



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
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Diploma Programme

# Candidates with special assessment needs







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**Diploma Programme**  
**Candidates with special assessment needs**

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# IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

IB learners strive to be:

<b>Inquirers</b>	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
<b>Thinkers</b>	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
<b>Principled</b>	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
<b>Open-minded</b>	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b>	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
<b>Risk-takers</b>	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
<b>Balanced</b>	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
<b>Reflective</b>	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



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# Introduction

This document states the policy of the International Baccalaureate (IB) for diploma and certificate candidates with special assessment needs. The IB believes that all candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put a candidate with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing him or her from demonstrating his or her level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized. This policy applies to candidates affected by a temporary, long-term or permanent disability or illness, including candidates with a learning difficulty.

The purpose of this document is to provide Diploma Programme coordinators (from here on referred to as coordinators) and teachers with information about the arrangements available for candidates with special needs **during their preparation of work for assessment and in their written examinations**. There is no intention to provide guidance on teaching methodology or resources. Procedures for requesting special arrangements are explained in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*, the procedures manual for coordinators and teachers. Although coordinators are responsible for submitting requests for special arrangements, it is recommended that colleagues who teach students with special educational needs should be given a copy of this policy document.

When referring to a mental disorder, the IB uses the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) classification system. However, the use of other recognized systems such as the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD-10) is equally acceptable when submitting documentation to IB Cardiff, UK.

If an adverse circumstance, such as family bereavement, civil unrest or natural disaster, affects a candidate, either during the preparation of work for assessment or during written examinations, the coordinator, not the teacher, should contact the coordinator help desk ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) at IB Cardiff for advice. Such circumstances do not normally qualify a candidate for special arrangements unless a condition (for example, an anxiety or sleep disorder) arising from the adverse circumstance can be diagnosed. Although special arrangements will not normally be authorized for adverse circumstances, the affected candidate(s) may be eligible for compensation.

# Terminology

## Accommodation

A generic term comprising all forms of arrangement, compensation or conditions that may be allowed for a candidate.

## Adverse circumstances

Circumstances beyond the control of the candidate(s) that might be detrimental to the performance of the candidate(s) in one or more assessment component (for example, bereavement, natural disasters, civil unrest). “Adverse circumstances” do not include medical conditions or disability.

## Assessment component

Each subject and level for the Diploma Programme is divided into assessment components, for example, paper 1, paper 2 and internal assessment. Some components comprise discrete tasks that are undertaken separately. These separate tasks within a component, such as the map work section for a geography examination paper, are referred to in this document as a “part” of an assessment component.

## Exceptional circumstances

Circumstances that are not commonly within the experience of other candidates with special assessment needs. The IB reserves the right to determine which circumstances qualify as “exceptional” and therefore justify a particular special arrangement.

## Invigilator

A person, or persons, responsible for supervising an examination. Also referred to as a “proctor” or a “supervisor”. The invigilator of an IB examination may or may not be the coordinator.

## Special arrangements

Changed or additional conditions during the assessment process for a candidate with special educational needs. These enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment more fairly and are not intended to compensate for any lack of ability.

## Special assessment needs

A candidate with special assessment needs is one who requires special arrangements in assessment conditions to demonstrate his or her level of attainment.

## Special educational needs

This refers to candidates with individual learning needs, who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, and who require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement.

Candidates who require special assessment arrangements may display the characteristics of one or more of the following special educational needs.

### Specific learning issues, language and communication disorders

- Significant issues in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers associated with issues in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notation, dyslexia, dyscalculia).
- Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems).

### Emotional and behavioural issues (EBD)

- Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessive preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial and uncooperative behaviour; and anger, frustration and violence.

### Physical and sensory conditions

- Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious, but affect mobility.
- Sensory issues: hearing—embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties; visual—includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.

### Medical conditions

- The most common being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anaemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia and other cancers.

### Mental health issues

- A wide range of conditions that can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions, such as schizophrenia and manic depression, to eating disorders, anxieties and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a candidate's life.

## Technical language

This refers to terminology specific to the subject being tested. It may be the target of the assessment and must be known by the candidate to understand fully the subject.

# 1 Principles

All special arrangements that may be authorized by the IB are based on the following principles.

