



From: Mr Dario Pirotta  
Director, MATSEC Support Unit

Through: Mr Gaetano Bugeja  
Director, Department of Curriculum Management

To: College Principals  
Heads of School

Subject: SEC Vocational Subjects – Access Arrangements for Application Criteria

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The MATSEC Support Unit would like to bring the following to your attention:

### **Access Arrangements for the Vocational Practical Assessment**

The directions below have been issued by the ADSC in response to a query raised by a number of teachers assessing the Vocational subjects. They asked whether the access arrangements granted for the controlled assessment should be made available during practical assessments.

In principle, access arrangements must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor give the learner an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same assessments. Therefore access arrangements should not compromise the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being assessed.

The following access arrangements are given to most applicants with different conditions:

- **Extra time:** for students who have literacy difficulties, coordination difficulties, visual impairment, hearing impairment, medical conditions that affects students' working speed, and others.
- **Reader in non-language subjects:** for students with severe literacy difficulties.
- **Prompter, supervised rest breaks and a room with few students:** for students who have attention and concentration difficulties, coordination difficulties and others.

In the majority of vocational assessments, the access arrangements awarded will be available during the practical. However, there are some important exceptions where the competence assessed would be invalidated if an adjustment was made. In particular:

- **Extra time** that is usually given to students who have difficulties to access print material (e.g. those with literacy difficulties) should not be permitted during an examination of an application criteria where practical skills are being assessed e.g. mixing ingredients during



cooking assessment (hospitality); handling of patients (Health and Social Care); installation of software (IT).

- **Rest breaks** that are usually given to students with attention difficulties should not be given during the assessment of an application criteria.
- The **Reader** who is assisting the student should only read the instructions on the assignment brief.
- A **communicator** should simplify the rubric of the carrier language in the paper without simplifying the technical terms or the text that the candidate is expected to process.

There are subject specific issues relating to assessment criteria where the teachers may need to seek particular advice from MATSEC. For such cases please contact the MATSEC Support Unit on 2340 2814/5/6 or by email on [matsec@um.edu.mt](mailto:matsec@um.edu.mt)