

CONTENTS

1. [Rationale](#)
2. [Background](#)
3. [Remit: which students does the Board of Examinations consider?](#)
4. [Principles: what is the Board charged to do?](#)
5. [Adjustments to examination arrangements: the role of the college](#)
6. [Procedure: how is a decision reached about adjustments to examination arrangements?](#)
7. [Provision: what sort of things are agreed as adjustments to examination arrangements?](#)
8. [Adjustments to the mode of assessment: how does a college make a request?](#)
9. [Alternative Mode of Assessment: how does a college make an application?](#)

1. Rationale

This Guidance relates to candidates for all examinations except those assessed by thesis and oral.

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the General Board's *Code of Practice: reasonable adjustments for disabled students*

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/support/index.html

They are intended to complement the relevant University Ordinances. They should not be taken to imply that, given a particular set of circumstances, the Board will automatically reach a particular decision. The relevant Ordinances are set out in the regulations for the Board of Examinations (2015 Ordinances p122) www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/

The *Applications Committee Guidance for Staff and Students* is a useful additional reference.

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/staff/exams/college/index.html

2. Background

2.1. The Cambridge Tripos is examined predominantly by formal 3-hour examinations. Saturdays and Bank Holidays are considered to be normal examination days. A student may have up to two examinations per day(s). This is standard and is not in itself grounds for examination arrangements.

2.2. Most of the examination sites are large and students can expect an "examination atmosphere"; most students feel nervous about examinations and this in itself is not grounds for arrangements.

2.3. University examination regulations apply to all students including those who have examination arrangements.

Further guidance on the legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010 is available in the General Board's *Code of Practice: reasonable adjustments for disabled students* http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/support/reasonable_adjustments.pdf.

3. Remit: which students does the Board of Examinations consider?

3.1. The Board of Examinations considers requests for students on courses with a taught element: Tripos and taught Masters courses. The Board of Graduate Studies considers research students' requests.

3.2. The Board of Examinations is authorised to adjust the arrangements or conditions under which an examination is sat such as the length, timing and place of examination, and the use of a computer, as set out in detail in section 6 below.

3.3. Where these adjustments do not adequately enable a disabled student to avoid the specific, substantial disadvantage which they would experience as a result of their disability, the Board may also consider requests for an alternative mode of assessment. This will, in most cases, entail the Board of Examinations setting aside the regulations for the examination where to do so is an effective and reasonable means of avoiding the disadvantage in question, and where there is no equally effective, reasonable, alternative means of avoiding that disadvantage.

3. Principles: what is the Board charged to do?

3.1. In its policies and decisions, the Board has the following objectives:

- to relieve a student of any substantial disadvantage that might arise as a result of their disability if the examination were to be conducted under standard conditions;
- to ensure fairness to other candidates; individual arrangements should not give one student an advantage over others;
- to preserve the integrity of the examination for the full cohort;
- to ensure timely publication of the Final Class List for the benefit of all students

3.2. Requests for consideration of an alternative mode of assessment will be for exceptional cases of disability and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In determining whether an alternative form of assessment is appropriate, both the particular needs of a student and the particular competence standards being assessed in the examination will be taken into account. Further information is available at section 7 and in the General Board's *Code of Practice: reasonable adjustments for disabled students* http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/support/reasonable_adjustments.pdf.

3.3. The Board considers requests for examination arrangements from colleges on behalf of their students. No student may apply directly to the Board. Where another body (such as faculty, department, or student union) presents a case for a student, the Board will direct the student to their college.

3.4. The Board considers each request on an individual basis.

4. Adjustments to examination arrangements: the role of the college

4.1. Colleges should ask all students as a matter of course whether they believe that they require adjustments to be made for them for examination purposes. A disabled student's college will receive a copy of any Student Support Document (SSD), issued to disabled students who disclose a disability to the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) and require adjustments. The college should discuss any adjustments they consider they need and any SSD with their student as soon as the student takes up their place at Cambridge, and in any Michaelmas Term thereafter. The discussions should determine what examination arrangements (if any) are to be sought in the forthcoming academic year.

Using CamSIS, a college must request examination arrangements by the deadline, which is the division of Lent term. For 2017/ 18 this is Monday 12 February 2018. The deadline is required to allow the student time to practise with the approved adjustment before the examination(s). Consequently, it may not be possible to accommodate all aspects of a college's request if the request is received after the deadline.

Where supporting documentation is required, but not available at this date, this must be submitted no later than, the final Friday of Lent Full term. For 2017/18, this is Friday 09 March 2018.

