

Student Support Policy & Alternative Assessment Arrangements Procedure

All students will be advised in writing of any pre-requisite requirements before enrolling for a course and, if necessary, will be offered a confidential interview with the Student Support Officer to discuss their individual learning needs.

Course Co-ordinators, Course Leaders and individual lecturers will monitor the progress of students undertaking courses and will offer guidance where appropriate or refer to the Student Support Officer.

The Student Support Officer(SSO) will meet on a regular basis with all full time students and will provide the following:

- General and specific advice and guidance on aspects of their course,
- Assistance with curricular or other problems that may arise
- Discuss their progress and any concerns or problems
- Extraordinary meetings at any time if urgent matters arise
- Impartial support during disciplinary processes
- Pastoral Support
- Student confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Disability

The Trust operates an Equalities and Diversity policy and students with special needs are entitled to additional support throughout their course if necessary, and according to specific guidelines of external agencies i.e. SQA or MCA.

Care Experienced Students

NAFC MC UHI operate a Corporate Parenting Plan which along with the associated Action Plan ensure that identifying and supporting care experienced students is carried out at every stage of the Student Journey.

Resources

Staff can seek further advice on guidance and support issues from the Student Support Officer.

Additional information available on the UHI website www.uhi.ac.uk/en/staff

Alternative Assessment Arrangements

The **Alternative Assessment Arrangements** process enables learners, who are disabled and/or have been identified as having additional support needs, have appropriate arrangements to equally access the assessment without compromising its integrity.

Learners are individuals with a diverse range of needs who may need alternative assessment arrangements. It is important that the individual needs of the student in each subject area are taken into account when considering the most appropriate assessment arrangements. For example, an arrangement required in one subject area may well not be relevant in another.

Principles of alternative assessment arrangements

These are based on:

1. students for whom assessment arrangements are provided should potentially have the ability to achieve national standards, but be unable to do so using the published assessment arrangements for the particular qualification. For example, a student may have difficulty with reading the questions in a closed book assessment; assessment arrangements, such as the use of a computer with text-reading software or a human reader may alleviate this disadvantage.
2. The integrity of the qualification must be maintained. For example, it is not possible for a student to use a human scribe in an Engineering Drawing Unit, where the actual drawing skills are being explicitly assessed.
3. Assessment arrangements should be tailored to meet a student's individual need. For example, a student with writing difficulties might not be at any disadvantage in a multiple choice paper but might have difficulties producing a written essay. There should be documented evidence of a candidate's assessment needs.
4. Assessment arrangements should reflect, as far as possible, the student's normal way of learning and producing work. For example, if a student with dyslexia normally uses a computer with a spell checker or a human scribe to overcome writing difficulties, this should be the assessment arrangement provided in the assessment.

Examples include:

- a learner who is profoundly deaf, and who uses sign, may need sign support to access an assessment task
- a learner experiencing mental health difficulties, who is very lethargic first thing in the morning due to medication, may need the start time of an assessment adjusted
- a learner with dyslexia, who experiences difficulties with reading, may need to use a coloured overlay and may also need extra time to complete an assessment
- a learner with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), who has persistent difficulties with concentrating, may need a separate room with supervised rest breaks.

Extra Time – Additional information

At NAFC MC UHI, extra time in timed assessments is the most common form of an alternative assessment arrangement currently applied.

In order to ensure that the process of assessment is rigorous and fair for all candidates when taking timed assessments, SQA require NAFC MC UHI to ensure that extra time is only provided to candidates to address an identified disadvantage.

Only those candidates who have been identified as having a particular disability/difficulty and where there is appropriate evidence of their need for extra time are eligible. It is therefore important that you have the necessary evidence available to support the provision of extra time.

The amount of extra time required may vary according to the candidate's individual needs. There must be appropriate evidence indicating (i) the impact of the candidate's disability/difficulty on their ability to complete tasks in a specified time and (ii) that a specific amount of extra time is appropriate.

Whilst a professional diagnosis, or standardised tests showing below average speeds in reading and/or writing and/or cognitive processing may be useful in identifying those candidates who may be at a disadvantage in completing tasks and assessments in normal allocated time, there must also be clear evidence of an on-going and significant difficulty in completing tasks (class tasks, assignments, assessments) in normal time.

Procedure

The need to provide assessment arrangements to ensure equal opportunities for assessment for a particular student is usually identified in the following different ways:

1. From self-disclosure during a pre-entry guidance interview with the SSO.
2. Self-disclosure during a course interview with a member of the course team
3. Self-disclosure on an application or enrolment form.
4. Identified from performance concerns during the course.

The SSO is responsible for negotiating, arranging and monitoring a student's identified assessment arrangement needs. Therefore, whoever identifies a student with potential alternative assessment arrangement needs, assumes the responsibility to inform the SSO as soon as possible. At all stages this process will be regarded as confidential, and information only passed to others on a need to know basis with the full permission of the student.

- Once informed, the SSO will arrange a confidential interview directly with the student.
- Where appropriate, the SSO will liaise with professionals, or other organisations in relation to gaining official diagnosis, or further information.
- The SSO will detail the assessment needs as disclosed on a Personal Learning Support Plan(PLSP).
- The SSO will contact the course leader/internal verifier and request evidence of the students work that indicates whether or not an assessment arrangement is required. This should be completed and returned within 10 working days wherever practicable.

