

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

CONTENTS

PAGE

Special Needs Policy

Special Needs Policy Statement	3
Foreword	3
British Council Values	3
Types of Special Requirements	4
- Visual Difficulties	
- Hearing and Speaking Difficulties	
- Learning Difficulties	
- Physical Impairments	
Required Documentation	4
Time Frame and Test Venues	5
Communication and Feedback	5
Policy Review	7

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY STATEMENT

The British Council aims to ensure that every test taker is treated fairly and objectively and that they are given optimum conditions to take their exams. IELTS is designed to be a fair test – your English language ability will be assessed objectively, regardless of any special requirements that you may have. This policy is aimed at prospective IELTS test takers who have special requirements that make it more difficult to demonstrate their English language ability. The special arrangements that we offer – outlined in this document – allow these individuals to take IELTS on an equal footing with other test takers.

FOREWORD

As the UK's principal cultural relations organisation we engage with diverse individuals, communities, organisations and other bodies around the world. In doing so we aim to develop and sustain partnerships and relationships based on mutuality to support understanding and trust. Our Special Needs Policy, which is linked to our values, and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy informs this and covers our dealings with clients, customers, partners and suppliers, as well as our staff and contractors.

BRITISH COUNCIL VALUES

We have five core values:

- integrity
- mutuality
- creativity
- valuing people
- professionalism

These govern our decision making, organisational culture and behaviours, and our dealings with clients, customers and suppliers. They underpin how we implement our Special Needs Policy and how we engage with and respond to diversity as part of our cultural relations work.

TYPES OF SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

We have a number of ways to help IELTS test takers who have special requirements, such as:

- **VISUAL DIFFICULTIES**

If a test taker has a **visual impairment**, we can provide enlarged print and Braille test papers or an amanuensis to write down the answers; in some cases test takers will be allowed to use a word-processor.

- **HEARING OR SPEAKING DIFFICULTIES**

If a test taker has **hearing difficulties**, we can arrange headphones for the listening part of the test or if required a lip-reading version of the Listening module.

- **LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

If a test taker has **learning difficulties**, for example dyslexia, additional time can be granted for transferring answers in the Listening part and in the Reading and Writing components.

- **PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT**

As an example, wheelchair users will be directed to the test venue with wheelchair access.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Test takers who would like to apply for special arrangements for the test day must support their registration with medical evidence, which should meet the following criteria:

- The medical evidence should be legible and either in English or in German.
- The medical evidence should be an original document on headed paper and bearing the name, relevant qualification(s) and signature of a recognised practitioner.
- The medical evidence should give a clear statement of the candidate's disability.
- The medical evidence should make it clear how the disability justifies Special Arrangements.

- The medical evidence must be in the form of a report prepared in a period no more than two years before the test date.

Additional criteria apply in the case of applications for special arrangements for candidates with specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia:

- The report must include details of the degree of the disability and be written when the candidate was aged 13 or older.
- The report must include full details of the learning difficulty and tests which have been carried out.
- The report must be provided by a fully qualified educational, clinical or chartered psychologist.

TIME FRAME AND TEST VENUES

Test centres require between six weeks and three months to put special arrangements in place. In some cases, they need to confirm arrangements with Cambridge English Language Assessment, in order to procure modified versions of the test (in Braille, for example). Should you require extra time in the test, or a separate room, we can offer these arrangements in Berlin or Cologne).

Candidates who require special arrangements such as extra time or modified question paper material must be registered for the paper-based not the computer-based test. Each case is considered on an individual basis, in order to provide the fairest conditions to each and every test taker.

TEST VENUE	WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY	EXTRA TIME/SEPARATE INVIGILATION*
Aachen	-	-
Berlin	YES	YES
Bremen	YES	-
Cologne	YES**	YES
Dortmund	-	-
Düsseldorf	YES***	-
Frankfurt	YES	-
Freiburg	-	-
Hamburg	YES	-
Hannover	YES	-
Leipzig	-	-
Mannheim	-	-
Munich	-	-
Nürnberg	YES	-
Stuttgart	YES****	-

**for example for learning difficulties (dyslexia, ADHD), visual impairments, hearing impairments (use of headphones, lip-reading version)*

***depending on type of wheelchair*

****depending on which test venue in Düsseldorf*

*****test taker must be in possession of Euro-key*

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

For all enquiries about taking the test with special arrangements, please send an email to special.arrangements@britishcouncil.de. A copy of the Special Needs Policy is made accessible to all employees via the web and intranet sites and all staff, including newly appointed ones must be made aware of it.

POLICY REVIEW

We commit ourselves to undertaking a formal review of the policy at least once every three years and to communicate changes. Responsibility for this lies with the Head of Exams, Germany.

FORMAL REVIEW DUE:

To obtain further copies of this policy, or if you have any questions or comments about it, please contact the British Council Germany.

*Caroline Murdoch
Head of Exams, Germany
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