4.2. After the examination(s), the college should meet with the student to review the examination arrangements and discuss whether to apply for the same in the coming academic year or to seek alternative arrangements or an alternative mode of assessment.

4.3. Where a student believes they require examination arrangements, but does not hold an SSD, the college might refer them to the DRC. If the student is unable (or unwilling) to be referred, the college should approach the Board of Examinations who will determine what documentation is required to support the request. The college then sends the supporting documentation to: exam.arrangements@admin.cam.ac.uk. The same deadline applies.

4.4. Without a specific request from students, requests do not carry over from year to year. Colleges must review the adjustments received by each student and agree whether to seek the same or a different adjustment (if any). Colleges must make a separate request for each student each year.

The Board understands that some circumstances, which might require adjustments to an examination, may not become known until later in the Lent Term and that the college may therefore only be able to notify the Board of Examinations at that point. Therefore, as soon as the need is identified, the college should seek the advice of the Board of Examinations by emailing exam.arrangements@admin.cam.ac.uk. The Board will consider the case but it may not be possible to accommodate the request, especially where it requires an adjustment that the student must practise.

4.5. The Board considers the request and the evidence in the light of its principles (ref para 3.3 above). Where necessary, the request will be discussed further with the college. The Board confirms the outcome to the college in CamSIS and / or in writing.

5. Procedure: how is a decision reached about adjustments to examination arrangements?

5.1. The adjustments are determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the evidence provided, and for all students are judged against normal practice in the UK.

5.2. To reach a decision, discussion may take place between the college, the DRC and the Board of Examinations and these parties may advise each other in order to ascertain what arrangements will meet the principles of the Board. If necessary, the Secretary of the Board may arrange for the matter to be reviewed by a medically qualified member of staff and / or a Senior Tutor.

5.3. If a student has any questions about examination arrangements, he / she should ask the college to contact the Board of Examinations.

5.4. Advice to staff and students is available from a number of sources, including the DRC and CUSU.

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/disability/students/exam.html>

<http://www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/info/>

5.5. Please note that advice does not constitute authority and that authority to agree examination arrangements rests with the Board of Examinations. No other body, including colleges and the DRC, may authorise examination arrangements. Confirmation will only be given by the Board of Examinations to the college.

6. Provision: what sort of things are agreed as adjustments to examination arrangements?

6.1. The following is not exhaustive, nor should it be taken to imply that, given a particular set of circumstances, the Board would automatically reach a particular decision. Each case is considered individually.

In the exam site

6.2. Physical adjustments to conditions may be made, for example use of a specific chair, table and / or lighting; bringing in medicine or food / drink for medicinal reasons.

6.3. If this is likely to disturb others, the college is required to take responsibility for accommodating its student(s).

Specific Learning Difficulties (SPLDs)

6.4. Students who are diagnosed with SpLDs are normally awarded a maximum of 25% extra time. They may also be permitted to use a pc if their diagnosis explicitly states that this should be provided. Students diagnosed with SpLD normally sit their examinations in the designated University examination sites. However, as described below, each of these arrangements may be varied in particular cases.

Alternative format of how examination question paper is presented

6.5. The examination question paper may be presented differently, for example in braille or on coloured paper or a student may be allowed to use low vision aids. Where required, a reader may be used in written examinations; sign language may be used in aural examinations.

6.6. Apart from the differences in presentation, the examination questions would remain as set and the rubric unchanged. The form of the examination is prescribed in Ordinance.

Additional time

6.7. Normally an overall maximum of up to 25 % additional time is agreed. The Board may prescribe how the time is used, for example supervised rest breaks away from the examination, where writing is not permitted, or it might allow the student to use the time as he / she wishes for example to work or rest or move around. A central examination site is provided specifically for students with additional time; in this site, there may be a variety of end times in any one session and students will be leaving at different times; some students may be allowed to move around during the exam. Additional time is provided at the end of the examination, not the beginning, so a student who is allowed 25 % additional time for a 3hr exam will finish 45 minutes later than the rest of the cohort. This might mean having only a short break if the student has two examinations on one day.

6.8. Allowances in excess of 25% are unusual in the UK. If the student submits evidence, obtained either from the UK or overseas, that indicates a recommendation for an allowance in excess of 25%, the Board will consult the DRC to determine the need of that individual, taking into account normal practice in the UK. If a student is not satisfied with the decision, the Board will refer the case for independent adjudication by a relevant expert external to the University.