- Once all required information and evidence has been received by the SSO, and the PLSP updated. A formal, minuted meeting will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable with the relevant course leader/ Internal verifier and the SSO present to review the assessment need and evidence presented. The meeting will be chaired by the Academic Quality Manager, or his deputy in order to provide an independent view of the process.
- Any arrangements agreed must:
 - a). adhere to the qualification or awarding body assessment requirements.
 - b). take into account varying needs across subjects, and be applied on a subject-by-subject basis, and not automatically be used in every unit of the students programme unless identified as being so required.
- The SSO will update the PLSP, inform the student of the proposed assessment arrangements, and obtain the agreement of that student.
- Meeting documentation and supporting evidence shall be kept by the Academic Quality Manager.
- Student PLSP shall be kept in the students personal file.
- The course leader/internal verifier is responsible for ensuring that the agreed arrangements are implemented and that they are still effective and appropriate to the students need.
- The SSO will monitor the effectiveness of the assessment arrangements through regular individual progress meetings with the candidate.

For further guidance with SQA FE qualification assessment arrangements please visit the SQA webpage>>
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/AA_AssessmentArrangementsExplained.pdf

MCA SQA/IAMI Written exams

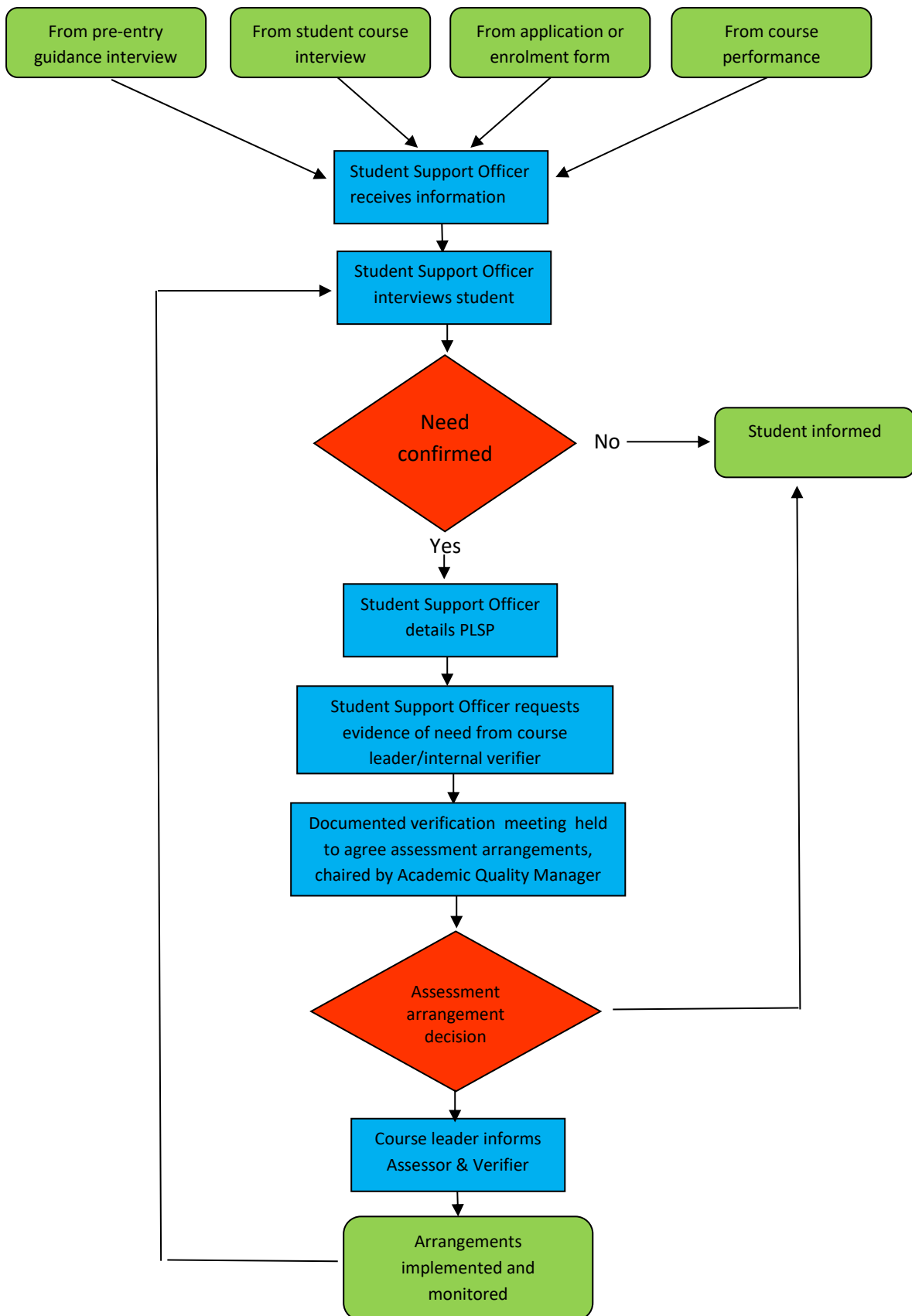
For Candidates undertaking a MCA written examination conducted by SQA/IAMI who have been diagnosed as dyslexic by either an educational psychologist or a Specialist Dyslexia Teacher may be allowed an extra 15 minutes for each hour of normal examination time. The use of readers, amanuensis (scribes) or computers are not permitted; however, other aides such as tinted film etc. are permitted.

Candidates wishing to apply for extra time should contact their personal or course tutor who will guide them through the procedure with SQA/IAMI.

The above guidance is obtained from the MCA Marine Guidance Note MIN 435 which can be accessed from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/min-435-clarification-of-dyslexia-policy>

Alternative Assessment Arrangements Procedure Flowchart

How a need is identified and progressed



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