

## Alternative Assessment Arrangements - FAQs

After discussion with auditors from the **Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA)**, Dollar Academy has confirmed the procedures set out below for processing possible applications to SQA for **Alternative Assessment Arrangements (AAA)**.

These procedures are managed by the Academy's **SQA Co-ordinator**, Dr J M Hendry. They are run by the **Support for Learning Department (SfL)**, headed by Mrs Siobhan Birrell.

The Dollar Academy SQA AAA processes are separate from the main support services provided by SfL, in that the main function of the AAA procedures is to satisfy the quality assurance principles of SQA in maintaining a consistent set of arrangements within the Academy and across all SQA presenting centres.

### **Q1 What are Alternative Assessment Arrangements (AAA)?**

They are changes to the assessment processes laid down on a subject-by-subject basis for each subject and level in the SQA's Conditions and Arrangements. In SQA documents, the combination subject and level is called a Product; for compactness, the same term is used here.

They are requested by the Academy and accepted or rejected by SQA prior to the examination of the subject. As assessment processes vary from Product to Product, alternative arrangements have to be proposed for each candidate in each of his/her subjects. Request has to be made for each year's SQA Diet. The levels of subjects for which the Academy presents candidates are:

- 1 Standard Grade – Credit and General or General and Foundation
- 2 Intermediate 1
- 3 Intermediate 2
- 4 Higher
- 5 Advanced Higher

The main AAA currently used in the Academy are:

- 1 Extra time, usually at the rate of 25%
- 2 Use of a Word Processor
- 3 Use of a Word Processor with extra time
- 4 Use of a Reader with extra time
- 5 Use of a Scribe with extra time
- 6 Enlarged papers
- 7 Coloured overlays
- 8 Coloured illumination
- 9 Transcription of a written script

### **Q2 Who may be eligible for AAA?**

SQA is legally required to ensure that any candidate with a significant educational disability is not disadvantaged by their published assessment arrangements. Disadvantages normally encountered in Dollar Academy can be grouped under three headings:

#### **1 Specific Learning Difficulty (SLD)**

The main SLDs, for Academy candidates for which AAA are sought are:

1. Dyslexia
2. Dysgraphia
3. Dyspraxia

In cases of SLD a series of administrative steps must be followed to apply for AAA– see Q3 below.

#### **2 Medical**

A debilitating medical condition, sensory problems or a lack of dexterity due to physical injury may be compensated by AAA.

#### **3 Language Difficulty**

If a candidate has received the majority of teaching in a language other than English, he/she is accorded the privilege of using a Native Language/English dictionary and extra time to use it to help with translation of questions and answers. The privilege is allowed in all subjects except English and Native Language.

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Any valid language difficulty or medically certificated difficulty is accepted by SQA without the requirement of evidence discussed in Q3 below for SLDs.

As the SQA's assessment procedures are unique to each of their Products, application for AAA must be made for each Product for which a candidate is entered.

Thus, the only circumstance in which AAA agreed for one SQA examination diet may be carried over to another, is when a candidate is re-sitting a Product.

### Q3 Who are involved in the Academy's procedures for SLD AAA?

1 When the subject **Class Teacher** observes a SLD, he/she refers evidence of the problem, together with a note of teaching/learning strategies adopted to help, to the **Head of Department (HoD)** for endorsement.

2 The HoD refers the problem to SfL

3 If SfL diagnoses and confirms a SLD, advice on strategies are discussed with the HoD and Class Teacher; this process of consultation continues throughout the time the pupil studies the subject.

4 Where appropriate, SfL devises AAA for that pupil in that subject, and may ask that the Department implement them in an **Assessment**. This Assessment has to be at the standard of the final examination in the Product, so that the effectiveness of the AAA can be measured.

5 If there is a substantial enhancement of the pupil's achievement, the pupil is invited to accept or reject the proposed AAA.

6 Once the steps 1 to 5 above are carried out, an **Independent Verifier** is asked to audit the procedures.

7 After he has signed off the documents, the **SQA Co-ordinator** applies to SQA for the AAA in the Product.

### Q4 What is meant by "substantial enhancement in attainment"?

Any SQA course assessment can be graded according to the criteria laid down by SQA.

For Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher the Standardised marks, Bands and Awards are:

Band	Grade	Standardised mark
1	A (upper)	85 – 100
2	A (lower)	70 – 84
3	B (upper)	65 – 69
4	B (lower)	60 – 64
5	C (upper)	55 – 59
6	C (lower)	50 – 54
7	D	45 – 49
8	Fail	40 – 44
9	Fail	Less than 40

To show substantial enhancement in attainment, Dollar Academy requires that the assessment with the AAA has shown a Band enhancement of at least two Bands compared with the assessment without AAA.

E.g. a Band 6 with no extra time has to become a grade 4 with extra time.

### Q5 What happens if SLD is not diagnosed?

If SfL conducts diagnostic tests, but does not confirm an SLD, advice on strategies are discussed with the HoD and Class Teacher; this process of consultation continues throughout the time the pupil studies the subject.

No further steps are carried out towards requesting AAA from SQA.