- 1.1 The IB must ensure that a grade awarded to a candidate in any subject is not a misleading description of that candidate's level of attainment, so the same standards of assessment are applied to all candidates, regardless of whether or not they have special needs.
- 1.2 Special arrangements are intended to reduce the adverse effects of a candidate's special needs when demonstrating his or her level of attainment. The special arrangements requested for a candidate must not give that candidate an advantage in any assessment component.
- 1.3 The special arrangements described in this document are intended for candidates with the intellectual capacity to meet all assessment requirements leading to the award of the diploma or certificates.
- 1.4 The school, not the IB, is responsible for establishing whether the Diploma Programme can be taught and assessed. Advice may be sought from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) before a school accepts a student with special needs; however, this advice is restricted to the implications for internal and external assessment and does not extend to teaching methods and resources.
- 1.5 If it can be demonstrated that a candidate's lack of proficiency in his or her response language(s) (English, French or Spanish) arises from a diagnosed need, special arrangements may be authorized. (For subjects in groups 3 to 6, all candidates are allowed to use a translating dictionary in the written examinations.)
- 1.6 The IB aims to authorize special arrangements that are compatible with those normally available to the candidate concerned. However, authorization will only be given for arrangements that are consistent with the policy and practice of the IB. It should not be assumed that the IB will necessarily agree to the arrangements requested by a school. Coordinators are required to provide information on both the candidate's usual method of working in the classroom and under assessment conditions.
- 1.7 The IB is committed to an educational philosophy based on international mindedness. Therefore, the special assessment needs policy of the IB may not reflect the standard practice of any one country. To achieve equity among candidates with special assessment needs, the policy represents the result of a consideration of accepted practice in different countries.
- 1.8 The IB will ensure that, wherever possible, arrangements for candidates with a similar type of need are the same. Given that cultural differences occur in the recognition of learning issues and the accommodations allowed, some compromise may be necessary to help ensure comparability between candidates in different countries.
- 1.9 If special assessment arrangements are necessary for a candidate, consultation with the IB is mandatory. Similarly, if a Diploma Programme candidate has difficulties meeting the requirements for creativity, action, service (CAS), the appropriate IB regional office must be consulted. Any exceptions are stated in this document. However, a school may provide any kind of special arrangement for a candidate during his or her study of the Diploma Programme or trial (practice) examinations.
- 1.10 A school must not inform an examiner of a candidate's condition or adverse circumstance. Similarly, in the case of internally assessed work, teachers must not make any adjustments when marking a candidate's work. If appropriate, the IB will ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered.

- 1.11 The IB treats all information about a candidate as confidential. If required, information will only be shared with appropriate IB personnel and members of the final award committee, who will be instructed to treat such information as confidential.
- 1.12 If special arrangements are authorized for internal assessment, the IB may require the candidate's work to be submitted to IB Cardiff for scrutiny.
- 1.13 Please notify IB Cardiff about retake candidates who require the same special arrangements carried over into their next examination session. This is because some arrangements, such as transcribing examination papers into Braille, take several months of preparation.
- 1.14 The list of special arrangements available is revised regularly. The IB will consider alternative arrangements proposed by a coordinator, provided those arrangements could be made available to all other similarly affected candidates.
- 1.15 According to the document *General regulations: Diploma Programme*, a Diploma Programme candidate may participate in three examination sessions to be awarded the diploma. At the discretion of the IB, a candidate with special needs may be allowed additional sessions.
- 1.16 If a school does not meet the conditions specified by the IB when administering special arrangements, or makes special arrangements without authorization, the candidate may not be awarded a grade in the subject and level concerned.
- 1.17 Each request for special arrangements will be judged on its own merit. Previous authorization of special arrangements, either by the IB or another awarding body, will not influence the decision on whether to authorize the arrangements that have been requested by the coordinator.
- 1.18 The IB does not flag or in any way annotate the results of a candidate for whom special arrangements have been authorized.
- 1.19 If the candidate's disability and/or the nature of the special arrangement might disturb other candidates during an examination, the candidate must take the examination in a separate room and be supervised according to the regulations governing the conduct of Diploma Programme examinations.
- 1.20 Any issues that arise from the nature of the special arrangements, or any unforeseen difficulties encountered by the candidate, should be reported to the coordinator help desk at IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) as soon as possible.
- 1.21 Written examinations must be invigilated according to the regulations governing the conduct of Diploma Programme examinations. The person invigilating the candidate must not be a relative of the candidate, or any other person with whom there may be an apparent or perceived conflict of interest.

## 2 Guidelines

The following guidelines supplement the procedures for requesting special arrangements explained in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

### 2.1 Responsibilities of the school

- 2.1.1 Before accepting a student with special educational needs as a candidate for the Diploma Programme, coordinators should consider whether suitable arrangements, for both teaching and assessment, can be made for that student.
- 2.1.2 Careful consideration should be given to a candidate's choice of subjects. Some subjects may pose particular difficulties for a candidate with special needs. Consultation with IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) may be appropriate before confirming a candidate's subjects.
- 2.1.3 To accommodate a candidate with a special assessment need, it is essential that the coordinator consults all teachers concerned at an early stage in a candidate's study of the Diploma Programme.
- 2.1.4 All requests for special arrangements submitted by a coordinator must have the support of the head of school. (All correspondence from IB Cardiff concerning candidates with special assessment needs will normally be addressed to the coordinator.)
- 2.1.5 Before submitting appropriate documentation to IB Cardiff, the school must obtain consent from the candidate and/or the candidate's parents or guardian.
- 2.1.6 An application for special arrangements must be made on behalf of a candidate on a request form submitted by the coordinator or the head of school. A teacher who specializes in teaching students with special needs may complete the form, but must not be the signatory. An application will not be accepted directly from a candidate, or from a relative or guardian of a candidate.
- 2.1.7 The school is responsible for making all arrangements for approving and appointing an amanuensis (scribe), a reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator. The person providing support must not be another candidate, a relative of the candidate, or a representative from an advisory service where a conflict of interest may be apparent or perceived. The IB does not pay a fee or expenses to a person providing support, nor does the IB pay for the hiring or purchasing of special equipment.
- 2.1.8 If special arrangements are requested, the coordinator must ensure that the candidate is, or becomes, familiar with those arrangements. The candidate must be familiar with any special equipment, including a computer and its software, authorized for use in an examination. If support from an amanuensis (scribe), a reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator is required, before the examination the candidate must practise with the person acting in this capacity.
- 2.1.9 The school is responsible for ensuring that all equipment authorized for a candidate with special assessment needs functions correctly and that there is a member of staff who is familiar with its use (for example, a Braille machine, computer software).

