
Clarification of Dyslexia Policy: Examination and Assessment Procedures

Notice to all Masters, Officers and Seafarers in the Merchant Navy and to those involved in Maritime Training.

This notice replaces MIN 404 (M+F) and should be read with the Exam Date MINs published annually.

This MIN expires 6 July 2017.

Summary

Candidates undertaking a MCA written examination conducted by SQA/IAMI who have been diagnosed as dyslexic by either an educational psychologist or a Specialist Dyslexia Teacher may be allowed an extra 15 minutes for each hour of normal examination time. The use of readers, amanuensis (scribes) or computers are not permitted; however, other aides such as tinted film etc. are permitted.

Candidates wishing to apply for extra time should contact their personal or course tutor who will guide them through the procedure with SQA/IAMI.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Examinations require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subject through timed assessments. During this time students are expected to select and manipulate thoughts and transfer these concepts into written format. This process emphasises a dyslexic student's difficulties.
- 1.2 Dyslexia is the only specific learning difficulty that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has a policy to make examination concessions. This policy allows candidates up to 15 minutes extra for each hour of normal examination time. Until now this allowance was dependent on the candidate obtaining a report from an educational psychologist identifying dyslexia as a learning difficulty. This policy is now amended to accept a wider range of assessors.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The MCA written examinations leading to the issue of Certificates of Competency (CoC) are managed by:
 - a. The Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA); and
 - b. The International Association of Maritime Institutions (IAMI).

2.2 The following policy only applies to examinations delivered by the above on behalf of the MCA. They do not apply to Further (FE) or Higher Education (HE) programmes (National Certificate, Higher National Certificate, Foundation Degree etc) . You should find the policy regarding these FE and HE programmes in the student handbook of your college /university and should seek further advice from your personal or course tutor.

3. Initial Action

3.1 If you think you may be dyslexic there are a number of on-line tests that may help you decide if formal assessment is appropriate.

3.2 If you are dyslexic and wish to request additional examination time, your initial action should be to contact your personal or course tutor. They will be able to guide you through making the application to SQA or IAMI as appropriate.

4. Learning Difficulties Assessors

4.1 The policy regarding acceptable assessors has been revisited and, in consultation with the Dyslexia Association, it has been extended to include Specialist Dyslexia Teacher with the Postgraduate Diploma in teaching adults with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs), with a Practising Certificate to assess adults from The Professional Association of Teachers of Students With Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS) or Dyslexia Action.

5. Initial Action

5.1 For the purposes of gaining additional time in MCA written examinations, a report will be accepted from:

- a. Educational Psychologists; or
- b. holders of Specialist Dyslexia Teacher with the Postgraduate Diploma in teaching adults with SpLDs, with a Practising Certificate to assess adults Practising Certificate, issued by either PATOSS or Dyslexia Action (a listing of current holders can be found at the website of the Specific Learning Difficulties Assessment Standards Committee).

5.2 Assessments must have been carried out as an adult (post 16 years old), include cognitive assessment and clearly identify dyslexia as a significant learning difficulty.

6. Examination Concessions

6.1 The MCA will allow up to an extra 15 minutes per hour where a candidate has been diagnosed as being dyslexic. Given the safety critical nature of the tasks which holders of a Certificate of Competency perform and the conditions under which they carry them out, it is not considered appropriate that candidates should be permitted the use of readers, amanuensis (scribes) or computers. However, other aides such as tinted film etc are permitted.

6.2 Where possible, candidates having extra time may be accommodated in a separate examination room so that they are not disturbed by the main body of students departing at the end of normal examination time.

6.3 Some groups of examinations must be completed within a three year period prior to the issue of a Certificate of Competency - no concession is granted in respect of this requirement.

7. Administrative Procedures

7.1 Examination centres putting forward dyslexic candidates for examination should notify the SQA / IAMI at least 2 weeks in advance of the examination together with supporting documentation. SQA/IAMI will liaise with the MCA and advise the examination centre of any additional time granted.

7.2 Once an increased examination time has been agreed it will remain valid for all future examinations until the tenth anniversary of the assessors report without reference to the MCA.

7.3 Examination centres may seek to recover the additional costs incurred by the supervision of the additional examination room and/or examination time. You should talk to the examination centre concerned to find out their policy.

8. Examination Results

8.1 Once a candidate has been given additional time in an examination they may not have their dyslexia raised as an issue for special considerations.

9. Useful Addresses

9.1 Below are the organisations that may be useful to students, colleges and employers. We have given the email address and a quote from their website.

a. British Dyslexia Association

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>

“The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) is a national charity and our vision is that of a dyslexia friendly society that enables dyslexic people of all ages to reach their full potential.”

b. The professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties

<http://www.patoss-dyslexia.org>

“PATOSS is a professional association of teachers of students with specific learning difficulties, for all those concerned with the teaching and support of pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties (**SpLD**): dyslexic, dyspraxic, ADD, and Aspergers syndrome. Membership is open to qualified teachers in SpLD and those studying for either the certificate or the diploma in SpLD”

c. Dyslexia Action

<http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk>

“We are a national charity that improves lives through education Our Vision - A world where barriers to learning, employment and fulfillment have been removed for people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. “

d. SpLD Assessment Standards Committee

<http://www.sasc.org.uk>

“This steering committee is a standard-setting group concerned with the diagnostic assessment of specific learning difficulties in an educational setting. The authority for

this committee and its remit stem from the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines. The committee seeks to extend the principles of good practice contained in the Guidelines across all age ranges and throughout the profession”

More Information

Seafarer Training and Certification
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 1/17
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel : +44 (0) 23 8032 9231
Fax : +44 (0) 23 8032 9252
e-mail: exams@mcga.gov.uk

General Inquiries: infoline@mcga.gov.uk

MCA Website Address: www.dft.gov.uk/mca

File Ref: MC 012/017/0070

Published: July 2012
Please note that all addresses and
telephone numbers are correct at time of publishing

© Crown Copyright 2012

Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas

*An executive agency of the
Department for
Transport*