

# Introduction to AARA

## Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

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This information is for students, parents/carers and school staff. It applies to students completing senior school studies in 2020 and beyond.

Every year, there are students undertaking senior school studies in Queensland who have a disability, a medical condition or who are impacted by illness or other circumstances outside of their control. When access to assessment is adversely affected, AARA may be applied so that students are able to demonstrate what they have learned during their studies, on the same basis as their peers.

## Student eligibility for AARA

Eligibility for AARA falls within three main categories:

- long-term and chronic conditions (e.g. hearing or vision impairment, intellectual disability, physical impairment, dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, autism spectrum disorder, diabetes)
- short-term conditions, which may improve or deteriorate over time depending on a range of factors (e.g. anxiety and depression), and temporary injuries (e.g. broken limb)
- illness (e.g. measles) and misadventure (e.g. flooding, death of a close family member).

Factsheets, including guidelines for supporting documentation in all categories, are available at: [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara).

AARA are applicable for students who have completed required learning as outlined in the relevant syllabus or course. They cannot be used to compensate for learning that has not occurred or to exempt a student from the learning or knowledge and skill requirements of a subject or course.

Students are *not* eligible for AARA on the following grounds:

- unfamiliarity with the English language
- teacher absence or other teacher-related difficulties
- matters that the student could have avoided, e.g. misreading an examination timetable, misreading instructions in examinations
- timetable clashes
- matters of the student's or parents'/carers' own choosing, e.g. family holidays or sporting events
- matters that the school could have avoided, e.g. incorrect enrolment in a subject.

## Principles of AARA

In making decisions about AARA, schools are required to:

- consult with students and/or parents/carers
- consider the current learning needs and adjustments that the student uses to access and complete assessment
- balance the interests of all parties affected, including other students, staff and the school itself

- consider alternative reasonable adjustments that are less disruptive and intrusive but no less beneficial for the students, as needed
- maintain the academic requirements of subjects and ensure the integrity of assessment requirements and processes.

Decisions regarding AARA are made on a case-by-case basis and are based on evidence of the functional impact of the condition and consultation with students and parents/carers. Therefore, AARA may be different for students with the same diagnosis, condition or circumstance.

Adjustments may be made to:

- how assessment is presented to a student, e.g. for a student with a hearing impairment, verbal instructions may be provided as written instructions
- how the student responds to the assessment, e.g. a student with dyspraxia may complete the assessment using a computer with approved software
- the time allowed, e.g. a student with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may have five minutes per half-hour extra time provided in supervised assessment
- the scheduling, e.g. a student may complete an internal assessment at a later time than others, because of a car accident or illness on the day of the assessment
- the environment in which the assessment is undertaken, e.g. a student may sit in a different room to the other students because they need a reader
- the mode of the assessment, e.g. a student with an injury may perform a different physical activity from the rest of the Physical Education class, so they can demonstrate the unit objectives.

## Reporting and approving processes for AARA

AARA for summative assessment may be either principal-reported or QCAA-approved.

The principal is responsible for making decisions about the type of AARA and for following guidelines about recording information and seeking QCAA approval. When making decisions for principal-reported AARA or when QCAA approval is required, they make decisions based on the particular context for an eligible individual student, for a particular assessment.

### Principal-reported AARA

Principal-reported AARA are specific practical arrangements and adjustments authorised by the principal or principal's delegate for an eligible student. In approving principal-reported AARA, a principal/delegate must be reasonably satisfied that the need for the AARA exists and be able to provide evidence to justify the decision.

Schools must notify the QCAA, via the QCAA Portal, of principal-reported AARA for students undertaking summative internal assessment in Units 3 and 4 of Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension) subjects and for summative external assessment in General, General (Extension) and General (Senior External Examination) subjects.

Principal-reported AARA may include:

- for summative internal examinations: alternative format papers, assistance, assistive technology, comparable assessment, computer, reader, scribe
- for summative internal and external examinations: bite-sized food, medication, diabetes management, varied seating, vision aids, other equipment
- for summative non-examinations: extensions, comparable assessment.

## QCAA-approved AARA

The QCAA is responsible for approving identified AARA for students undertaking summative assessment in Units 3 and 4 in Applied, Applied (Essential), General and General (Extension) subjects, summative assessment for Short Courses and for external assessment in General, General (Extension) and General (Senior External Examination) subjects.

QCAA-approved AARA are specific practical arrangements and adjustments that can only be approved by the QCAA following consideration of supporting documentation submitted with the AARA application via the QCAA Portal.

QCAA-approved AARA include:

- for summative internal examinations: extra time, rest breaks
- for summative external assessment or Senior External Examination (SEE): extra time, rest breaks, alternative format papers, assistance, assistive technology

Schools:

- Check the accuracy of information supplied in the AARA application.
- Consider whether a student's application for AARA is consistent with eligibility requirements and clarify with QCAA officers as required.
- Complete the online application and submit supporting documentation by the due date via the QCAA Portal.
- Advise the student, parents/carers and assessment supervisor of approved AARA, including providing them with any written notifications from the QCAA.
- Consult the student prior to assessment (Students are not required to use all of the approved arrangements – they may use all, some or none of them. The student is the person to make the decision).

## More information

- National requirements
  - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*: [www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763](http://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763)
  - *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)*: <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/16354>
  - *Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)*: [www.nccd.edu.au](http://www.nccd.edu.au)
- QCAA policies and processes
  - AARA factsheets, all available at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/assessment/aara)
  - *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook*, Section 6  
[www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook/6-aara](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook/6-aara)
  - phone 1300 381 575 or email [aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au](mailto:aara@qcaa.qld.edu.au).



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