

# **MEMORANDUM**

**FROM:** Supervisor of Examinations  
Ministry of Education

**TO:** Principals of all Public and Private Primary Schools

**DATED:** 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2011

**SUBJECT:** **2012 SEA Special Concessions**

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The Ministry of Education is strongly committed to equality of opportunity and fairness in its provision for all students and is supportive of all arrangements which will reduce barriers to learning and assessment.

As such, Special Concessions are designed to provide equity not advantage and to serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and other special challenges. Such provisions are offered in accordance with the “Policy Guidelines for the provision of alternative arrangements (Special Concessions) for students writing local examinations”.

These guidelines apply to:

- All primary, secondary or special school students, teachers, parents and principals of private and public schools
- All professionals of private organisations, and public institutions involved in the testing and assessment of students.

Applications for Special Concessions on behalf of eligible students due to sit SEA 2012 are to be completed on the prescribed forms and forwarded to the Supervisor of Examinations, Examinations Section (London Street, Port-of-Spain), **by 06<sup>th</sup> July, 2011**.

These guidelines and forms can be downloaded from the Ministry’s website (moe.gov.tt). Please contact the Examinations Section, London Street at 627-7942 or Student Support Services Division at 625-7935 for further information.

Please be guided accordingly.

Joann Bailey-Clarke (Ms.)  
Supervisor of Examinations  
Ministry of Education



Ministry of Education

Policy Guidelines  
for the Provision of  
Alternative Arrangements (Special Concessions)  
for Students writing local examinations

*September 02, 2009.  
Revised September, 2010;  
Revised June, 2011.*

## **1. Guidelines for the provision of alternative arrangements (Special Concessions)**

- ❖ Guidelines for the provision of alternative arrangements (Special Concessions) for students writing national exams (SEA, NCSE, National Tests, School Leaving Examination).

## **2. Rationale/Background**

- ❖ An increasing number of applications are received by the Ministry of Education each year from parents, principals and teachers for the provision of alternative arrangements (special concessions) that would afford equity for all students writing national exams.
- ❖ The Ministry is strongly committed to equality of opportunity and equity in its provision for all students and is supportive of all arrangements which will reduce barriers to learning and assessment, and therefore contribute to the development of our citizens in alignment with vision 2020.

## **3. Scope**

These guidelines apply to:

- ❖ all primary, secondary or special school students, teachers, parents and principals of private and public schools
- ❖ all professionals of private organizations, and public institutions involved in the testing and assessment of students.

## **4. Special Concessions**

- (i) Special Concessions are designed to provide **equity** not advantage, and to serve to level the playing field for students with disabilities and other special challenges.
- (ii) Special Concessions are the alterations made to the standard format of an examination paper or to the conditions under which an examination/assessment is done or to the date of an examination, in order to accommodate the special need of the students. All concessions are guided by universal standards.  
(See appendix – I)
- (iii) They increase the student's access to instruction and assessment by addressing identified needs and when used appropriately, they reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's challenge. However, they do **not** reduce the learning expectations for students.

## 5. Eligibility for Special Concessions

Applications for the provision of the relevant accommodations or special concessions may be submitted for students in the following categories:

### a. Students with Medical, Physical and Sensory Impairments

Applications for students with medical, physical and sensory impairments must be accompanied by bonafide documentation from a recognized medical institution or qualified professional or specialist.

### b. Students with Learning Disabilities

Applications for students with learning disabilities must be accompanied by bonafide documentation (**valid for a maximum of three years from the date of assessment**) from a professional/organization qualified to do psycho-educational assessments. (See Appendix – II)

Speech and Language assessment reports must be accompanied by psycho-educational assessment reports.

Students without documented disabilities who receive classroom support or use instructional tools or accommodations in the classroom are not automatically eligible for these special arrangements.

### c. Other special circumstances

Any other special circumstances under which concessions may be required on the day of the examination may be submitted for consideration. These include acceptable conditions such as illness, injury, bereavement, or other particular circumstances that may adversely affect students' performance during assessment.

### d. Emergencies

Applications for concessions as a result of an emergency situation or condition which may adversely affect students' performance during assessment may be **submitted for consideration after the given deadline and up to one month prior to the examination**. The following are examples of situations or conditions which may constitute an emergency:-

- Sudden onset of illness
- Recent injury
- Bereavement

All required documentation must be attached in accordance with guidelines given in this document.

Applications submitted less than one month prior to the examination will not be entertained for the scheduled examination. They may, however, be considered for any subsequent Make-up Examinations, which in the instance of the SEA, are scheduled from one month after the Examination date.

