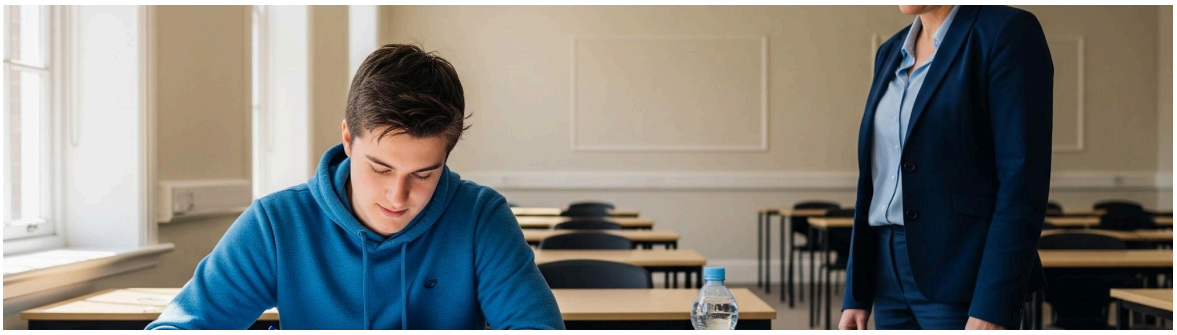


Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): NZQA Special Assessment Conditions

This page answers common questions about the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) for NCEA. If you can't find the answer you are looking for, please contact the MAC SAC Coordinator, Nicola Holmes, or the Principal's Nominee Helen Figueira (email addresses at the end of the doc).

KEY POINTS:

1. **Purpose and Eligibility:** NZQA Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) are provisions for students with long-term diagnosed sensory, physical, medical, or learning difficulties, or temporary impairments, to remove barriers to NCEA assessment without giving an unfair advantage.
2. **Application Process:** Students discuss eligibility with teachers, who contact the SAC coordinator (Nicola Holmes). Applications require professional evidence or school-conducted testing (like the "Exact" test) to determine the nature of support needed.
3. **SAC Allocation:** NZQA analyses the evidence/test results to determine the specific conditions granted. Students cannot choose their allocation; they must only use the conditions approved by NZQA, which may include a Reader, Writer, Computer Use, Extra Time, or Separate Accommodation.
4. **Implementation of Conditions:** MAC arranges conditions for both internal and external assessments. Students must communicate their required provisions, and teachers book services (like a reader/writer) in advance for each assessment.
5. **Specific Allocations:** students can use all, some, or none of their allocated conditions for any given assessment. However some assessments won't be eligible for certain conditions (e.g. no special computer use for a digital exam / no extra time if the exam is already longer than the NZQA allocation)

What are Special Assessment Conditions?

NZQA Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) are provisions put in place to assist students who have a long-term, diagnosed sensory, physical, medical, or learning difficulty, or who have a temporary impairment, to meet the requirements of assessment for NCEA. The conditions are designed to remove barriers to assessment without giving the student an unfair advantage.

Who is eligible for SAC?

Eligibility is generally for students with a professionally diagnosed sensory, physical, medical, or learning difficulty that meets the NZQA criteria. Specific evidence is required to support an application. Temporary impairments (e.g., a broken arm) may also qualify for temporary SAC provisions.

How can students apply for SAC?

To apply for SAC, students should discuss their eligibility with their teachers. The teacher can contact the SAC coordinator (Nicola Holmes) to request some testing to determine eligibility.

What documentation is needed for an application?

If a student has professional evidence from a qualified specialist (e.g., educational psychologist, audiologist, medical specialist) detailing the condition and how it impacts their ability to be assessed, MAC will send this information to NZQA.
If a student doesn't have any existing evidence, MAC will carry out an online test called Exact which will assess various aspects of the student's learning, and determine any areas where they might need extra support (word recognition, reading comprehension accuracy and speed, spelling, typing and handwriting speed). The results will then be sent to NZQA to determine the specific conditions that will be useful to the student.

What kinds of testing can MAC do?

MAC can carry out an Exact test. This is an online assessment which rates a student's learning capabilities against those of the general population in the same age range. It assesses word recognition, reading comprehension accuracy and speed, spelling, typing and handwriting speed. If students are significantly below the expected level for their age range in any of these areas MAC can apply for SAC conditions.

MAC is also able to use a tool called Dyslexia Screener. This will indicate whether a student has dyslexic tendencies, but it is not a diagnostic tool. For a learning difficulty diagnosis students will need to seek advice from a medical professional.

Can students choose their SAC allocation?

No. NZQA will analyse the test results / application and determine which conditions they allocate. Some students are only allocated one condition, some are allocated some or all of the conditions. Students can only use their allocated conditions. E.g. if a student has been granted a reader but not a writer, they cannot use the reader to write for them.

The SAC coordinator will make allocations really clear to students when NZQA grants them.

How long does the application process take?

The school submits the application to NZQA. The processing time can vary, but applications should be submitted by the school well in advance of external examinations - ideally by the start of Term 1, or as soon as a need is identified.

Is there a cost to apply for SAC?

There are no fees for applying for SAC.

SAC Provisions and Support

What types of SAC provisions are available?

Provisions may include Reader, Writer, Computer Use, separate accommodation, or extra time. The specific condition(s) granted will depend on the diagnosed need and its impact on assessment, as approved by NZQA.