Use of pc

6.9. Where the use of a pc is permitted by the Board, the University or college provides the pc; a student may only use his / her own equipment if this arrangement is explicitly approved by the Board of Examinations. A central examination site is provided specifically for students who are permitted to use a pc. Each student is required to attend a training and registration session at the central site, on a date fixed each year by the site organiser. If a student does not attend this session, he / she may not be able to be examined in this site. Students in this site may also be permitted additional examination time - please refer above (para 6.4).

Sitting examinations in college

6.10. This is for exceptional and complex medical cases only. The request to the Board is made at the discretion of the college, following discussion with the student. Where a college and the Board agree that a student may sit examinations in college, the college then assumes responsibility for the practical implications and the examination environment. Official examination start times apply. An examination in college is subject to University examination regulations, including inspection by the Proctors. A Guide to "In College Exams" is available from the Student Registry.

Using an amanuensis

6.11. The Board of Examinations may in certain circumstances permit a student to dictate answers to an amanuensis.

Rescheduling an examination

6.12. In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Examinations may permit a student to sit an examination at a time other than the officially timetabled one. This may require the student to be isolated overnight(s). It is the responsibility of the college to make all practical arrangements and to ensure that nothing improper occurs in terms of preparation for the examination. The student is required to sign a Declaration Form confirming that no improper means were used and acknowledging that sitting an examination earlier than the officially timetabled slot may mean that corrections to the question paper are not known when that student sits the examination.

Extensions to deadlines

6.13. Where the submission date for a dissertation or other written work is prescribed by Ordinance, a college may apply to the Secretary of the Applications Committee applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk for an extension to the deadline, stating the reasons why the deadline is required and enclosing supporting documentation as appropriate. The Secretary will consult with the Chair of Examiners. Where an extension is agreed, a revised date for submission will be specified. That date will reflect the need for the piece of work to be submitted in time to be marked and considered at the final meeting of the Examination Board.

Costs

6.14. The Equality Act 2010 includes a statement to the effect that a person who is required to make a reasonable adjustment on behalf of an applicant is not entitled to require that applicant to pay any of the costs of that provision. There is no cost to the student (for example a disabled student cannot be charged for the cost of additional invigilation).

7. Alternative Mode of Assessment: how does a college make a request?

7.1. Where a disabled student believes that the standard modes of assessment adjusted in accordance with the arrangements described above would not alleviate the substantial disadvantage they experience because of their disability, and would not allow them to demonstrate achievement of the competence standard required to be met, the Board of Examinations will consider any specific request submitted by their college on behalf of the student to be assessed by an alternative means. This might, for example, be to substitute submitted work in place of written papers, for alternative shorter unseen papers to be set, to allow the student to take examination papers over a longer time period, or to take the examination over more than one year.

7.2. Before submitting a formal request for consideration of an alternative mode of assessment, students are normally expected to have discussed their requirements with a College Tutor who should contact the Secretary of the Board of Examinations exam.arrangements@admin.cam.ac.uk. The Secretary of the Board of Examinations will consult the college, appropriate academic representatives from the Faculty / Department (to include the Chair or Senior Examiner) and the Disability Adviser to discuss possible options, and, if necessary, will arrange a case conference involving the student.

Before the Board of Examinations can approve any request for an alternative mode of assessment, it must be approved by the Chair of Examiners on behalf of the Faculty Board or Degree Committee (as appropriate), which will be guided by the competence standards for the award. There is no legal requirement to adjust competence standards on the grounds of disability. Guidance on competence standards is available in the General Board's *Code of Practice: reasonable adjustments for disabled students* http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/support/reasonable_adjustments.pdf.

Competence standards will vary between subjects, but the Programme Specification for the course in question should in all cases provide a basis for determining them.

7.3. Requests must be made in a timely fashion, as early in the academic year as possible to ensure that appropriate teaching can be put in place and that alternative modes can be discussed with the Faculty / Department concerned and suitable arrangements put in place. It might not be possible to accommodate requests made after the end of the Michaelmas term.

7.4. After initial informal consultation has taken place, including consultation with the Degree Committee, a formal request should be made to the Secretary of the Board of Examinations, through the college, and should be accompanied by medical evidence and / or an assessment from an appropriate expert. The request should clearly state the preferred alternative method of assessment.

7.5. The Secretary of the Board of Examinations will then seek formal approval from the Chair of Examiners for the alternative mode of assessment. At this stage, the Chair of Examiners might request that specific conditions such as a deadline or word limit are set.

7.6. The request will then be considered by the Education Committee, which will in turn advise the Board of Examinations. The decision of the Board of Examinations will be final.