## **6. Classifications or Types of Special Concessions/Accommodations**

Concessions offered can be classified as follows:

- ❖ **Presentation Accommodations** – adjust the presentation of test material and/or test directions (Braille, Large Print). These include the use of specific personnel (Interpreter; Reader; Scribe/Writer)
- ❖ **Response Accommodations** – adjust the manner in which students respond to or answer test questions. (Oral responses transcribed by a Scribe; Braille)
- ❖ **Setting Accommodations** – adjusts the place in which the testing normally occurs.
- ❖ **Scheduling Accommodations** – adjust the time allowance (Extended and/or Compensatory Time) or scheduling of a test.

**All concessions are administered in a separate room.**

## **7. Application Procedures**

- Applications are completed by teachers and parents and submitted along with the student's application form for all local examinations through the Principal of the school to the Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education. (See Appendix – III)
- Applications must be submitted with the relevant supporting documents:
  - i. Copy of Student Cumulative Record
  - ii. Assessment reports from qualified professionals (e.g. psychologists, medical practitioners, speech and language pathologists)
  - iii. Any other documents to support the request/application

## **8. Concessions Committee**

The Ministry shall appoint a Committee to review, evaluate and approve/reject all applications. The members of this Committee are appointed by the Chief Education Officer of the Ministry of Education. The Committee shall comprise of the following members:

|             |   |                                                                             |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chairperson | - | Co-ordinator of Special Education/Diagnostic Prescriptive Services (SSSD)   |
| Member      | - | School Psychologist (SSSD)                                                  |
| Member      | - | Director of DERE                                                            |
| Member      | - | Supervisor (Examinations Section)                                           |
| Member      | - | Curriculum Officer                                                          |
| Member      | - | <sup>1</sup> Qualified professional (external to the Ministry of Education) |
| Member      | - | <sup>1</sup> Medical practitioner                                           |
| Member      | - | School Supervisor                                                           |
| Note taker  | - | SSSD                                                                        |

### **Functions of the Committee:**

- To deliberate on all applications for concessions.
- To approve/reject applications for concessions in alignment with the criteria set by the Ministry of Education.
- To submit reports on all applications for concessions to the Chief Education Officer.

## **9. Approvals**

- The Committee's approval is required to authorize the provision of special concessions for all applicants.

## **10. Internal Procedures**

- Applications from all schools must be sent to the Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education.
- Applications will be forwarded from Examinations Section to the SSSD – Head Office and allocated to Special Education personnel for detailed investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Qualifications specified

- Diagnostic Specialists of Student Support Services Division (SSSD) conduct investigations of all applications, which may include interviews with parents, school officials and professionals, and submit recommendations within four weeks of the identified deadline date to the Committee. Applications will not be recommended without the appropriate supporting documentation. (Applications for concessions as a result of an emergency situation or condition are dealt with separately). All applications are treated confidentially.
- The Committee will meet as often as required to consider applications. A quorum is five and must include the Co-ordinator of Special Education, either the medical specialist or the qualified external professional as required and the School Psychologist (SSSD).
- The Co-ordinator of Special Education will prepare a schedule of all applications for the consideration of the committee.
- Diagnostic Specialists who conducted the various investigations can be asked to come before the Committee to present further information on their respective applications.
- The Committee Chairperson shall submit in writing a notice of the decisions of the committee to the Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education. Decisions will be communicated by the Examinations Section to the relevant School Administrators (Principals) who will be responsible for informing teachers and parents of the Committee's response. (Copies will be sent to the District Heads.)
- If the application is approved, the notice will include the terms and conditions of the concession granted and other related guidelines.
- If the application is not approved, the notice will include a brief explanation of the reasons for the denial of the application.
- Principals, parents, professionals wishing to withdraw an application or appeal the decisions of the Committee can do so in writing to the Chief Education Officer within one week of receiving the Notice of Approval/Rejection. Within three weeks of receiving the appeal, the CEO, after consultation and review will issue a final determination.

## **11. Role/Responsibilities**

- ❖ The Chief Education Officer, with the support of the Manager of Student Support Services Division (SSSD) is responsible for communicating these guidelines to all stakeholders.

- ❖ Stakeholders include Principals, School Supervisors, Personnel of Student Support Services Division (SSSD), Examinations Section, Division of Educational Research and Evaluation (DERE).
- ❖ Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education is responsible for management of all alternative arrangements for the provision of accommodations (Concessions) for students writing national exams.
- ❖ Student Support Services Division (SSSD) will provide the technical support for the administration of special concessions.

