



Summary of the Reasonable Accommodations to Certificate Exams (RACE) for students with Developmental Coordination Disorder / Dyspraxia

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What is RACE?

RACE stands for Reasonable Accommodations for Certificate Exams. These accommodations are given to certain students sitting the state exams in order to enable them to achieve their potential, by lessening the impact of a disability on those exams. The following summary is designed to help parents of students with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD/Dyspraxia). The accommodations relating to other difficulties e.g. a hearing or visual impairment aren't discussed in this document and if you need more information on these issues please refer to the following website: www.examinations.ie.

Reasonable accommodations for students with DCD/Dyspraxia may be applied for on the grounds of one of the following two routes:

- a) **Physical Difficulty:** includes students with dyspraxia/DCD or motor dysgraphia. A physical difficulty is also taken to include ADHD, any medical, sensory, mental health and behavioural difficulties as well as other physical difficulties.
- a) **Learning Difficulty** for students with a co-existing Specific Learning Disability such as Dyslexia.

You can apply under both routes for different accommodations e.g. a spelling and grammar waiver under the learning difficulty route if your child has an issue such as Dyslexia, and use of laptop under the physical difficulty route if your child has DCD/Dyspraxia.

If your child is applying on the grounds of a Physical Difficulty, they may be eligible for the following accommodations:

- a) Standard word processor, voice activated word processor, or other writing accommodation such as a recording device. A candidate approved for the use of a Word Processor on physical difficulty grounds must have the spell-check and auto-correct turned off. Such candidates can still demonstrate proficiency in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

- b) Scribes are only given in very exceptional circumstances i.e. if the student has physical difficulties which mean they can't type and also have speech problems which would make use of a recording device impossible for them. Scribes can also be given for particular subjects that can't be typed e.g. maths.
- c) Helper in the practical examinations
- d) Use of drawing aids such as drafting machines, drawing boards, parallel motion boards and smaller drawing sheets in the subjects Technical Graphics, DCG, Construction Studies, Materials Technology (Wood) or Technology,
- e) Junior Certificate Home Economics only – exemption from the practical and/or project

If your child is applying on the grounds of the learning difficulty, they may be eligible for the following accommodations:

- a) A reader to read the examination papers, or to provide assistance with reading, without elaboration or explanation of the text
- b) Word-processor or other writing accommodation (recording device)
- c) Scribes are only given in very exceptional circumstances i.e. if the student has physical difficulties which mean they can't type and also have speech problems which would make use of a recording device impossible for them.
- d) Waiver from the assessment of spelling, grammar and punctuation in language subjects
- e) Exam Reading pen

Does the actual certificate you get with the results from Junior or Leaving Certificate show that your child got accommodations?

The certificate doesn't indicate that the student typed instead of handwrote their paper. It will only show up on the certificate when a part(s) of an examination have been waived, so that the purpose of the examination regarding those parts has not been met, or the method of examining has been significantly altered. This usually applies to waivers for spelling and/or grammar and to those who use a recording device or scribe. In approving accommodations for a candidate, the letter of decision will inform the candidate of the content of any such explanatory note in relation to the subject(s) concerned. The explanatory note is usually as follows:

“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and written punctuation elements” (This will apply in the case of English)

“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and some grammatical elements” (This will apply in the case of all other language subjects)

In the Junior Cycle subject Home Economics, a candidate may be granted an exemption from the project; from the practical test; or from both. Depending on the exemption(s) granted, the grade obtained by a candidate in this subject will be accompanied by an

explanatory note:

“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the project element”

AND/OR

“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the practical element”

Now that you know what is available through RACE you need to know what the criteria are to receive these accommodations.

Criteria for an application for RACE on the basis of a physical difficulty:

This is the best route for the student with DCD/Dyspraxia who needs to type or use a recording device to produce their answers. This physical category also includes medical, sensory and mental health difficulties; behavioural conditions, ADHD as well as other physical difficulties.

The student will need to meet the following conditions to have accommodations for handwriting e.g. to type or use a recording device:

- The student must have had ongoing issues with handwriting over time;
- There needs to be evidence of need identified by the school and the appropriate interventions put in place throughout their schooling e.g. use of a laptop;
- Their ability to write legibly **and/or** at a reasonable speed under examination conditions is significantly impaired;
- **The writing speed needs to be less than 12 word per minute** if applying on the basis on slow handwriting speed.
- If the accommodation is being sought on the grounds of illegible handwriting (and not speed) the written work would need to be effectively illegible i.e. to the extent that an examiner would have significant difficulty in deciphering it. Legibility of handwritten samples completed under examination conditions are used by the school to demonstrate this.
- Please note that candidates who have been granted the use of assistive technology by the Department of Education must still meet all the relevant guidelines in the same way as all other candidates. They do not have an automatic right to use same in examinations.

