Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 We are committed to providing all candidates with fair access to our assessments. The information below outlines the processes for requesting access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for any candidate with specific needs entering for Graded Exams in Music Performance and Music Theory, or Diplomas.

1.2 This information is intended to be a helpful and clear guide for teachers, parents and candidates prior to entering for an exam. It is also available in alternative formats; please contact the Access Coordinator for further information: accesscoordinator@aberm.ac.uk.

2. What do we provide?

2.1 Applicants may request access arrangements or reasonable adjustments in order to enable equal access for any candidate with specific needs.

2.2 Access arrangements are designed to give fair access to our assessments, without changing the parameters of the exam or the marking criteria. Supporting evidence is not normally required when requesting access arrangements. Examples of access arrangements include:

- Large print tests/exam paper (where no additional time is required)
- Modified print tests/exam paper (where no additional time is required)
- Test/exam paper printed on coloured paper
- Use of a coloured overlay or filter
- Step-free access
- General extra time for practical exams (e.g. for candidates with mobility issues)
- Rest breaks (e.g. for candidates with Asthma, ME or Hypermobility)
- Use of an adapted instrument
- Minor modifications to exam music for practical exams (e.g. for candidates with physical disabilities)
- Modified or simplified language to be used by the examiner in practical exams
- An exam appointment in the morning or afternoon

2.3 Reasonable adjustment refers to any change made to the parameters of an exam to give a candidate with specific needs fair access. Applications for reasonable adjustments must be accompanied by supporting evidence (see section 5.).

Examples of reasonable adjustments for Exams in Music Performance include:

- Extra time for sight-reading preparation
- Braille/large print/modified print memory test in place of sight-reading
- Aural repetition in place of sight-reading
- Alternative aural tests for candidates with hearing impairment
- Adaptations to the aural tests for candidates unable to speak or sing
- Use of the scale book or lyrics for candidates with processing difficulties

Examples of reasonable adjustments for Graded Exams in Music Theory include:

- Braille/large print/modified print exam paper

1 If a candidate with specific needs requires a morning or afternoon appointment for a practical exam, please visit the Specific Needs pages of ABRSM’s website for instructions on how to request this.
• Extra time
• Use of a scribe or reader

2.4 We do everything we can to provide alternative tests or arrangements for candidates with specific needs, but cannot alter the marking criteria. Where a candidate’s specific needs mean that they cannot fulfil the requirements of a Graded Exam in Music Performance or a diploma exam, they may find that the Performance Assessment is a suitable alternative. Performance Assessment candidates perform a programme of own choice pieces lasting up to 15 minutes. For more information, see www.abrsm.org/performanceassessment.

3. Additional information

3.1 Applicants are welcome to provide any other information before the exam that might be useful for the examiner or invigilator to know, to help the exam run smoothly e.g.:
• If the candidate is particularly anxious in new situations
• If the candidate has tinnitus and is particularly sensitive to notes above a certain range
• If the candidate has physical or verbal tics
• If the candidate has a physical disability (that doesn’t require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment)

4. How do I request access arrangements or reasonable adjustments?

4.1 The entry form has a list of access codes. Each code relates to a specific access requirement. Applicants must select the most relevant access code on the entry form when they make their entry. If there is no appropriate access code, or if more information is needed, a covering letter or email must be sent to us with the exam entry. This should not arrive later than the published closing date. Requests received after this date will not be accepted.

4.2 Please note that the relevant access code must be selected each time an exam entry is made for a candidate with specific needs, regardless of whether access arrangements or reasonable adjustments have been requested for that candidate on a previous occasion. You do not need to re-send supporting evidence for each subsequent entry. However, if there has been any change to the candidate’s specific needs or if there is additional information that would help the exam to run smoothly, this must be submitted with each exam entry.

4.3 Applicants who have questions about access arrangements or reasonable adjustments should contact the Access Coordinator before making an entry. Contact details for the Access Coordinator are listed at the end of this policy.

