



Alternative Mode of Assessment

A Guide for Colleges, Departments and Students

This guide is designed to enhance the detail of the operational process as laid out in the Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students found online [here](#). It does not replicate the information or background available in the Code, and it is expected that all users have read the Code before this document.

The detail and examples laid out in this guide should not be taken to imply that, given a particular set of circumstances, a particular outcome would be approved.

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Application detail](#)
3. [Types of AMA \(Appendix A\)](#)
4. [Timeframe](#)
5. [Stakeholders and their role](#)
6. [Alternative mode of Assessment process \(Appendix B\)](#)

Introduction

The Alternative Mode of Assessment (AMA) process is for students where the standard examination access arrangements available do not adequately address the specific, substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled student.

This will, in most cases, entail setting aside the regulations for examination and determining an alternative, where to do so is an effective and reasonable means of avoiding or offsetting the disadvantage.

Requests for consideration of adjustment to the mode of assessment will be for exceptional cases, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Cases previously considered will not set any precedent for a particular disability, however examples of what has been approved previously are available for reference.

The University may call for a review of an approved adjustment where the nature and extent of a disability has changes and/or where the approved adjustments are not delivering parity of treatment.

Application detail

A student's college, usually via their Tutor, should submit applications for consideration of an Alternative Mode of Assessment. Prior to the application, the student is expected to have discussed their request with their Tutor.

The College must submit a formal request that includes a completed application form together with current and comprehensive medical evidence and / or an assessment from an appropriate expert.

Types of AMA

Requests for an AMA are considered on a case-by-case basis; however, a library of previous cases that have previously been approved is shown in [Appendix A](#).

Competency Standards

Prior to the case conference, it is expected that the Chair of Examiners (or Chair of Degree Committee for Graduate Students) has identified the competence standards for the current mode of assessment, specifically what is being measured and how.

A common example of assessment, particularly for undergraduates, is a written assessment under timed conditions. For many subjects, this is to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of their subject in response to unseen questions without access to reference materials. For others, a competence standard may be demonstrating a certain level of ability in music performance or medical dissection.

In most cases, a competence standard is not connected to the mode of assessment, that is, the mode of assessment is simply the method which has been chosen to assess the competence standard.

There is no legal compulsion to make reasonable adjustments to a true competence standard.

Timeframe

Requests must be submitted before the end of the Michaelmas Term. This is to ensure that any teaching and support can be put in place and that alternative modes can be discussed with the Faculty / Department concerned. The process can take several weeks, and in complex cases, months to conclude.

It might not be possible to accommodate requests made after the end of the Michaelmas Term and such accommodation will usually be limited to cases where there is a late diagnosis, or where the adjustments relate to the next academic year.

Approved AMA's do not roll over to future years and a new application is required for each part of assessment.

Key stakeholders and their role

Chair of Examiners or Chair of Degree Committee (depending on programme of study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required at case conference • Responsible for reporting competency standards being assessed through current mode of assessment • Responsible for ensuring programme competency standards are met by any alternative mode of assessment proposed • Responsible for making recommendation to Secretary • Responsible for actioning, or delegating to others, the operational delivery of any alternative mode of assessment approved.
College rep (usually tutor but can include DoS, Senior Tutor and tutorial staff for operational detail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for discussing application with student and submitting application for consideration • Required at case conference • Responsible for obtaining any further information needed after the case conference • Responsible for informing student of outcome • Responsible for working with the SR on operational requirements
Disability advisor / or Head of DRC*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged to attend case conference • Responsible for advising on nature of disability and potential impact on student
Secretary**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving recommendation from Chair of Examiners • Responsible for presenting case to relevant Board or delegated authority and reporting outcome.
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for alerting College Tutor to examination access requirements early in the Michaelmas term. • Responsible for ensuring specialist evidence is available to those parties involved in the process • Encouraged to attend the case conference
Student Registry (SR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required at case conference • Responsible for the administration of the process • Responsible for the liaison between all parties • Responsible for ensuring that the operational processes for assessment are considered and managed between the SR, College and Chair of Examiners (or delegate)