## 2.2 Applications for special arrangements

When submitting an application for special arrangements, the application should indicate when the special need began.

### Temporary medical condition

- 2.2.1 A detailed report on the nature of the condition is not normally required. For example, a note or certificate from a medical practitioner is sufficient for a candidate with mononucleosis.
- 2.2.2 If a detailed report is required, it will be requested by IB Cardiff after the application has been received.

### Long-term medical condition or permanent disability

- 2.2.3 A detailed report from a medical or psychological service is required as supporting documentation for all candidates with a long-term medical condition or a permanent disability in need of special arrangements. It should include a statement about the impact on learning. IB Cardiff may request additional information if the supporting documentation is not adequate.
- 2.2.4 If a candidate is affected by a prolonged illness during the final year of the Diploma Programme, the coordinator should notify IB Cardiff using the appropriate form.
- 2.2.5 If the illness occurs during a written examination (for example, an allergic reaction such as hay fever), immediately after the examination the coordinator should submit to IB Cardiff a completed copy of the appropriate form from the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*, with medical documentation confirming the illness.

### All candidates with special assessment needs

- 2.2.6 An application for special arrangements must specify, on the appropriate form, exactly which arrangements are being requested. If the form does not specify which arrangements are being requested, no action will be taken by IB Cardiff. (Supporting documentation in the form of a medical or psychological report does not itself constitute an application for special arrangements.)
- 2.2.7 **For anticipated candidates, special arrangements will be automatically carried over into the diploma session.** If a candidate's condition changes after a request for special arrangements has been submitted, IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) must be informed.
- 2.2.8 If a special arrangement may result in the candidate taking longer to complete a written examination, coordinators are advised to request additional time for the examination(s) concerned. Authorization for certain special arrangements (for example, an amanuensis) will normally include an additional time allowance of 15 minutes per hour. Further details are given in section 4.1.

### Supporting documentation

- 2.2.9 Special arrangements are based on the current effects of a candidate's condition on his or her performance in an assessment situation. Therefore, the coordinator must justify that special arrangements are necessary while the candidate is being assessed for the diploma or certificates. For this reason, a medical or psychological evaluation must have been undertaken no earlier than the previous academic year before the start of the candidate's study of the Diploma Programme. Some flexibility will be allowed for candidates with a permanent disability.
- 2.2.10 The supporting documentation for a candidate with special needs must be a formal assessment from a medical or psychological service. The report may be written by a clinical team comprising of various medical, health, educational or counselling professionals with appropriate qualifications.

Where a report from a specialist or clinical team is not available, the coordinator should consult IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)).

The IB reserves the right to query or reject a report if it considers that the signatory (or signatories) may not be suitably qualified to undertake the evaluation and diagnosis. It is not permitted for a relative of the candidate to write or be involved in the writing of the report.

- 2.2.11 The supporting documentation for candidates with a long-term medical condition or permanent disability must:
- be legible, on paper with a letterhead, signed and dated
  - state the title, name and professional credentials of the person (or persons) who has undertaken the evaluation and diagnosis of the candidate
  - state specifically the nature of the special need, and the tests or techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis
  - be consistent with the coordinator’s request for special arrangements
  - describe the functional limitations arising from the disability and their impact on learning
  - include a summary (or conclusion) and recommendations as to which special assessment arrangements are appropriate
  - be accompanied by a translation into English, French or Spanish, if it is not written in one of the IB working languages.
- 2.2.12 Coordinators must, on the appropriate form:
- summarize the candidate’s condition, updating, clarifying and drawing attention to any relevant details in the attached documentation
  - provide details of special arrangements made by the school for class assignments, homework and examinations
  - state precisely which special arrangements are being requested
  - state whether the same or similar arrangements have previously been authorized for the candidate by the IB or another examination board.
- 2.2.13 Clear photocopies of documentation are acceptable; original certificates or reports are not required. Documentation will not be returned.
- 2.2.14 In the majority of cases, the completed form and supporting documentation will be sufficient for IB Cardiff to consider authorizing special arrangements. However, if a candidate has a severe condition, discussion between the coordinator and IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) may be necessary to decide on the most suitable arrangement(s) for the candidate.
- 2.2.15 Before submitting a request for special arrangements, the coordinator should consider the candidate’s needs for each component of assessment. Where appropriate, the request should specify the arrangements required for each component.

## 3 Arrangements not requiring authorization

At the discretion of the coordinator (or head of school), the following arrangements are permitted in examinations without prior authorization from IB Cardiff.