5. What supporting evidence is required?

5.1 Examples of acceptable supporting evidence are:
• A report from an Educational Psychologist or other suitably qualified assessor
• A letter or email from a Head Teacher or Principal
• A letter or email from a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
• A letter or email from the Disability Support Unit at a Further or Higher Education establishment
• A letter or email from a suitably qualified healthcare professional
5.2 The supporting evidence should:

- Be dated
- State the author’s job title and contact details
- Give the full name and date of birth of the candidate
- Confirm the candidate’s specific needs and include details of any formal assessments
- Where possible, provide details of reasonable adjustments allowed for statutory exams
- Outline the candidate’s usual way of working

5.3 Adult candidates who may not have access to the options above should contact the Access Coordinator to discuss the most appropriate alternative. We are unable to accept JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) forms or confirmation from JCQ of reasonable adjustments as supporting evidence. This is because such documents rarely contain the detail we need to ensure that our provision is appropriate. ABRSM is not currently a member of JCQ.

5.4 Please note that obtaining suitable supporting evidence can take time and should ideally be arranged well in advance of making an exam entry.

6. **When should supporting evidence be submitted?**

6.1 Supporting evidence should be sent by email, and must arrive no later than the published closing date for entries. Where a reasonable adjustment is requested without supporting evidence, the exam will be administered with the adjustment in place, but we will not issue the exam result until the relevant documentation has been received.

6.2 Supporting evidence cannot be accepted by examiners or stewards on the day of the exam.

6.3 Failure to submit appropriate supporting evidence may be considered maladministration in accordance with our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy: [https://gb.abrsm.org/en/policies/malpractice-and-maladministration-policy](https://gb.abrsm.org/en/policies/malpractice-and-maladministration-policy).

7. **Late notice requests for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**

7.1 All access arrangements and reasonable adjustments must be requested by the published closing date for entries. We will not accept requests for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments after the closing date. This is to ensure that there is enough time to make the necessary arrangements.

8. **Changes to entries**

- Applicants who wish to amend their entries after the closing date may do so in line with standard procedures. However, we will not normally be able to transfer access arrangement or reasonable adjustment requests onto the updated entry. In this case, applicants have two choices:
  - To continue without the access arrangement or reasonable adjustment, or
  - To cancel the exam, request a partial refund and re-enter in the next exam session.
8.1 We review each change request on a case by case basis. Where we are able to transfer access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, this does not set a precedent for future exams, and similar requests may not receive a similar decision.

9. Data protection

9.1 We recognise that applicants requesting reasonable adjustments may need to disclose personal and sensitive information about a candidate as part of the entry process. We are committed to handling this information discreetly and confidentially. Our Privacy Policy can be found here: www.abrsm.org/privacypolicy.

9.2 We recommend that applicants send supporting evidence by email to supportingdocuments@abrsm.ac.uk. Supporting evidence should only be sent by post where no other option is available. A photocopy of the original supporting evidence should be sent to:

Access Coordinator
ABRSM
4 London Wall Place
London
EC2Y 5AU

9.3 We are unable to return supporting evidence that has been sent by post and it is strongly recommended that applicants send photocopies and not originals.

9.4 Documents and emails containing supporting evidence are saved on a secure server until the closing date for appeals and are then destroyed a maximum of six months after they are received. We keep the basic details of any approved reasonable adjustments, and brief details of the supporting evidence given, for compliance purposes. This information is kept indefinitely, but records are deleted if the candidate has not taken an exam for five years. The email inbox, server and database have restricted access to a small number of staff directly involved in the administration of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

10. Contact us

10.1 If you have any questions about provisions for candidates with specific needs, the contact details for the Access Coordinator are as follows:

Access Coordinator
ABRSM
4 London Wall Place
London
EC2Y 5AU
T +44 (0)20 7467 7342
E accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk