

2 May 2008

S2008/012  
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**TO: Principal  
Principal's Nominee  
HOD Learning Support**

### **Special Assessment Conditions**

Schools are reminded that applications for special assessment conditions will be accepted through the High Security Area of the NZQA secure website from **3 June 2008**. The closing date for applications is **31 July 2008**.

Your school must already have identified all likely candidates for special assessment conditions for 2008. One of the criteria for acceptance of special assessment conditions is that the applicant has been receiving special assessment conditions for all internal assessments throughout 2008.

One of the most common requests for special assessment conditions is for extra time. In most cases consideration should first be given to reducing the number of standards that the candidate is expected to sit in one examination session.

### **Annual Needs Analysis**

Each candidate who had special assessment conditions in the 2007 examinations should have an annual needs analysis completed before the same special assessment conditions are provided in 2008. The school should examine the external results of each candidate with regard to the special assessment conditions that were provided in the 2007 examinations. The decision to make examination entries for 2008 for a candidate who had special assessment conditions provided and who performed poorly in one or more examinations or who chose not to attend an examination should be given careful consideration. Similarly, any candidate who did not use the special assessment conditions provided in 2007 should probably not be an applicant for special assessment conditions in 2008. This information is available from each Exam Centre Manager and is monitored each year by NZQA.

### **Testing**

Special assessment conditions are granted not only on the basis of significant learning problems. Physical problems only require a medical certificate.

Every applicant who is applying for special assessment conditions on the basis of **significant learning problems** must have a current assessment (not more than three years old) from a suitably qualified independent professional (such as a Level C assessor). Some RTLBs and Special Needs Coordinators who are suitably qualified to meet the registration requirements for an assessor, and could be in a position to administer assessments to local students, are not currently registered. This is not to imply that RTLBs must become registered to undertake the assessments. Information regarding registration is available from the NZCER website at <http://www.nzcer.org.nz>

### **Alternative evidence**

Where schools are unable to provide the required current assessment from a suitably qualified independent professional the school must contact NZQA no later than **3 June 2008**.

To make an application using 'alternative evidence' the school must therefore assure NZQA that either the school does not have access to a Level C assessor in their region or that the student's family can not afford to pay for a Level C assessor's report and that financial assistance is not available from the school or other agencies.

If NZQA gives initial approval to submit an application for special assessment conditions based on 'alternative evidence' then the school must submit evidence of each of the following:

- (i) That the school does not have access to a Level C assessor in their region or that the student's family can not afford to pay for a Level C assessor's report and that financial assistance is not available from the school or other agencies
- (ii) Of an appropriate testing tool being used to assess the student's learning during the previous two years to identify their learning problem **and** the need for appropriate special assistance
- (iii) That the student can demonstrate competence at a higher level with reader, writer or special assistance than without, comparative evidence will be required
- (iv) That the student is receiving ongoing support to manage their learning problem and that the school has a specific programme of learning support that they have provided and continue to provide for the student
- (v) That the student is receiving the same special assessment conditions, as that requested, in their current year of learning for school based assessments.

Further detail about 'alternative evidence' should be discussed with the School Relationship Manager before making applications. These applications will be considered by a review panel which will include Level C assessors. As there may be no opportunity to engage in further feedback schools need to ensure that they have addressed all of the criteria above, in full, when making their application.

Students new to the school with no 'alternative evidence' available to the school will need to provide a current assessment from a suitably qualified independent professional, as outlined above.

All applications for 'alternative evidence' must be signed off by the school Principal as representing a genuine need and attesting to the authenticity of the evidence and submitted no later than **31 July**.

### **Record Keeping**

All applications will be subject to audit by NZQA so schools must keep on file all evidence used to support applications for special assessment conditions. They need to be kept for at least one year after applications are submitted and until they are no longer required to support further applications by this student.

All independent evidence in support of an application must have been recorded within three years of the year of examination. This is because the recommendations are age and stage appropriate. Applicants must have been receiving ongoing support to manage their learning difficulties during their time at secondary school, and schools must be able to detail the specific programmes of learning support that they have provided and continue to provide for students. (For a template see SecQual Circular S2006/040).

