

# Access Arrangements Guidance for test centres

# 1. General information about access arrangements

## What are access arrangements?

Access arrangements are individually assessed alterations to tests designed to support test takers with physical or learning disabilities.

## Do access arrangements make any difference to the content of the test or to the way it is marked?

No. Access arrangements are adjustments which are made to the physical environment of the test centre or to the format of the test which allow test takers with disabilities easier access to the test. They do not change the content of the test or the way it's marked.

## Who decides which access arrangements are appropriate for a test taker?

It is the responsibility of the test centre to make an assessment of the specific needs of the test taker, and to determine which access arrangements are appropriate. Section 2 of this document lists the arrangements that are permitted for PTE General and Young Learners tests.

## Do I need to get permission from Pearson Language Tests (PLT) before telling the test taker?

For some access arrangements you do not need to seek permission from PLT before informing the test taker, however the test taker **must** have provided current medical evidence. Please see section 2.1 for details.

For all other access arrangements you must seek permission from PLT before informing the test taker. Please see section 2.2 for details.

## Important information about applying for access arrangements

- ❖ All applications must be made by the centre and endorsed by the Head of Centre and submitted to Pearson Language Tests by the deadline date for doing so (a list of the deadline dates can be found in the PTE General and Young Learners Administration Guide);
- ❖ Centres are required to apply as early as possible in order to allow approval/refusal prior to the test taker being entered;
- ❖ Approval for each Access Arrangement application is considered on a case by case basis;
- ❖ Test takers may not be able to have the Access Arrangement requested if the application is received after the deadline date;
- ❖ Access Arrangement applications should reflect the test taker's normal way of working, e.g. using a word processor, unless such arrangement would affect the integrity of the assessment;
- ❖ Evidence will need to be provided by the test taker/centre in order to support the application;
- ❖ Access arrangements will not be granted where those arrangements compromise the integrity of the test or give the test taker an unfair advantage;
- ❖ Centres will be notified by letter (electronic or hardcopy) of the outcome of the applications.

## 2. Access arrangements permitted

### 2.1 Arrangements permitted by the centre

In this section you will find the arrangements that can be offered to test takers without prior consultation with Pearson Language Tests.

Current medical evidence confirming physical/mental impairment or other ill health must be available in the centre and available to Pearson Language Tests on request, but does not have to be supplied to PLT in order to grant the access arrangements. These documents should be no more than 2 years old.

Further information on how the following arrangements permitted by the centre can be applied must be sought from Pearson Language Tests.

#### Centres may permit:

Up to maximum 25% extra time

- It may be appropriate to grant less than the maximum extra time;
- Evidence of need in the normal working arrangements for the test taker should be taken into account;
- More than 25% extra time may be permitted following application to Pearson Language Tests.

Supervised rest breaks

- Supervised rest breaks may be considered an alternative or an addition to extra time;
- The supervised rest break is not included in any extra time allowance.

Separate invigilation

- Centres may permit a test taker to take the test under separate invigilation if there is a pressing need to do so;
- For alternative accommodation on other sites, applications must be made to PLT as the movement of test papers is involved.

Coloured overlays, low vision aids, amplification equipment

- Centres may permit devices of the type which are normally used by the test taker and which do not have any bearing on the test;
- This does not include any reading pens which read to the test taker and define the word, electronic translators or any other computer software for which permission has not been granted;
- Centres must consult PLT about any new technology which might invalidate the test objectives.

Transcripts\*

- Transcripts may be used where a test taker's handwriting is illegible or so difficult to read that it would be beneficial for an examiner to be able to refer to a transcript of the test taker's work for clarification;
- The transcript may be handwritten, typed or word processed.

Prompters\*\*

- A prompter may be permitted where the test taker has little or no sense of time, or is affected by an obsessive compulsive disorder which leads them to keep revising a question rather than moving on to other questions;

- A prompter must not speak to the test taker, give factual help or offer suggestions, or communicate in any other way other than to remind the test taker to move on to the next question by tapping on the desk or the arm.

\* Transcripts must be produced by a member of the centre's staff who is familiar with the test taker's handwriting.

\* A copy of the transcript cover sheet must be completed and securely attached to the front of the test taker's test paper. No other documentation should be attached.

\*\* Prompters should not normally be the test taker's own subject teacher. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the test taker be used as a prompter.

## 2.2 Access arrangements to be approved by PLT

In this section you will find the arrangements that must be approved by Pearson Language Tests before they can be implemented at the centre.

Current medical evidence confirming physical/mental impairment or other ill health must be provided to Pearson Language Tests with access arrangement requests. These documents should be no more than 2 years old.

PLT will not automatically agree to all access arrangements requested, particularly where they conflict with test criteria. In such cases PLT will advise of alternative arrangements that can be provided if appropriate.

Further information on how the following arrangements can be applied by the centre will be provided upon approval of request from Pearson Language Tests.

### Enlarged papers

- A paper enlarged to A3 size can be produced when applications are made by the deadline. These papers are not produced automatically.

### Readers\*

- Use of a reader involves reading the whole paper (with the exception of reading components) to the test taker, or reading only some of the questions if the test taker requests;
- **A reader is not permitted during the reading components of the paper.** A test taker who would normally be eligible for a reader but is not permitted during the reading components may apply for an additional time allowance for this component section.

### Scribes\*

- Use of a scribe in written tests, but not in oral tests, writes down or word processes a test taker's dictated answers to the questions. If a test taker dictates answers onto a tape, the Centre must produce a hardcopy;
- **A scribe is not permitted during the writing components of the paper.** A test taker who would normally be eligible for a scribe but is not permitted during the writing components may apply for an additional time allowance for this component section.

### Practical assistants\*

- A practical assistant carries out practical tasks, such as turning a page in the answer booklet or holding a ruler, at the request of a test taker whose manual dexterity or physical co-ordination are at levels below what is normal for most people;

- The test taker will not be credited with marks for any skill that has been performed by the practical assistant.

#### Word processors

- Word Processors may be used by test takers whose disability/learning difficulty either impairs their hand written communication or renders their handwriting illegible as evidenced by a diagnostic or medical report.

\* The same person may act as, scribe and practical assistant as long as permission has been given for all three arrangements.

\* A copy of the appropriate cover sheet for scribe and/or practical assistant must be completed and securely attached to the front of the test taker's test paper. No other documentation should be attached.

\* The Head of Centre/Examinations Officer should ensure that readers, scribes and practical assistants are acceptable and responsible adults, familiar with the subject matter being tested and have worked with the test taker before the test.

\* A relative, friend or peer of the test taker must not act as reader, scribe or practical assistant.

## Contact us

For further information or to return completed access arrangement forms please contact:

Address: Pearson Language Tests  
Operations Team  
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London  
WC2R 0RL  
United Kingdom

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