



Planning for Conditions and Criteria

The following is a statement of position by ASEAQ and as such has been endorsed by the Management Committee of ASEAQ (September 2011).

The following information is presented to clarify various understandings about what processes should take place at the planning stage to ensure that students with disabilities are able to learn in the manner which suits them best; learn what is appropriate for them; and to be assessed on what they have learned in a manner that best enables them to show what they know and can do.

There are various terms that are used interchangeably to describe what occurs in the planning of teaching and planning of assessment process. These include: adjustments, changes, differentiation, modifications. These are not always useful for staff or parents in describing the types of planning considerations undertaken to meet the needs of students.

No matter what labels are given, these must be divided into two distinct groups. The difference between these groups is extremely important and should be identified and documented in students' support plans / IEPs / Individual Student Plans / etc. It is this distinction between the two that should be communicated to all teachers involved in teaching the student as well as the parents. Discussions and decisions about the **Conditions** and **Criteria** at the planning stage also means that there are no issues at reporting time – the decisions have already been made.

Some students with disabilities require planning for both the Conditions and Criteria for some or all subject areas. This also needs to be discussed and incorporated during the planning stage when teaching and learning as well as assessment is determined.

Conditions

Planning for the CONDITIONS of the units of work / lessons / assessment tasks:

- Changing the 'how' of the learning and assessment, NOT the 'what'
- Appropriate conditions give the student equitable access to the same level of curriculum as their age peers
- The students are learning and being assessed on the same learning outcomes as their age peers
- Conditions can be grouped as Timing; Scheduling; Setting; Presentation: and Response
- Conditions for teaching and learning include: additional time to learn concepts; time of day that particular aspects are learned; one-on-one / small group / quiet area for learning; pre-teaching of terminology/concepts; interpreter; Braille; large

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print; presentation of concepts/content and set out on page/computer; use of AACs; additional scaffolding of steps in a learning sequence

- These Conditions enable students to access the learning in the way which best suits their needs
- Conditions for assessment include: additional time to an assessment task or test; time of day in which the assessment occurs; a quiet or separate place for assessment, videoing 'orals' in private and presenting them to the class rather than standing front of the class; interpreters for orals; a reader; a scribe; additional white space on a page; one question per page; use of AAC; tasks in formats other than pen and paper
- These Conditions enable students to demonstrate what they know and understand and what they can do
- Examples of conditional changes include those published for use with the [NAPLAN](#) tests
- The students do the same activities, have the same lessons, same assessment criteria as their peers and so are reported in the same manner as their peers.
- There would be NO indication on the report card that any conditional changes have occurred
- The use of planning for specific Conditions would be used for students with hearing, vision, physical, speech-language impairment, some students with ASD eg high functioning Asperger's syndrome

Criteria (also known as Characteristics)

Planning the CRITERIA / CHARACTERISTICS in relation to the year level expectations for units of work / lessons / assessment tasks:

- Changing the 'what' of the learning and assessment; making this 'what' cognitively less demanding than what their age peers are doing, by either working at levels prior to the chronological age level; or lessening the quantity of learning outcomes expected to be learnt or assessed
- Planning for Criteria in the teaching and learning phase: the learning outcomes are at a level prior to those expected to be learnt by their same age class peers; less learning outcomes being taught/learnt in comparison to same age class peers
- Planning for Criteria in the assessment phase: criteria are developed to align to the level of the learning outcomes being taught/learnt (different from peers); or less learning outcomes being assessed in an assessment task; not all criteria set out in unit of work assessed
- For some students this will mean that all their learning occurs in the regular classroom; the students are doing the same/similar activities; the students are not "in a corner doing their own thing"
- While these students may be involved in the class activities, they will be assessed on their own set (individualised/differentiated) of criteria which directly align to their learning outcomes

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- These students could have similar looking assessment tasks, but the criteria will have less cognitive demand and be aligned to the learning outcomes and will be marked on a separate criteria sheet. This assessment task will not be marked or reported against their age peers. See [QSA Assessment Bank Modules](#)
- These students could have totally different assessment tasks from their peers and these will have different criteria sheet aligned to the learning outcomes
- As these assessment tasks have their own criteria, they cannot be marked or reported against those assessment tasks of their age peers
- There would be an indication on the report card as to the level of the learning outcomes learnt and assessed
- There needs to be discussion with parents at the planning stage as to the level of learning outcomes being taught and assessed
- There would be notation in some individualised documentation (eg student profile, IEP, ISP) of the learning outcomes to be learnt and assessed
- The use of planning for specific Criteria different from same chronological aged peers, would usually only be considered for students with intellectual impairment or students with dual/multiple impairments whose multiplying effect make it difficult for the students to access the same learning outcomes as their age peers

Some students will require planning in relation to both Conditions and Criteria in the teaching, learning and assessment processes (eg student with mild/moderate Intellectual Impairment in regular class). Whatever is done needs to be considered in the planning process and documented in some manner. This will stop any confusion at reporting time because the planning process includes both the teaching and the assessment aspects. Collating and evaluating assessment for reporting is not the time to determine what should/could have/did occur.

This is as applicable in the regular classroom as a special school classroom. Within a classroom in a special school there will be students who are working across a number of year levels and planning will need to occur in relation to both conditions required for learning and assessment as well as the criteria to be addressed.

The term 'adjustment' is used in the [Disability Discrimination Act](#) and Education Queensland's [Education Adjustment Program](#). However 'adjusted' appears to becoming a deficit term. It implies a "bolted on not built in" mentality. Teachers should be planning for the needs of all their students and building this in from the start of the planning process: the learning outcomes; the pedagogical approaches; the criteria to be assessed and the method of assessment. If teachers think in terms of 'adjustments', then they may not thinking about the needs of all students from the start; they may be 'bolting on' to meet their needs.

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