- 3.1 A candidate is permitted to take an examination in a separate room if it is in the best interests of the candidate or other candidates in the group. For example, lighting may be a particular consideration for a candidate with a visual impairment, or a room with an echo may be detrimental to a candidate with a hearing issue. Furthermore, a candidate's condition or the nature of the special arrangement (for example, an amanuensis, a computer) may disturb other candidates, in which case a separate examination room is justified. If the examination is taken in a separate room, all regulations governing the conduct of IB examinations must be observed. The candidate must be kept under the constant supervision of an invigilator.
- 3.2 The coordinator may arrange for appropriate seating to meet the needs of individual candidates (for example, sitting near the front may be appropriate for a candidate with a visual or hearing issue).
- 3.3 A candidate may take medication and/or refreshment to alleviate a medical condition such as diabetes.
- 3.4 A care assistant may be in attendance if this is necessary for the welfare or safety of a candidate. The assistant must not be another candidate or a relative of the candidate.
- 3.5 A candidate who normally uses an aid (for example, a coloured overlay, a Braille slate, a sound amplification device, a radio aid, a hearing aid, a low vision aid, a magnifying aid, coloured filter lenses) is allowed to use the aid in examinations. NB: It is in breach of regulations if candidates carry into the examination room any other mobile devices.
- 3.6 A candidate with a hearing condition may receive instructions from a communicator. This arrangement must be confined to explaining the conduct of the examination and the instructions in an examination paper. The communicator must not convey information about any aspect of a question in the paper without prior authorization from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)).
- 3.7 For a candidate who is colour blind, the coordinator (or invigilator) is permitted to name colours in an examination paper (for example, on a map in a geography examination). However, no other form of assistance may be given without authorization from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)).
- 3.8 At the discretion of the coordinator, a candidate may be given additional time to complete assignments during the two-year programme (for example, the extended essay, the theory of knowledge (TOK) essay, language A1 world literature essay) without authorization from IB Cardiff. However, if an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for assessment is required, an email to IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) is mandatory. See section 4.13.

## 4 Special arrangements

The arrangements listed below are termed “special” arrangements because they require authorization from the IB, unless stated otherwise.

### 4.1 Additional time

Additional time may be authorized for written examinations and for certain activities connected to internal assessment according to the candidate’s assessed needs. For written examinations, additional time is normally restricted to 15 minutes for each hour of the examination (that is, 25% more time). For periods of less than one hour the additional time should be given on a pro rata basis. More than 15 minutes per hour may be authorized for candidates with a severe condition or where the special arrangements place a greater demand on time.

When requesting additional time, it is important to bear in mind that too much time may be tiring for a candidate and, therefore, counterproductive. Similarly, more time spent on a task does not necessarily improve the quality of the response given by a candidate.

An additional time allowance is not the same as a rest period: during a rest period the candidate is not permitted to continue working.

- 4.1.1 At the discretion of the coordinator, a candidate may be given additional time to complete assignments during the two-year programme (for example, the extended essay, the TOK essay, language A1 world literature essay) without authorization from IB Cardiff. However, if an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for assessment is required, an email to IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) is mandatory. See section 4.13.
- 4.1.2 Candidates receiving additional time may also receive rest periods. See section 4.2.
- 4.1.3 Additional time will not be authorized for a component where the completion of a task within a limited time is specified in an assessment criterion.
- 4.1.4 Additional time will not be authorized for the five minutes’ reading time that precedes written examinations.
- 4.1.5 Although the standard allowance is 15 minutes per hour, 5 or 10 minutes per hour may be requested.
- 4.1.6 If a candidate’s condition, or the nature of the special arrangement(s), is such that more than 15 minutes per hour is required, this should be clearly stated and justified in the application for special arrangements. There should be no assumption that more than 15 minutes per hour will be authorized.
- 4.1.7 If a candidate’s personal examination timetable is such that, with additional time and/or rest periods, more than six and a half hours of examinations would take place in one day, rescheduling should be requested. All regulations and procedures that normally apply to rescheduling examinations must be adhered to. Information on rescheduling can be found in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.
- 4.1.8 At the discretion of the coordinator, a candidate who is allowed additional time may take his or her examinations in a separate room. This is to avoid disturbing the candidate when other candidates in the group leave the examination room at the scheduled time.

- 4.1.9 Additional time of 30 minutes per hour (that is, 50% more time) will normally be authorized for candidates using examination papers in Braille. Time in excess of 30 minutes per hour may be authorized, according to the assessed needs of the candidate.

## 4.2 Rest periods

During a rest period, the candidate is not permitted to read, respond to the examination paper or to write notes of any kind. A rest period is distinct from “additional time” during which the candidate may continue working.

- 4.2.1 The amount of rest time required, or whether more than one rest period is necessary, depends on the candidate’s circumstances. Ten minutes per hour is normally authorized.
- 4.2.2 Candidates receiving rest periods may also receive additional time. See section 4.1.
- 4.2.3 During the rest period in an examination, the candidate’s script and examination paper must be covered or turned face down on the desk/table.
- 4.2.4 The candidate may leave the examination room for part or all of the rest period, but must be supervised to ensure that the security of the examination is maintained. There must be no communication with, or disturbance to, other candidates.
- 4.2.5 If a candidate’s personal examination timetable is such that, with rest periods and/or additional time, more than six and a half hours of examinations would take place in one day, rescheduling should be requested. All regulations and procedures that normally apply to rescheduling examinations must be adhered to. Information on rescheduling can be found in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.

## 4.3 Information and communication technology (ICT)

The IB recognizes that for many candidates with special assessment needs, a computer, or other microprocessor-controlled device, provides a highly effective means of communication. For this reason, computers and other forms of assistive technology are normally permitted for written examinations if a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten response.

Owing to the rapid development of such technology and the variety of alternative forms of communication now widely available, it is not practical to list which forms of technology are permitted. Each request will be considered on its own merit. A form of technology will usually be authorized when it is the candidate’s normal method of working and does not provide the candidate with an advantage.