Application for use of a recording device on the basis of a physical difficulty:

- The use of a Recording Device means that they can't be assessed for spelling, written punctuation and grammatical elements in any language subjects.
- The grades obtained by a candidate in any language subject taken by him/her will be accompanied by an explanatory note, which will read as follows; *“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and written punctuation elements”* (This will apply in the case of English)
“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and some

grammatical elements” (This will apply in the case of all other language subjects)

- The State Exams Commission (SEC) does not meet the costs associated with purchase or use of digital media (removable USBs; SD cards; CDs) or cassette tapes.

Application for use of a scribe on the basis of a physical difficulty:

- A candidate who is unable to write or effectively unable to write may be granted the assistance of a scribe where a physical difficulty is combined with a speech difficulty which makes the use of a Word Processor or Recording Device unsuitable.
- The use of a scribe may also be appropriate where a Word Processor or Recording Device would be impossible or very difficult in the case of a specific examination (e.g. Mathematics.)
- In the Leaving Certificate subjects Technology, Engineering, Construction Studies and In Junior Certificate subjects Technology, Materials Technology (Wood) and Metalwork (Materials and Technology), candidates are only allowed to use the scribe for questions or parts of questions which require a written response. The scribe cannot under any circumstances produce sketches and/or drawings in any question in these examinations. Labelling and annotations are considered to be inherent parts of these diagrams and must also be the candidate’s own unaided work. A scribe is not permitted in the subjects Leaving Certificate Design and Communications Graphics (DCG) or Junior Certificate Technical Graphics. In the subject Leaving Certificate Japanese, a scribe can be used only for questions to be answered in English or Irish and NOT for questions to be answered in Japanese.
- Access to a scribe will preclude the assessment of spelling, written punctuation and grammatical elements in any language subjects. Accordingly, the grades obtained by the candidate in any language subject will be accompanied by the same explanatory note as used in the case of the recording device

Application for use of a helper for practical subjects on the basis of a physical difficulty:

- Where a candidate is granted the assistance of a helper in the practical subject examinations, this person may carry out general ‘housekeeping’ type duties e.g. lifting and carrying utensils and equipment.
- The helper must not give factual help to the candidate or offer any suggestion regarding what has to be undertaken and must carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so will cause a health and safety hazard.
- The helper is furthermore not permitted to carry out any task that is part of what is being assessed. For example, the helper may assist a candidate in clamping a piece of work, but may not assist them in applying any tool to the piece.

Application for exemption from a practical test and/or project in Junior Certificate Home Economics on the basis of a physical difficulty:

- In the Junior Certificate subject Home Economics, a candidate may be granted an exemption from the project; from the practical test; or from both. Depending on the exemption(s) granted, the grade obtained by a candidate in this subject will be

accompanied by an explanatory note, or notes, as follows: *“all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the project element” AND/OR “all parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the practical element”*

- Exemptions **are not** available from the practical components or projects in any other subject, nor are waivers from any of the practical elements within those components. Candidates who are not able to complete these will forfeit the relevant marks.

Application for use of a Drawing Aids on the basis of a physical difficulty

- Use of drafting machines, drawing boards, parallel motion boards and smaller drawing sheets can be approved in the subjects Technical Graphics, DCG, Construction Studies Materials Technology (Wood) and Technology.

Criteria for an application for RACE on the basis of a learning difficulty:

This summary is targeted at accommodations for students with difficulties related to writing, please consult the RACE guidelines relating to ‘readers’ should you need more information in this area)

Applications for assistive technology are different when applying under this route and this route is only recommended to students who have other difficulties co-existing with the physical problems inherent in Developmental Coordination Disorder (Dyspraxia) i.e. if they also have a learning difficulty such as Dyslexia. There is no longer a need for a psychological report in order to meet the ‘learning difficulty’ criteria of the RACE application process. All of the required testing to establish a ‘learning difficulty’ can be carried out in the school. The results from any attainment tests required (i.e. standardised tests in reading; spelling; writing speed) must be obtained within the twelve months prior to the date of application, if applying in this route but this does not apply for the physical disability route. The required counts of error rates in reading and spelling may only be obtained from assessments carried out by the school. Error rates from non-school sources can’t be allowed to override the school’s count of error rates when you are assessing eligibility in line with the ‘learning difficulty’ criteria.

