

ADAPTING EXAMS

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects an individual's ability to communicate, and to organise information. Exams usually require students to communicate and organise information while under some time-pressure. This may be inappropriate for a student with ASD. Schools are required by law to make reasonable adjustments to the ways that they organise for the teaching and assessment of students with disabilities, where appropriate. Therefore it may be appropriate to arrange an alternative method of assessment. For information about making adjustments to VCE and NAPLAN, see the bottom of this page.

In some cases, it may be considered appropriate/necessary to conduct an exam for assessment. Below is a list of some adjustments that may be made to exams for students with ASD. It may be appropriate to implement several of these adjustments in combination. Consider discussing various adjustments with the student in advance, and allowing the student to have some input into the design of assessment tasks. Supports which are provided during regular classroom instruction are generally appropriate for use in exam situations.

Some examples of possible adaptation are:

Providing the student with breaks. You may like to schedule breaks or give the student "break cards" that they can use to request a break. Be aware the student will first need to practise using break cards in a low-stress environment, with support.

Providing one question at a time. Give the student the question, allow them as much time as they need to answer the question, and when they are ready for the next question, they may indicate this using an agreed method.

Providing each question in many formats. For example, allow the student to read the question, allow processing time, then read the question to the student.

Allowing the student to type their responses to questions rather than write them.

Allowing the student to speak their responses to questions (these can be scribed by a teacher or recorded with a device).

Providing each question on a separate piece of paper and providing the student with a "finished box" and checklist that they can tick off as they complete each answer.

Allowing the student to speak or make noise during the exam.

Providing the student with graphic organisers to support them in constructing answers.

Encouraging the student to verify with a teacher that they understand a question before they form a response.

Providing the student with fidget toys, earplugs/headphones or other sensory supports.

Providing the student with motivators and positive reinforcement for staying on-task.

Allowing the student as much time as they need.

This list of adjustments is adapted from Kaweski, W. 2011 *Teaching Adolescents with Autism: Practical Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom*, Corwin, California

About Autism Spectrum Disorder

Teaching and Learning

Social Skills and Behaviour

Amaze is the peak body for Autism Spectrum Disorder in Victoria.