### Computers

The use of computers in other areas of assessment, such as the extended essay and internal assessment, is accepted without question and the IB places no restrictions on the use of software aids such as spellcheckers. However, in written examinations a computer may only be used as a word processor, for the sole purpose of providing an alternative to handwriting in most circumstances.

- 4.3.1 An application to use a computer should only be made in circumstances where a candidate has a particular issue, for example, resulting from a visual issue, physical disability, temporary injury or specific learning issue.

4.3.2 If a candidate with special assessment needs uses a computer as his or her usual means of communication, the candidate will normally be permitted to use a computer in his or her examinations. However, if a computer is not appropriate for all components (for example, in a multiple-choice question paper), other special arrangements may need to be requested.

4.3.3 No facility of the software may be used that gives an advantage over other candidates. Therefore, a candidate must not have access to:

- information stored in the memory of the computer or on CD
- a thesaurus, spellchecker or other electronic device that may give an unfair advantage.

The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that a candidate does not have access to stored information or an unauthorized electronic device. An exception is normally made for candidates with severe dyslexia who may use a spellchecker during the written examinations that must be authorized by IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)).

4.3.4 The IB does not provide a list of prescribed software that candidates may use. Advice may be sought from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) on using suitable software, but the responsibility for identifying and obtaining software rests with the coordinator.

4.3.5 In examinations where the answers to questions require more than text (for example, mathematics, the sciences and economics), prior consultation with IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org)) is mandatory to determine the suitability of the software. The software must not give the candidate an advantage.

4.3.6 Coordinators are advised to check that the computer and all peripherals, such as a printer, are working properly at the time of the examination. The automatic save option should be used during the examination to ensure that the candidate's work is regularly saved onto the hard disk.

4.3.7 The failure of a computer to store, retrieve and/or print the candidate's work may result in no marks being awarded for the component. While the IB will consider whether any compensation can be made for the missing component, if there are insufficient marks on which to award a grade for the subject, no grade will be awarded.

4.3.8 The IB reserves the right to request, either before or after an examination, full details of the type of hardware and software used by a candidate.

4.3.9 It is recommended that a candidate who is using a computer takes the examination in a separate room, to avoid any distraction to other candidates.

4.3.10 Before the examination, the candidate must be proficient in the use of the computer and its software.

4.3.11 At the discretion of the coordinator, it is permissible for a candidate to print his or her work during the examination for scrutiny. However, this is not encouraged and no additional time is permitted for this activity, regardless of any computer or printer malfunction.

4.3.12 The candidate's work should be printed at the earliest opportunity after the examination. The candidate should be present to verify and sign that the printed copy is a complete copy of his or her work produced during the examination.

4.3.13 A printed version of the candidate's work should be submitted for assessment, not a CD. The CD should be retained by the coordinator until after the issue of results.

### **Voice-activated technology**

4.3.14 Voice-activated technology is not considered appropriate for written examinations, although its use may be authorized when this method has been the candidate's normal means of working. Authorization to use such technology for any internal or external assessment component, including the extended essay and TOK essay, is mandatory.

- 4.3.15 An application for using voice-activated technology will be considered on its own merit. Only in exceptional circumstances, and where this arrangement has been the candidate's normal method of working, will voice-activated technology be authorized.

### **Augmentative speech equipment**

- 4.3.16 A candidate with speech issues may use augmentative speech equipment in examinations, but only when this has been the candidate's normal means of working. IB Cardiff will require details of the equipment and the extent to which it will assist the candidate.

## 4.4 Amanuenses

An amanuensis (or scribe) is a person who writes down the dictated response of a candidate for the requirements of an internal and/or external assessment component. The use of an amanuensis is permitted for all forms of assessment where a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten response or use a computer.

- 4.4.1 If a candidate is allowed both an amanuensis and a reader, the same person should fulfill both roles whenever possible.
- 4.4.2 Additional time amounting to 15 minutes for each hour of the examination (that is, 25% more time) will normally be authorized when a candidate is assisted by an amanuensis.
- 4.4.3 Prior to the examination, the coordinator should provide an opportunity for the candidate and amanuensis to practise working together.
- 4.4.4 The candidate must take the examination in a separate room. The dictated responses of the candidate must not be overheard by other candidates.
- 4.4.5 Because the examination is taken in a separate room, an invigilator must be present in addition to the amanuensis. This is to ensure the proper conduct of the examination, so that no questions arise regarding the appropriateness of the assistance.
- 4.4.6 The amanuensis must:
- transcribe the candidate's responses verbatim
  - draw all visual material (for example, diagrams, maps and graphs) according to the exact instructions of the candidate
  - not offer information that may be used to answer questions, including advice on which questions to answer, when to move on to another question or the order in which questions should be answered.
- 4.4.7 The amanuensis may:
- read back answers at the request of the candidate
  - alter or delete answers at the request of the candidate.
- 4.4.8 A candidate's answers to a multiple-choice question paper may be recorded in a form that is most convenient to the candidate and amanuensis. However, the candidate's answers must be submitted to IB Cardiff on a multiple-choice answer sheet, regardless of how they were initially recorded.
- 4.4.9 The amanuensis must be familiar with the terminology used in the subject but, whenever possible, should not be the candidate's own teacher for the subject being examined.
- 4.4.10 Conversation between the candidate and the amanuensis must be confined to ensuring that the candidate's responses are transcribed correctly. There must be no discussion about the examination paper or the candidate's answers.