### **Appendices**

- I – Schedule of possible concessions to be granted
- II – Guidelines for the Submission of Psycho-Educational Assessment Reports
- III – Application Forms

## APPENDIX I

CONCESSIONS TO BE GRANTED FOR THE SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT 2012 MAY INCLUDE:

| Condition                                                                                                              | Possible Concession                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Essay                                       | Language<br>Arts                              | Mathematics                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hearing Impairment</b>                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreter</li> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Separate examination venue / room</li> </ul>                                                                                 | Ten (10) minutes<br><br>Twenty (20) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes |
| <b>Vision Impairment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Low Vision</b></li> <li>• <b>Blind</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Braille / Large Print</li> <li>• Scribe</li> <li>• Reader</li> <li>• Supervised rest breaks</li> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Separate examination venue / room</li> </ul> | Ten (10) minutes<br><br>Twenty (20) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes |
| <b>Physical Disability</b>                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scribe</li> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Supervised rest breaks</li> <li>• Compensatory time</li> <li>• Separate examination venue / room</li> </ul>                       | Ten (10) minutes<br><br>Twenty (20) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes |
| <b>Learning Disability</b>                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Supervised rest breaks</li> <li>• Compensatory time</li> <li>• Separate examination venue / room</li> </ul>                                         | Ten (10) minutes<br><br>Twenty (20) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes<br><br>Forty (40) minutes |

|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                     |                     |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Medical Conditions</b><br><b>e.g. Asthma,</b><br><b>Juvenile Diabetes,</b><br><b>Allergies,</b><br><b>Other</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scribe</li> <li>• Permission to take medicine, eat, drink, go to the bathroom, move around during breaks</li> <li>• Extended time</li> <li>• Supervised rest breaks</li> <li>• Compensatory time</li> <li>• Close monitoring</li> <li>• Separate examination venue / room</li> </ul> | Ten (10) minutes    | Twenty (20) minutes | Twenty (20) minutes |
|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Twenty (20) minutes | Forty (40) minutes  | Forty (40) minutes  |

# **Guidelines for Special Concessions (SEA - 2012)**

## **Psycho-educational Assessment**

## **Key elements of a Psycho-educational Assessment**

Psycho-educational assessments provide estimates of the client's intellectual abilities, educational achievement levels and perceptual-motor functioning; as well as, if necessary, the results of rating tests of attention, behavior/emotional functioning and adaptive behavior. The goal of the assessment is to determine if the client has learning disorders/disabilities, mental retardation/borderline intellectual functioning or any attention problems that may be impeding their academic progress. Assessments also yield recommendations relevant for educational planning.

Once the testing has been completed, the psycho-educational report will provide the results and interpretations of the various psychological tests, as well as pertinent details about the client's birth, medical and developmental history, social and behavior history, and educational history. The aforementioned information is presented in the report to provide information, but also evidence and justification for the diagnosis and is valid for a maximum of three years from the date of assessment.

### **Intelligence Tests:**

Intelligence tests or IQ tests should ideally provide the following:

- **Full-scale intelligence quotient:** overall, composite measure of intelligence.
- **Verbal IQ:** estimate of verbal comprehension and expression.
- **Performance IQ:** estimate of visual-spatial reasoning.

Other supplementary measures of cognitive abilities are also useful such as:

- **Processing Speed** (a measure of informative-processing speed), and
- **Working Memory** (a measure of short-term memory and attention).

### **Recommended intelligence scales include:**

*Wechsler intelligence Scale for Children – 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (WISC-IV)*

*Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence – Revised (WPPSI-R)*

*Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (KABC)*

*Woodcock Johnson Cognitive*

### **Achievement Tests:**

Assessment of achievement is an important part of assessment to rule out/diagnoses learning disabilities.

A client is not diagnosed with a learning disability if his/her academic limitations are found to be the result of the following:

- Lack of schooling (due to absenteeism or inadequate instruction)
- Impaired vision or hearing
- Mental Retardation evidence by an IQ score lower than approximately 70, and deficits in at least two areas of adaptive functioning (Communication, Socialization, Daily Living Skills and Motor Skills).

Most psychologists use an Achievement/ability Standard Score Discrepancy Model to determine the presence of a learning disability. Ideally, the client's IQ score is compared to the reading, mathematics, and Written Expression composite test scores. If there is a significant discrepancy between two scores, then the client is said to have a learning disability in that area.

A discrepancy of more than one standard deviation (i.e., more than 15 points) is considered significant. Sometimes, a larger discrepancy (e.g. more than 1.5 standard deviations, which would be more than 22.5 points) is considered to be significant. The developers of the WISC-IV have provided tables in their manual to make the analysis much simpler.

