills, and assessors will be able to draw on range of assessment tools in order to confirm such difficulties.

2. Before an assessment, the SENCo must complete Part 1 of Form 8, which is made available to the access arrangements assessor prior to assessment. The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information as detailed within Part 1. All test results must be backed up by evidence showing that the access arrangement requested reflects the support given to the student, i.e. 'painting the picture' of the student's need for the arrangements *[see JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 4.2.5]*. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'.

3. *Exact* may also be used as a screening tool to help identify students who may qualify for access arrangements, and who will require further assessment by an Access Arrangement Assessor. If *Exact* is used solely as a screening test, the results would be included within Part 1 of Form 8 (not Part 2).

4. Screening may be administered by a suitably qualified Access Arrangement Assessor or by a non-specialist member of staff who is competent in test administration, but does <u>not</u> hold an assessor qualification (e.g. a SENCo or trained Higher Level Teaching Assistant). If *Exact* is administered by a non-specialist the results <u>cannot</u> be entered into Part 2 of JCQ Form 8. All tests in Part 2 must be administered by a qualified Access Arrangement Assessor who must sign to say that they carried out those assessments. If *Exact* has been used as a screening test by a non-specialist, the student may be retested by an Access Arrangement Assessor using the parallel (equivalent) form of *Exact* – see the [*Exact Administrator's Manual*](#) (accessed from the program and from the GL website).

5. *Exact* is available for individual use or multiple users. *Exact* should be administered in accordance with the instructions given in the *Exact Administrator's Manual*. As with all tests, it is important to supervise students closely when administering the test, whether screening or carrying out an access arrangement assessment. Those who don't engage fully with the tasks may have questionable results.

Extra time in exams

The following results from *Exact* are appropriate when applying for 25% extra time in examinations.

- **Reading Comprehension Speed** (standard score 84 or below)
  [JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.2.2]

  5. The *Exact* Comprehension Speed measure is valuable in showing those students (e.g. compensated dyslexics) who can read accurately but slowly, or who need to re-read text several times to absorb its meaning. It is one of the few timed tests of reading comprehension speed. The test is easy to administer and, being a computer-based test, it is free from administrator bias or inconsistency. However, some students may attempt the test too quickly by just guessing without giving the questions proper consideration. This, of course, is a potential factor in any multiple-choice test, not only computer-based tests. Before they start the test, the administrator should therefore point out to students that they should make use of all the time allowed and should try to get as many answers right as possible. They are not expected to answer all the questions, and if they complete the test too quickly their score will not be valid.

- **Handwriting to Dictation** (standard score 84 or below)
  [JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.2.2].

  6. As a measure of writing speed, the *Exact* Handwriting to dictation can be used as core evidence for 25% extra time where the candidate's standard score is in the below average range (a standard score of 84 or less).

  7. A standard score of 84 or less in an appropriate test is regarded as the key assessment criterion for extra time for candidates with learning difficulties. However, the JCQ AARA also allows, in 'rare and exceptional' cases, standard scores *within the low average* range (85-89) from at least 2 <u>different</u> areas of speed of working (e.g. two low average scores relating to speed of reading comprehension and speed of writing would be acceptable, whereas two low average standardised scores relating to speed of reading and speed of reading comprehension would not be acceptable) to be cited in the case of 25% extra time. These applications will need to be referred to the Awarding Body for approval. There must, of course, be supporting evidence regarding the student's normal way of working to back up these low average scores [see *JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.2.2* for details].

Writing: Use of a scribe or speech recognition technology or word processor with spell check enabled

The following results from *Exact* are appropriate when applying to use a scribe or speech recognition technology or a word processor with spell check enabled in examinations.

- **Spelling** (standard score 84 or below) with unrecognisable spelling attempts *[JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 7.5.11]*.

   8. In addition to the requirement for a below average score for spelling accuracy, the student's spelling attempts should be analysed to determine whether they are recognisable as the target words. Spelling errors that are fully plausible and easily readable are unlikely to impact on the examiner's ability to read the student's work. However, where spelling attempts are unrecognisable, the student may need to use a scribe, speech recognition technology or word processor with spell check enabled to fully demonstrate knowledge and understanding. *[JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.7]*.

- **Handwriting to Dictation** (standard score 84 or below)
   [JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 7.5.11].

   9. The *Handwriting to Dictation test* in *Exact* can be used within Part 2 as evidence for the use of a scribe as it provides a measure of writing speed. Students with illegible or very slow handwriting can be apparent from the results of the dictation test in *Exact*, and their typing speed and accuracy in the *Typing to Dictation test* can help to determine whether they might need to use a word processor or have a scribe (it should be noted, however, that typing speed alone is not a measure upon which to award a scribe and is not recorded as core evidence in Part 2 of Form 8). If a student is going to use a word processor in examinations with spell check and word prediction functions disabled, no further individual evidence is required provided it is the student's normal way of working *[see JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.8]*. However, the *Typing to Dictation* test on *Exact* can provide useful information on the student's ability to type (both typing speed, expressed in words per minute and a standard score, and accuracy), such qualitative evidence can be used to support the use of a word processor.

   10. A few students handwrite adequately to dictation but write slowly when free writing; this discrepancy is valuable because it shows that their difficulty is not with the mechanics of writing but with 'thinking time' or in some cases uncertainty because of spelling difficulties. These students require further assessment of their free writing, processing speeds and spelling, and may require extra time rather than a scribe. Spelling difficulties alone, however, are not a measure upon which to award extra time.

A Reader or Computer Reader in exams

Assessment evidence in Form 8 Part 2 is not required for students who require a reader or computer reader in exams. However, the following reading tests in *Exact* can be very useful extra tools in identifying students who may have difficulties with reading.

- **Reading Comprehension Accuracy**

- **Reading Comprehension Speed**

- **Word Recognition**

These reading tests in *Exact* are useful in screening for reading difficulties with word recognition, reading comprehension and reading comprehension speed and can help in identifying students who may need a reader or computer reader in exams. The results can help the SENCo to be satisfied that the student has "persistent and significant reading difficulties" and that "there is a genuine need for the arrangement." *[see JCQ AARA 2020/21, Section 5.5]. However, the SENCo will need to confirm that access to reading help is the normal way of working by completing a 'Short Concise' file note as evidence for the JCQ inspector.*

Painting the picture of need

All the test results from *Exact* can be used as part of the evidence to paint the picture of the student's needs within Part 1 of Form 8 [see JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments booklet 2020/21, Sections 5.2.2, 7.5.11 and 7.6.1].