Provision Type	Description
Reader	An adult reads the examination paper or assessment task to the student
Writer	An adult transcribes the student's answers (dictated)
Computer Use	Student uses a computer for writing or typing responses
Extra Time	Additional time allocated to complete the assessment
Separate Accommodation	A quiet, separate room for the assessment to minimise distractions

How does a student know if SAC will work for them?

If a student has been tested and granted SAC by NZQA it is likely it will work for them. However, some students find it difficult to get used to using a reader / writer. Using a reader / writer is an acquired skill which is useful to practice. A good way for students to get used to it, is by installing an extension on their device such as Google Read and Write, which provides a similar experience to a reader / writer. Some instructions for downloading and using that can be found here. Google Read & Write can be used in internal (not external) assessments whether a student has been allocated SAC conditions or not. Google Read and Write is free for all students to use on their school Google account.

When a student is granted SAC, how will it work for their assessments?

MAC will implement the granted conditions for both internal and external assessments. Every time they have an internal assessment the student should discuss with their teacher which conditions they wish to use and ensure they book a reader / writer well in advance if required. For literacy / numeracy co-requisite exams and externals, students will be asked to decide well in advance which of their allocated conditions they wish to use for each exam.

If a student changes their mind about their SAC requirements for an assessment. What should they do?

If a student has requested a reader / writer for an exam but no longer requires it, they need to let their teacher / Nicola Holmes know as soon as possible, so that the reader / writer can be cancelled. MAC employs members of the community to provide this service, so it is a waste of money and people's time if they arrive at the kura and are not used. It is bad practice for students to decide on the day of assessment that they no longer need the support.

If a student declines the offer of support and later decides they need it, they must ask their teacher / Nicola Holmes as soon as possible. Very close to the exam this may not always be possible but we will try our best. If a student decides this on the day of the assessment it is unlikely a reader / writer will be available.

If a student is experiencing an issue with their SAC provision during an assessment. What should they do?

The student should ask the exam supervisor or reader / writer to contact Nicola Holmes or Helen Figueira immediately who should hopefully be able to resolve the issue. If the student feels unable to do that during the exam they must let us know immediately afterwards so we can document the issue on their exam paper before it is submitted to NZQA.

Use of different SAC supports

A student has been allocated Extra Time - how much more time will they get?

Extra Time is allocated at 10 minutes extra per hour of exam for internal assessments. For external exams students are allowed 10 minutes extra per standard / paper.
For the literacy and numeracy exams there is only one standard being taken and MAC allocates a 2 hour slot for the exam, hence no extra time should be required (however the student can stay in the exam room as long as they need).

For external exams, all exams are allocated a 3 hour slot. For exams where a student is sitting only one or two papers, each is due to take an hour, so the extra time is included within the 3 hours. The only time they will have more time over the 3 hours is if they are sitting 3 papers, in which case they will get 3 hours 30 minutes. The student must write on all 3 papers.

A student has been allocated computer use - how does that work?

Most assessments are now digital so this allocation won't be relevant a lot of the time. For digital exams the student's conditions are the same as everyone else. For a written exam they will be able to type up the answers to the questions on a blank Word document. This will be

sent to the supervisor at the end of the exam and printed out so it can be sent to be marked. At the top of each page in Word the student must put specific details, it's best to set this up as a header:

- **Internals:** the student's name, standard name and number
- **Externals:** the student's NSN number (not their name), the standard number and name

Sometimes students with computer use may be allocated a separate room if it is deemed they will distract students who are not on a device.

A student has been allocated a reader / writer - what can / can't they do?

A student might be allocated only a reader, only a writer, or both. This is a person who will sit with the student to do the exam in a separate room.

- The person cannot be the student's teacher, family member or friend
- **Readers** - they will read only the text on the exam paper. They can't interpret the question, or explain words or concepts. They can repeat the text as many times as the student wishes. They can't help the student with the answers. They will wait while the student writes / types their answers and can read these back to the student.
- **Writers** - they will write / type the answers that are dictated to them. They can't tell the student what to write or write their own words. In most exams, unless these skills are being specifically tested (literacy writing), they will use their own spelling and punctuation skills. For Literacy Writing assessments the student needs to tell the writer when to use punctuation (capital letters, full stops, new paragraphs etc). The student may need to adapt their speaking speed to ensure the writer has time to take down all the words.

Students cannot choose your reader / writer, but if a student has a negative experience with one then we need to know so we don't match them with the student in the future.

A student has been allocated separate accommodation - what will that look like?

Separate accommodation is typically given to students who experience extreme anxiety around exam situations. Students will be allocated a smaller room with only a few students (up to around 8). There will be a supervisor sitting in the exam room to ensure exam conditions and help with any problems. The supervisor cannot help students understand the exam or with the answers. Normal exam conditions apply such as leaving bag / jacket / phone etc outside the exam room.

SAC Review

Are there any resources available to understand student's provisions?

The following resources are available for further information:

- NZQA Special Assessment Conditions page
- MAC Slides explaining SAC
- Instructions for installing and using Google Read and Write

Useful email addresses:

- Nicola Holmes - SAC coordinator - holmesn@mtaspiring.school.nz
- Dan Frost - SENCO - frostd@mtaspiring.school.nz
- Helen Figueira - Principal's Nominee - figueirah@mtaspiring.school.nz

How does a student request a review of their SAC provisions?

If a student feels their granted provisions are insufficient or no longer appropriate, they can discuss a request for review from Nicola Holmes. A new review application will require updated professional evidence / testing.