**Recommended achievement tests include:**

*Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – II (KTEA-II)*  
*Woodcock Johnson – III Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)*  
*Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – II (WIAT-II)*

**Perceptual Motor tests:**

These tests, also called tests of visual motor integration assist in the diagnosis of learning disabilities and disorders of perception.

**Recommended tests include:**

*Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test (BVMGT)*  
*Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration (VM1)*

**Measure of Adaptive Behaviour:**

A measure of adaptive behavior (i.e., domestic, daily living, social and functional academic and communication skills) must be obtained in making a diagnosis of mental retardation.

**Commonly used measures of adaptive behavior include:**

*Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales – II (VABS-II)*

### **Tests and Rating of Attention:**

There is no single test for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). However, there are several behavior rating and computerized tests of attention; most provide measures of hyperactivity-impulsivity and inattentiveness.

### **Some commonly used measures include:**

*Connor's Parent Rating Scales – R*  
*Connor's Teaching Rating Scales – R*  
*Brown Attention – Deficit Disorder Scales*

### **Who Can Perform a Psycho-educational Assessment?**

Psycho-educational assessments should be performed by psychologists or psychometrists.

Examiners should have extensive knowledge and training in psychological tests and the administration and analysis of these tests.

It is important to ascertain if the professional has specific training and expertise in psycho-educational assessment, particularly assessment of learning disabilities and other learning disorders.

Steve Williams  
Manager  
Student Support Services Division

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT 2012**  
**APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL CONCESSION**  
 (to be filled out by the school)

Name of School 

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Address of School 

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Date of Birth 

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 Year

Reason for Accommodation:

☐ Learning Disability    ☐ Medical/Physical/Sensory Disability    ☐ Special Circumstances

Reason for Accommodation:

☐ Learning Disability    ☐ Medical / Physical / Sensory Disability    ☐ Special Circumstances

Test Format Requested:    ☐ Large Print    ☐ Braille

Date of Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of District Medical Officer / Consultant: \_\_\_\_\_

Concession Requested: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**N.B: Supporting Information from Student Cumulative Record Card must be attached.**

.....  
**Signature of Principal**

.....  
**Date**

.....  
**School Stamp**

**FOR OFFICAL USE ONLY**

**Candidate's Registration No: .....**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT 2012**

**CONCESSIONS QUESTIONNAIRE**  
(to be filled out by the school)

Name of student ..... D.O.B..... Sex.....

School .....Contact No.....

Age of entry into Primary School.....

1. State reason for request for concession:

☐

Physical

☐

Psychological

☐

Academic

☐

Medical

☐

Recent Trauma

☐

Other

2. Nature of concession requested.....

3. Has the student been professionally diagnosed?

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, state diagnosis.....

By whom diagnosed.....

4. Has the student ever been referred to an external agency to address concern?

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, indicate agency / agencies from which assistance was sought:

☐ Student Support Services

☐ Counsellor

☐ Psychologist

☐ Other External Agency

☐ Social Worker

State reason (s) for referral.....

.....

5. How long has the condition existed?

☐ From Birth

☐ Pre-school

☐ Infant Level

☐ Junior / Middle Level

☐ Upper Level

Has the student repeated any class?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. If yes, state class(es) repeated.....

7. List percentages achieved in end of term examinations

Standard 3      Term One .....%      Term Two .....%      Term Three .....%

Standard 4      Term One .....%      Term Two .....%      Term Three .....%

8. How does the student respond to examinations?

(Does the student display examination anxiety?)

Please explain

.....  
.....

9. (a) Are accommodations made for student during end of term examinations

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please indicate

☐ Extra Time

☐ Reader

☐ Interpreter

☐ Amanuensis

☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) How does accommodation affect the student's performance?

Please explain.

.....  
.....

.....  
Name of Class Teacher

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature of Teacher

.....  
Name of School Principal

.....  
Date

.....  
Signature of Principal

.....  
School stamp

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SECONDARY ENTRANCE ASSESSMENT 2012**

**CONCESSIONS QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**(to be filled out by parents)**

Name of student.....

D.O.B...../...../.....      Sex: Male / Female      Tel. No:.....  
dd   mm   yy

School ..... Class.....

Age of entry into Primary/Secondary School.....

1. Why are you requesting a concession for your child?

.....

2. What is the nature of the concession requested?

.....

.....

3. Has your child been professionally diagnosed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

4. How long has this problem existed?

.....

.....

5. What has been done at school to support your child with the problem?

.....

.....

6. Has your child benefited from this provision?

.....

.....

.....

.....  
Name of Parent / Guardian

.....  
Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date.....