Application for use of a word processor or recording device on the basis of a learning difficulty:

In the case of a candidate whose ability to answer examination questions in writing is significantly impaired due to the speed of his or her writing, coupled with spelling, grammar and punctuation difficulties, the following criteria must be met:

- A standard score of 85 or less on an approved test of spelling

AND

- Spelling/grammar/punctuation error rate of 8% or more in scripts written in the language of the school under examination conditions

AND

- Speed of writing of less than 12 words per minute

Frequently Asked Questions:

Can my child have Additional Time in exams?

Additional time in which to complete the written examinations (not to be confused with rest breaks) is not an accommodation that can be sanctioned in its own right under the RACE scheme. The following section describes the limited circumstances attached to the award of additional time in the examinations. Other than in Leaving Certificate Irish, English, History and Geography, additional time, at a rate of ten extra minutes per scheduled hour, or part thereof, of each examination paper, may be provided to candidates in the following circumstances:

- Candidates for whom the use of a scribe has been sanctioned - as there is a time overhead in dictation and otherwise in dealing with a scribe.
- Candidates who meet the eligibility criteria for the use of a recording device or a word processor but who are unable to make use of these aids under examination conditions e.g. a device has broken.
- Candidates with a visual impairment.

Regardless of the circumstances or combination of circumstances, additional time is limited to a maximum of ten minutes per scheduled hour, or part thereof, of examination to a maximum of thirty minutes per examination. In the Leaving Certificate subjects Irish, English, History and Geography additional time is limited to ten minutes per the whole examination.

What are Rest Breaks?

Schools have discretion, to grant rest breaks or rest periods, not exceeding twenty minutes per examination, to candidates with physical and/or medical conditions. The following rules apply:

- Candidates are not permitted to read, write or complete any other examination related activity during the rest break — rest breaks do not represent additional time in which to complete the examination.
- Based on their needs candidates may take one or more rest breaks during each examination.
- The total of the rest break(s) granted by the school must not exceed twenty minutes per examination.
- The clock is effectively stopped and the time is added at the end of the examination.
- The candidate will be accommodated in the main examination centre and should only be in a special examination centre if that has been approved for another reason.
- Rest breaks must be supervised.

Can my child do their exam in a separate room?

These rooms are called Special Examinations Centre i.e. doing the exam in a room in the school other than the larger room where the other students do the exams)

Individual examination centres are only allowed in very specific circumstances as follows:

- For candidates who are recording their answers (i.e. using a scribe or recording device).
- For candidates who need the full use of a reader (as opposed to reading assistance).
- For candidates who have a contagious medical condition.

Shared examination centres can be granted for students who:

- Use of a word processor or other aids.
- Approved use of a reader, but only requiring limited reading assistance (occasional words or phrases to be read to them); in this scenario, it will be possible for a small number of candidates requiring reading assistance to share a reader in a shared special centre established for this specific purpose.
- Non-disruptive emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Non-contagious medical conditions.

Can my child use a special chair or foot rest?

- Yes as long as you can provide this yourself or it's available in the school already.
- As long as it doesn't disrupt other students or have implications in relation to space for other students.

General Guidelines when applying on behalf of students with DCD/Dyspraxia:

- Accommodations that were provided at Junior Certificate will be provided again at Leaving Certificate subject to confirmation by the school authority of an identified and continuing need.
- If your child didn't apply for accommodations at Junior Certificate they can still apply for them for their Leaving Certificate.
- The school will keep all reports and evidence of your child's disability /difficulties and these will be available for inspection by the State Exams Commission should they be required.
- Evidence of a student's eligibility for accommodations to exams will also include details of their history of support and intervention provided through their schooling e.g. learning support and resource hours.
- If your child isn't granted accommodations an Independent Appeals process is offered and your school will advise you on this. This appeal is made through your school. Those unhappy with the outcome of the Appeal will have recourse to the offices of the Ombudsman or Ombudsman for Children.
- Your school will let you know when to apply for RACE and will send in the application (signed by you) on behalf of your child.
- Deadlines for application can be found on the following website: www.examinations.ie

This information is a summary of the RACE guidelines which can be accessed from www.examinations.ie

Dyspraxia Ireland wishes you and your child all the very best with state exams. We hope you found this guide helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr Dorothy Armstrong', written in a cursive style.

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