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### 1. Rationale

The University has a [Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students](#) and the Board of Examinations is responsible for approving any adjustments which are referred to as 'examination arrangements'. Unless otherwise stated, the Code applies to all matriculated students studying at the University and University examination regulations still apply to all students including those who have examination arrangements.

Colleges are familiar with the Code, which outlines a number of adjustments permitted in respect of assessment, including adjustments to the length, timing and location of examinations and the use of computers.

The guidance outlined below has been developed to describe:

1. the reasons for adjustment;
2. making a request for an adjustment: you and your College's roles;
3. provision: examples of adjustments to examination arrangements;
4. making a request for an alternative mode of assessment;
5. the procedure and who approves the request.

Checklist:

1.	<b>Speak with your College</b> , in Michaelmas Term, to consider examination adjustments or alternative mode of assessment.
2.	<b>Request examination arrangement</b> before deadline (division of Lent Term), 13 February 2017
3.	<b>Practise with the approved adjustment</b> in advance of your examinations
4.	<b>Review the adjustment</b> , after the examinations, with your college

## 2. Reasons for adjustment

2.1 Most Cambridge Tripos and taught Masters are examined by formal 3-hour examinations. Saturdays and Bank Holidays are considered to be normal examination days. You may have up to two examinations per day. This is standard and is not in itself grounds for examination arrangements.

2.2 Many examinations sites are large and you can expect an 'examination atmosphere'. Most students feel nervous about examinations and this in itself is not grounds for examination arrangements.

2.3 Applications for adjustments may be made if you:

- have declared a disability and hold a Student Support Document (SSD) issued by the University's Disability Resource Centre (DRC) or other documentary evidence supporting an adjustment;
- have not disclosed your disability/medical/psychological condition to the DRC (and so do not hold a SSD) but hold medical or psychological evidence or a full diagnostic report written by an educational psychologist, psychiatrist or specialist teacher detailing recommended adjustments to examinations. The Code of Practice includes mental health issues but it is up to you to check whether an issue, such as severe anxiety, is classified as a disability within its remit.

## 3. Making a request for an adjustment: you and your College's roles

3.1 If you hold a Student Support Document (SSD), your College should discuss it with you as soon as you take up your place at Cambridge, and in any Michaelmas Term thereafter. Your discussion should determine what examination arrangements (if any) you seek in the forthcoming academic year.

3.2 If you do not hold an SSD but believe you require examination arrangements, speak with your College who might refer you to the DRC or University Counselling Service (UCS). If you are not referred, the College will ask the Board of Examinations to determine what documentation is required. Without this documentation, the Board will not consider your request.

3.3 Your College must request examination arrangements on your behalf, and submit any required supporting documentation by the division of Lent Term (which for 2017-18 is **Tuesday, 13 February 2017**).

The deadline applies to allow you time to practise with the approved adjustment before the examination(s). Consequently, it may not be possible to accommodate all aspects of your request if it is received after the deadline.

Where supporting documentation is required, but not available by the above date, it must be submitted no later than the final Friday of Lent Full Term (i.e. **Friday, 16 March 2018**).

The BoE understands that some circumstances which might require adjustments to an examination may not become known until later in the Lent Term and that your College may therefore only be able to notify the BoE at that point. The BoE will consider the case but it

may not be possible to accommodate the request, especially where it requires an adjustment that you must practise.

3.4 After the examination(s), you should review the examination arrangement(s) with your College and discuss whether to apply for the same one(s) in the coming academic year or to seek different arrangements or an alternative mode of assessment.

3.5 At present, requests do not carry over from year to year. Your College must review the adjustment(s) and agree whether to seek the same one(s) or a different adjustment (if any).

#### **4. Provision: examples of adjustments to examination arrangements**

4.1 The following is not exhaustive, nor should it be taken to imply that given a particular set of circumstances, the BoE will automatically reach a particular decision. Each case is considered individually and draws on the SSD and medical/psychological evidence or a full diagnostic report.

- **Physical adjustments to conditions in the examination site:** e.g. use of a specific chair, table, lighting; allowance to take medicine or food/drink into examination venue.
- **Alternative format of how examination question paper is presented:** e.g. in braille or on coloured paper or use low vision aids or sign language in aural examinations.
- **Amanuensis:** allows dictation of answers.
- **Use of pc:** if you are permitted to use a pc, you will sit your examination in a central site provided for students using a computer. In advance of the examination, you are required to attend a training and registration session at the central site, on a date fixed each year by the site organiser.
- **Additional writing time:** allows extra writing time at the end of an examination, normally up to an overall maximum of 25%. Students with this extra time sit the examination with other students permitted extra time. Allowances in excess of 25% are unusual in the UK. Therefore, if you submit evidence, obtained either from the UK or overseas, that indicates a recommendation for an allowance in excess of 25%, the Board will consult the DRC to determine your needs, taking into account normal practice in the UK. If you are not satisfied with the decision, the Board will refer the case for independent adjudication by a relevant expert external to the University.
- **Rest breaks:** provide time to rest, whilst remaining under examination conditions.

#### **5. Making a request for an alternative mode of assessment**

5.1 Where the standard examination adjustments would not alleviate the substantial disadvantage experienced because of the disability, the BoE will consider any specific request to be assessed by alternative means. This might, for example, be to substitute submitted work in place of written papers; for alternative shorter unseen papers to be set; to allow you to take examination papers over a longer time period; or to take the examination over more than one year.

5.2 First, you must discuss your requirement with your College Tutor. The Tutor knows the procedure to follow, which will include consultations with appropriate academic representatives from the Faculty/Department (to include the Chair or Senior Examiner) and

the Disability Adviser to discuss possible options. It might be necessary to hold a case conference involving you.

In considering the request, all parties will be guided by the competence standards for the award. There is no legal requirement to adjust competence standards on the grounds of disability. The decision of the BoE will be final.

5.3 The request must be submitted before the end of Michaelmas Term to ensure that any appropriate teaching and support can be put in place, and that alternative modes can be discussed with the Faculty/Department concerned and suitable arrangements provided. It might not be possible to accommodate requests made after the end of the Michaelmas Term and such accommodation will usually be limited to cases where there is a late diagnosis, or where the adjustments relate to the next academic year.

5.4 The request will be considered then by the relevant authority and a decision made. In the case of the Board of Examinations that decision will be final.

## **6. Procedure: who approves the request?**

6.1 The BoE is authorised to adjust the arrangements or conditions under which an examination is taken such as the length, timing and place of examination, and the use of a computer. The BoE may also consider requests for an alternative mode of assessment. No other body, including Colleges and the DRC, may authorise examination arrangements.

6.2 The BoE considers requests for examination arrangements from Colleges on behalf of their students. You may not apply directly to the BoE. Where another body (such as Faculty, Department or Student Union) presents a case for you, the BoE will direct you to your College.

6.3 The BoE considers each request on an individual basis and the adjustments are determined case by case based on the evidence provided, and all students are gauged against normal practice in the UK.

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

## **Further links**

[Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students.](#)

[Disability Resource Centre: Exam access arrangements](#)

[Examination arrangements; Student Advice Service](#)