A new application has to be made for every candidate each year. An approved application for special assessment conditions in one year does not necessarily mean that they will be automatically provided in the next year. Subsequent applications should follow the same procedure as the initial application, take cognisance of the annual needs analysis and where appropriate refer to more recent independent testing to elaborate upon the existing student profile.

In ongoing years, within three years of special assessment conditions being approved by NZQA, only a current needs analysis survey for individual applicants that is signed by the Principal as proof of an ongoing need and ongoing support being provided by the school is required.

### **Closing dates**

NZQA will not accept applications after **31 July 2008** except for those candidates with a newly identified significant ongoing mental or physical disability which affects their ability to perform in the examinations. In these cases the school must contact NZQA with the appropriate medical evidence by **1 September 2008**.

'Alternative evidence' applications will not be considered after **31 July 2008** for any applications as the NZQA review panel will not have sufficient time to process and consider the application.

Schools should be prepared to meet the cost of special assessment conditions approved or amended after **1 September 2008**. They should contact their School Relationship Manager should any queries arise in regard to this.

### **Home supervision**

All candidates who request Home Supervision must be physically or mentally unable to sit at an exam centre. Applicants must provide NZQA with current evidence in the form of recent clinical examination by a registered medical professional in support of their application, before 31 July 2008. An address and contact phone number for the applicant must be provided. If a candidate whose application has been declined, still wishes to have Home Supervision, it may be approved in some circumstances but only if the candidate meets the costs.

The Exam Centre providing any home supervisor must be the school closest to the candidate's home to permit ease of travel for the supervisor. If no local school is able or willing to provide a home supervisor, an application may be declined.

### **To apply online**

Applications are to be made online through your school's **High Security Area** on its Provider page. Your Principal's Nominee will help you with access to the site.

### **Completing the application**

Read the instructions carefully before making an application.

The 'School Contact' should include the name, phone number and email of the staff member making the application so they can be contacted by email.

Any application made online is confirmation by the school that the applicant has been receiving the same special assessment conditions for all internal assessments throughout 2008.

The 'Reason for application' **must** note:

- the name of the independent Level C assessor
- the date of the current independent assessment that recommends special assessment conditions
- the significant learning problems that were identified in the independent assessment report or the medical or physical condition that necessitates special assessment conditions
- details of extra learning support that the school has provided throughout the year for each applicant
- the special assessment conditions requested for each examination session and the reason. It is not sufficient to write only "slow reader" or "needs writer assistance".

Further information about Special Assessment Conditions is available on our website at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/acrp/secondary/6/613.html>.

Applications using 'alternative evidence' are not able to be made online. They must be fully documented in hard copy and three copies of each document collated and posted to:

Special Assessment Conditions  
Secondary Assessment and Liaison  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority  
PO Box 160  
Wellington 6011

### **Approval of Applications**

All online applications will be approved as soon as possible after applications have closed. The approvals are made online and their acceptance or rejection can be seen in the High Security area of your school's NZQA website. Schools should check this site and print off the applications so that they have a record of the special assessment conditions approved and can also note which candidates used the conditions. This will be useful for your annual needs analysis and review.

Any applications that do not appear to be warranted will be altered to reflect 'good practice'. For example, a candidate may make an application for extra time while being entered for only one standard. NZQA would reject this application because there are 3 hours available (in almost every exam) for this student to complete the one standard. The school may also be contacted to provide extra details or expand on anything written in the application before an application is approved.

### **Timeline for Special Assessment Conditions**

<b>Before 3 June</b>	Ensure evidence for applications for special assessment conditions is obtained or updated. If 'alternative evidence' is to be used, contact your School Relationship Manager for initial approval to proceed.
<b>3 June</b>	Applications open via school login page and 'alternative evidence' pathway.
<b>31 July</b>	Closing date for applications, both online and 'alternative evidence'.
<b>1 September</b>	Closing date for applications for newly identified mental or physical disabilities. Schools to meet cost for new or amended approvals after this date.

## **Enquiries**

Please refer any enquiries relating to this circular to your School Relationship Manager:

School Relationship Manager Secondary Assessment and Liaison Telephone: 04 463 3000 Fax: 04 463 3113 Email: <a href="mailto:firstname.lastname@nzqa.govt.nz">firstname.lastname@nzqa.govt.nz</a>
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Circulars are available from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz/publications/circulars](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/publications/circulars)).