- 4.4.11 The amanuensis must not act as a prompt, unless authorization has been given by IB Cardiff (sen@ibo.org). If time elapses during the examination when the candidate is not responding to the examination paper, no action should be taken by the amanuensis, unless the candidate is ill or distressed and then the invigilator should be notified.

## 4.5 Readers

The role of a reader is to read the examination paper to a candidate and to read back the candidate's answers if requested to do so. However, the assistance of the reader is not confined to the written examinations; a reader may assist a candidate with all internal and external assessment components.

- 4.5.1 An examination paper must be read out loud without any alteration to its wording. Explaining instructions and answering questions about the rubrics of the examination paper (for example, how many questions to answer, the time available for the paper) are permitted; however, the reader must not interpret or explain questions on the paper.
- 4.5.2 If there is more than one candidate for the same examination requiring a reader, they may be grouped together. However, if a candidate requests that his or her answers be read out loud, that candidate must take the examination separately.
- 4.5.3 If the candidate is allowed both an amanuensis and a reader, the same person should fulfill both roles whenever possible.
- 4.5.4 The candidate's examination must be conducted in the presence of an invigilator, in addition to the reader. This is to ensure the proper conduct of the examination, so that no questions arise regarding appropriateness of the assistance.
- 4.5.5 The reader must be familiar with the terminology used in the subject, as any mispronunciation could be confusing or unsettling for the candidate. The reader must pronounce words clearly and should be someone whose speech is easily understood by the candidate. However, the candidate's own teacher for the subject concerned should not be appointed as the reader.
- 4.5.6 At the request of the candidate, all questions or parts of a question can be read more than once. Also at the request of the candidate, words appearing in the examination paper can be spelt out. However, the reader must not:
- explain a question
  - reword a question
  - emphasize any part of the examination paper
  - give advice on how to answer a question or which questions to answer (other than stating the relevant rubric)
  - advise on when to move on to another question
  - advise on the order in which questions should be answered.
- 4.5.7 For examinations in groups 3 to 6 subjects, a candidate who is not working in his or her best language may ask the reader to consult a translating dictionary. An entry can be read to the candidate, but no further explanation should be given.
- 4.5.8 The reader must not act as a prompt, unless authorization has been given by IB Cardiff (sen@ibo.org or help@ibo.org). If time elapses during the examination when the candidate is not responding to the examination paper, no action should be taken by the reader, unless the candidate is ill or distressed and then the invigilator should be notified.

- 4.5.9 Some assistance may be given if the candidate is experiencing difficulty in using information that is visually enhanced or presented in a tactile format. However, this assistance must be of a descriptive nature and must be confined to providing the same information that is accessible to a sighted candidate.

## 4.6 Communicators

A communicator is someone who is able to convey information to a person with a hearing impairment through the use of lip-speaking, finger-spelling or sign language. A communicator may be used during examinations.

- 4.6.1 A communicator may be used for conveying the oral instructions of the coordinator or invigilator without authorization from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)).
- 4.6.2 If a communicator is required so that a candidate can access the questions in an examination, it is mandatory to obtain authorization from IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)). Authorization will only be given if the communicator is a qualified teacher of the deaf who must be able to finger-spell all technical words. However, it is unlikely that this arrangement will be necessary if the examination paper has been modified to accommodate the needs of a candidate with a hearing impairment.
- 4.6.3 It is left to the discretion of the coordinator whether the examination should be held in a separate room.
- 4.6.4 Authorization will not be given for a candidate to give signed responses to questions that are a part of his or her internal or external assessment. An alternative means of communication, such as writing or word processing, must be found.

## 4.7 Prompters

A prompter is a person who ensures that a candidate is paying attention to the examination. This arrangement would normally be authorized for candidates diagnosed as having a neurological or cognitive disability resulting in a severe attention problem. It is likely that the coordinator or invigilator will act as the prompter, but only if the examination can be conducted according to IB regulations and without disturbing other candidates.

- 4.7.1 The prompter may only prompt. No other form of assistance should be given. The means of prompting may be a gentle tap on the candidate's arm or desk/table. The prompt must not be given verbally.
- 4.7.2 The prompter must not draw the candidate's attention to any part of the examination paper or his or her script.
- 4.7.3 The prompter should be familiar with the candidate's behaviour so that he or she knows when the candidate is not attending to the task, rather than thinking.
- 4.7.4 The position of the prompter in relation to the candidate is left to the discretion of the coordinator. However, the prompter should be seated in a position that provides a view of the candidate's disposition rather than his or her work. This must be achieved without the candidate feeling as though he or she is under any pressure or scrutiny.

## 4.8 Modifications to examination papers

Modifications can normally be made to examination papers for candidates with visual or hearing issues. Candidates with a visual issue may require more than one form of modification, but it should not be assumed that the needs of all such candidates can be accommodated. Some content within examination papers cannot be presented non-visually at present without invalidating the nature and purpose of the assessment. However, the IB may provide alternative questions to those based on an illustration (for example, cartoons or photographs) that can be presented non-visually, and assess the same objectives.

