



Belfast Model School for Girls

Access to Assessment Policy Statement (for BCS awards)

Achievement for All

The Belfast Model School for Girls seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all candidates, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment and that any reasonable adjustments for candidates preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification.

The school will make reasonable requests to BCS for adjustments to be approved for an individual candidate. The decision will be based on the individual needs of the candidate as assessed by suitably qualified professionals. In promoting this policy, the Belfast Model School for Girls aims to ensure that a candidate is not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates and their certificate accurately reflects their attainment.

Candidates who may require reasonable adjustments

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. The following individuals will be considered for reasonable adjustments:

Candidates who have:

- a permanent physical impairment, e.g. cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis.
- behavioural, emotional, social needs, e.g. chronic depression, autism.
- a sensory impairment, e.g. hard of hearing.
- specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia.
- a temporary illness, injury or indisposition.
- English as their second or additional language.

This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some candidate needs may fall within more than one of the categories set out above.

Reasonable adjustments which may be requested by the Belfast Model School for Girls include:

- Allocation of additional time
- Support of a reader
- Support of a scribe/ amanuensis
- Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter
- Support of a personal assistant
- Use of assistive technology
- Rest breaks
- Use of appropriate assessment locations
- Use of a bilingual dictionary
- Re-sits (in the case of temporary illness /injury)

Details of Reasonable Adjustments

Allocation of Additional Time

The school will follow BCS guidelines in this regard.

Support of a Reader

A reader is defined as a person who will read to the candidate any part of the assessment materials or any part of the candidate's answers. Candidates with a physical impairment, a visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty may require the support of a reader.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure the use of third party support does not give the candidate an unfair advantage or indeed disadvantage the candidate.

Support of a Scribe/Amanuensis.

A scribe is someone who writes down a candidate's dictated answers to questions. Such support may be required by candidates who have a physical impairment, a visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure the use of third party support does not give the candidate an unfair advantage or indeed disadvantage the candidate.

Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter for Hearing Impaired Candidates.

The role of the interpreter is to converse when asked to do so by the candidate, to ensure that the candidate has properly understood the instructions and questions. The role may include saying the word or phrase, rephrasing, using sign language, or the use of writing.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure the use of third party support does not give the candidate an unfair advantage or indeed disadvantage the candidate.

Support of a Personal Assistant

Some candidates may require someone for help with personal assistance during the assessment. A candidate, for example, with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter. Such help should maintain the effectiveness of the assessment giving no unfair advantage.

It is the responsibility of the Centre Manager to ensure the use of third party support does not give the candidate an unfair advantage or indeed disadvantage the candidate.

Use of Assistive Technology

Where possible the candidate should use their own equipment. Such equipment should be verified by the school in order to ensure there is no hidden information or access to information which would give unfair advantage to that candidate. If their own equipment cannot be used, assistive technology which mirrors that of the candidate ought to be provided. The list below is indicative of the most common assistive technologies currently available. It is used as a guideline only.

Hardware

- Alternative keyboards and mice, including:
Keyboards with Braille labelled keyboards or home-row key indicators;
Joysticks/ trackerballs/ rollerballs/ mouse keys on keyboard;
Mouth stick,
- Braille display,
- Switches (alternative input to keyboard and mouse, used by individuals with physical disability),
- Large monitors,
- Headphones and volume adjustment for use with voice output/input software packages.

Software

- Operating System Accessibility features such as Sticky Keys, Filter Keys, Mouse speed adjustments, etc,
- Screen magnification software,
- Screen reading software (supporting users with a visual impairment or dyslexia),
- Voice recognition software.

Use of bi-lingual dictionaries and translators

Bi-lingual dictionaries may be allowed for candidates whose first language is not English.

Use of appropriate assessment locations

Assessment may be carried out in various locations depending on candidates' needs. Every location must allow for access by a disabled person and provide appropriate disabled facilities, if required. The school will submit the Off-Site Assessment Form along with the standard Access to Assessment request form, before the assessment takes place.

Rest breaks

Some candidates who may be disadvantaged by specific set times may require breaks. The school will approach BCS to request rest breaks, the duration of which will not be deducted from the assessment time.

Breaks during an assessment will be supervised and the duration of the break agreed with the assessment invigilator. The candidate must not discuss the assessment with any third party during a break period, nor refer to books or any other source of help.

Temporary illness/ injury

If a candidate suffers temporary illness or indisposition at the time of assessment, a re-sit is permitted. The Centre Manager will notify BCS in writing, with supporting evidence, of the circumstances including dates and venues.

Other reasonable adjustments

The reasonable adjustments listed above are not intended to be comprehensive. Others will be considered by the school in line with the BCS 'Access to Assessment Policy Statement'.

The Belfast Model School for Girls will defer to the BCS Guidance to Centres on the use of Approved Reasonable Adjustments when implementing this policy and will follow BCS procedures for requesting reasonable adjustments for candidates.