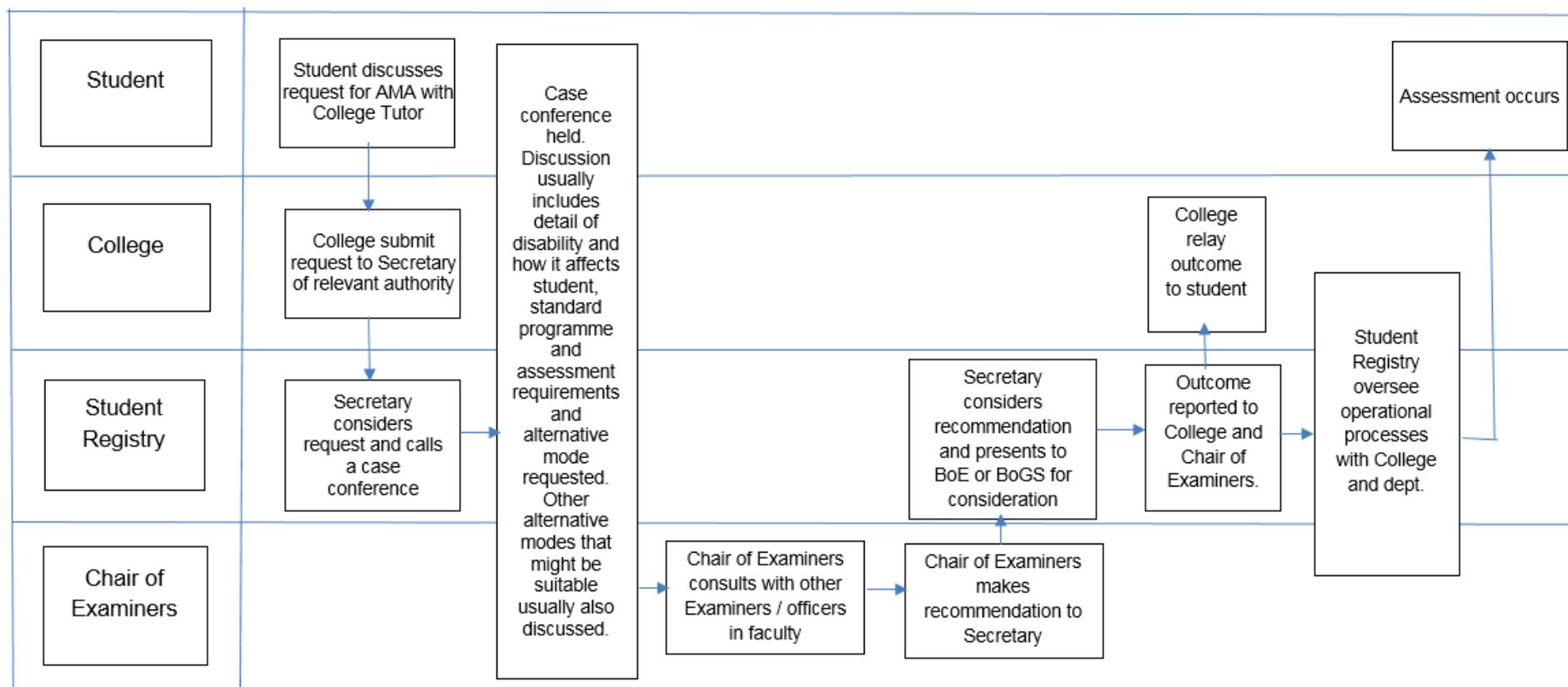
Head of DRC* – in more complex cases, the Secretary may explicitly request that the Head of the DRC is in attendance.

Secretary** - to the Board of Examinations or Board of Graduate Studies depending on student's programme of study

AMA – log of alternative modes previously approved

<p>To replace one paper with a portfolio of essays</p>	<p>A portfolio of three essays, maximum word length for each of 2000 words, one from each section, the title to be selected from those available as supervision essays. Supervisors to offer a level of supervision for these essays similar to that for dissertations – i.e. brief comment rather than full feedback. The essays will be marked using the Faculty’s General Assessment Criteria (available to the student on Moodle) and will be marked with the expectation of a level of research, referencing and presentation commensurate with coursework rather than examination essays.</p>
<p>To replace one paper with an essay</p>	<p>A 5,000 word essay on one single question. Student to choose one of the four parts of the paper to focus the essay on and the Examiner would devise a question that incorporate various elements of the whole part (which includes 3 lectures). Student also to commit to attend 80% of the lectures of the paper and complement the essay with two non-essay based supervisions in one of the other 3 parts of the paper</p>
<p>Bespoke paper to be written and broken up into shorter examinations</p>	<p>Might include 2 x 90 minute or 3 x 1hour examinations.</p>
<p>Mix of same and bespoke papers, broken into smaller chunks</p>	<p>The student should sit paper X at the same time as other candidates, but only sections A and B Section C would be attempted at a later date, with a decent gap between other exams (tbc once the timetable has been fixed) Section C would be a different set of questions from the paper other students will attempt this year The student will be asked to specify in advance whether they intend to answer on the theme of ‘A’ or ‘B’</p>
<p>Take each Tripos part over 2 years instead of 1</p>	<p>Student splits lecture and examinations into two, taking different parts in each year. Faculty to hold marks over from year 1 to year 2 and class at the end of year 2</p>
<p>Reduce the number of questions to be answered</p>	<p>To reduce the number of questions to be answered for one scheduled paper, from 3 to 2, scaling time from 3 hours to 2 hours.</p>
<p>Split paper and extended essay</p>	<p>To reduce the questions answered from 4 to 2 and then submit a separate essay under exam conditions on a topic selected from X options.</p>
<p>Mix of bespoke and core paper</p>	<p>Candidate chooses a question from a version of section A on the first day, and one from a version of section B on the second day. As soon as they have chosen the question on each section, the exam paper is removed. On the third day, they are given both A and B again and they choose a third question.</p>
<p>Extension of Dissertation / coursework / submitted essays</p>	<p>Delay submission of work until after exam period</p>

Alternative Mode of Assessment Process



Glossary

BoE	Board of Examinations
BoGS	Board of Graduate Studies
Chair of Examiners	For some subjects or programmes this may be the Senior Examiner or Chair of Degree Committee