### Examination papers in Braille

- 4.8.1 The IB will undertake to transcribe examination papers into the Braille code normally used for the language concerned. While the IB will make every effort to provide the examination papers in Braille, it cannot guarantee to do so because of the variety of Braille codes used in different countries. For this reason, it is important to contact IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) before a candidate embarks on the Diploma Programme to ensure that the appropriate Braille code(s) will be available for the examinations.
- 4.8.2 If an examination paper requires a candidate to select questions from particular taught options, only those options will be transcribed into Braille, not the whole examination paper. Therefore, for relevant subjects, the coordinator is required to inform IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) of the options being taught. The transcription of taught options alone will only be done where it does not reduce the candidate's choice in the examination.
- 4.8.3 If a candidate changes his or her choice of subjects, IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) must be informed immediately. Any costs incurred in producing examination papers in Braille that are no longer required by the candidate may be passed on to the school.
- 4.8.4 Raised diagrams can normally be supplied with examination papers in Braille. The diagrams are normally produced on heat-expanded minolta paper.
- 4.8.5 A school must ensure that the candidate is familiar with the Braille code used for each examination paper (for example, Nemeth Braille Code for science and mathematics notation).
- 4.8.6 It is the responsibility of the school to submit printed copies of the candidate's answers to the examiner for assessment. The printed copies should be in the language of registration for the subject and level concerned. The original Braille (if available) should be retained by the school until after the issue of results. The IB reserves the right to request the original Braille.

### Changes to the print on examination papers

- 4.8.7 Enlarged print and/or a change of font should only be requested for candidates with visual issues.
- 4.8.8 The coordinator should provide IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) with the specification and examples of the required paper and print size. The candidate must already be familiar with using the specification requested.

### Printing on coloured paper

- 4.8.9 The coordinator should provide IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) with an example of the colour of the paper required.

### Modifications to the visual complexity

- 4.8.10 Simplifications to the layout or visual complexity of an examination paper can normally be made.
- 4.8.11 The visual content will only be simplified if this can be achieved without compromising the assessment objectives of the examination paper.

## Modifications to the language of examination papers

- 4.8.12 This normally involves the restructuring and simplification of language, and the rephrasing of questions, without alteration to the technical language or vocabulary specific to the subject or literary text.

## 4.9 Audio recordings of examination papers

The IB may provide an examination paper on a CD, but only in exceptional circumstances. This service is strictly limited; no assumption should be made that an examination will be available on CD. If available, the CD will be accompanied by a hard copy of the examination paper.

- 4.9.1 This arrangement is only available for examination papers that have no visual material (for example, illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketch maps).
- 4.9.2 The candidate must take the examination in a separate room. Other candidates must not be able to hear the recording of the examination paper.
- 4.9.3 Coordinators are advised to request additional time if a recording of the examination paper is used.
- 4.9.4 The IB accepts no responsibility for the electrical or mechanical failure of audio equipment. If equipment fails, the coordinator may extend the examination to allow the candidate the time equal to the time the equipment was not working. Authorization is not required, but unusual circumstances of this kind must be reported to IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) immediately after the examination.

## 4.10 Audio recordings of responses to examination papers

If a candidate is unable to provide a handwritten or word processed script, and an amanuensis is not a viable alternative, authorization may be given to audio record responses. However, this arrangement will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances, after other alternatives have been considered and rejected.

- 4.10.1 Recording responses is not normally permitted for examinations in groups 1 and 2.
- 4.10.2 This arrangement is only available for examinations where there is no requirement to produce visual material (for example, illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketch maps).
- 4.10.3 The candidate must take the examination in a separate room. The responses of the candidate must not be overheard by other candidates.
- 4.10.4 The candidate must dictate answers into an appropriate recording technology. Video recording must not be used.
- 4.10.5 The recording must be transcribed verbatim by a person appointed by the school (for example, a school secretary). No corrections or alterations can be made to the candidate's response. The coordinator is responsible for checking the original recording against the transcript to ensure that no corrections or alterations have been made. The candidate's transcript must be sent to the examiner. The coordinator must retain a copy of the recording until the close of the examination session.

### 4.11 Transcriptions

A transcript is a candidate's response to an assessment component submitted in a form other than the candidate's own handwriting. Transcription is justified when a candidate with a specific learning issue, or a physical disability, has very poor handwriting skills and cannot use a computer. Transcription is not available to candidates with poor handwriting for whom some form of special need cannot be diagnosed.

- 4.11.1 It is not necessary to transcribe the whole of a candidate's script. Only those sections or words that are extremely difficult to read need to be transcribed.
- 4.11.2 Regardless of whether the examination requires candidates to write responses on the examination paper itself, the transcription must be on a piece of paper separate from the candidate's script. The transcription must clearly indicate that it is a transcription and include the printed name and signature of the transcriber. The candidate's actual script must not be annotated: this is to avoid confusing the words of the transcriber with those of the candidate or examiner.
- 4.11.3 The transcript must be produced immediately after the examination under secure conditions—the process is strictly confidential. The candidate must not be consulted, even if some of the handwriting is illegible.
- 4.11.4 The transcript must be produced by a teacher who is familiar with the candidate's handwriting. The teacher must not be a relative of the candidate or a teacher of the subject.
- 4.11.5 The transcript must be produced verbatim, with no corrections to the candidate's spelling, grammar or content of the answer. Diagrammatic material must not be transcribed. The assessment of such material will be based on the candidate's own work.
- 4.11.6 The transcript should indicate the subject, level and paper of the examination, and the candidate's registration category and code.
- 4.11.7 The examiner will be instructed to mark the candidate's script, and only refer to the transcript if the candidate's actual work cannot be read. For this reason, the original script must be sent to the examiner with the transcription.
- 4.11.8 The production of a transcript must not delay the submission of other candidates' scripts to an examiner. The transcript must be included with the other scripts.

### 4.12 Alternative venues for examinations

If a candidate is too ill to attend school, but on medical advice is able to take the examinations at home or in hospital, authorization may be given for the examination to be taken at an alternative venue. In principle, the examination should be taken at the same time as other candidates in the group, but if necessary the application for an alternative venue may include a request to reschedule the examination.

- 4.12.1 Authorization to take an examination at an alternative venue must be obtained from IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) before the examination. This can be obtained at short notice by telephoning the 24-hour emergency help line available during the written examinations in May and November.
- 4.12.2 The sealed packets of examination papers must not be opened before the time and date scheduled for the examination by the IB. If there is sufficient time, extra packets of examination papers will be sent to the school. If there is not sufficient time, the packets of examination papers must be opened in the presence of candidates in the normal way and one copy of the examination paper then transferred immediately to the candidate concerned.
- 4.12.3 A short delay in starting the examination because of the transfer of an examination paper from the examination room to the alternative venue does not require an authorization to reschedule.

However, if the candidate is to begin the examination after other candidates in his or her teaching group have finished, authorization to reschedule is required and the candidate must be supervised during the intervening period.

- 4.12.4 The examination (or examinations) must be invigilated by a teacher or another responsible person from the school. It is not permitted for a relative of the candidate to invigilate the examination. A relative or care assistant may only be present for the examination if this is necessary for reasons of health or safety.
- 4.12.5 Consideration should be given as to whether the candidate requires rest periods and/or additional time for the examination(s). Both are special arrangements that must be authorized by IB Cardiff ([sen@ibo.org](mailto:sen@ibo.org) or [help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)). See sections 4.1 and 4.2.

## 4.13 Extensions to deadlines

This arrangement applies to cases of illness or accident when a candidate is genuinely prevented from completing work in time for the coordinator to submit the work to the examiner (or marks to IB Cardiff in the case of internal assessment).

- 4.13.1 An extension will normally be authorized for a period of four weeks, although a longer period will be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.13.2 A request for an extension to a deadline must be received at IB Cardiff ([help@ibo.org](mailto:help@ibo.org)) before the normal deadline. An extension to a deadline will not be authorized retrospectively.
- 4.13.3 IB Cardiff is responsible for advising an examiner that a candidate's work will arrive after the normal deadline, not the coordinator. Similarly, the coordinator must not advise an examiner of the reasons why the work is being submitted late; this will be done by IB Cardiff.

## 4.14 Assistance with practical work

Authorization may be given for a candidate with a physical disability to have assistance with practical work. This arrangement is normally confined to the requirements of internal assessment (for example, practical work in experimental science or geography fieldwork). It is particularly suited to situations where there is a concern for a candidate's health or safety.

- 4.14.1 The assistant/aide must not perform a task on behalf of the candidate in a manner that will provide an advantage in the assessment component. The assistant/aide must carry out a task exactly as instructed by the candidate, unless there are safety considerations.
- 4.14.2 If the nature of the assistance compromises the assessment requirement (for example, manipulating apparatus), the candidate may not be eligible for marks in that component, or in that part of the component.
- 4.14.3 All communication must be confined to clarifying the candidate's instructions if they are not understood by the assistant/aide. No guidance, advice or suggestions may be given to the candidate.
- 4.14.4 Whenever possible, the candidate should be left to perform the activity without assistance, but under supervision if health or safety is a consideration. The presence of an assistant/aide does not mean that the candidate should necessarily be given assistance in all aspects of the activity.
- 4.14.5 The assistant/aide should be familiar with the apparatus being used, and therefore may be a teacher of the subject, but preferably not the candidate's teacher. The person must not be another candidate or a relative of the candidate.

### 4.15 Exemptions from assessment

Exemptions are not normally granted for any assessment component of the Diploma Programme. However, if an assessment component or part demands a physiological function that a candidate is not able to perform, an exemption may be authorized. Before submitting a request for an exemption from a component, careful consideration should be given to whether all reasonable adjustments have been considered. For example, an exemption may be granted in the following circumstances **if all reasonable adjustments have been considered**.

- A candidate with a severe speech disorder may be exempt from the oral activities required for internal assessment in groups 1 and 2.
- A candidate with a physical disability, such as muscular dystrophy or motor neurone disease, may be exempt from practical work in science subjects for safety reasons.
- A candidate with poor mobility may be exempt from some fieldwork activities.

4.15.1 Authorization for an exemption will only be given when there are substantial grounds for an exemption. A candidate's inability to perform the functions required by the component must be clearly and fully documented.

4.15.2 An exemption from all requirements for a component can only be authorized by the final grade award committee. For this committee to consider a request for an exemption, the request and all supporting documentation must be received at least 12 months before the candidate's written examinations.

4.15.3 All Diploma Programme candidates are required to take two languages, without exception. A Diploma Programme candidate with severe dyslexia will not be exempt from the requirement to take a second language. However, special arrangements may be authorized for any individual component.

4.15.4 If a Diploma Programme candidate is unable to complete all requirements for CAS owing to a medical condition, the coordinator must contact the IB regional office for advice.