End of Primary Benchmark 2023

Procedures
for
Access Arrangements and Exemptions
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Rationale

This procedural handbook gives an overview of application to the provision of Access Arrangements and Exemptions for the End of Primary Benchmark 2023 assessments. These provisions are meant to ensure that access arrangements and exemptions are acknowledged as an integral part of the learning process and not provided solely for summative assessments. These examination access arrangements provisions for Benchmark examinations were agreed to as a collaborative effort by the Educational Assessment Unit (EAU), the State Schools’ Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD) and the School Psychological Service (SPS), and the Psychological Service and the Dyslexia Specialist within the Secretariat for Catholic Education.
Map of Procedures to follow when applying for Access Arrangements and Exemptions for the End of Primary Benchmark 2023

Section A:
- Reader for Mathematics
- Multiplication Tables
- Electronic Reader for Maltese and/or English Reading with Understanding
  + Digital Recording for Maltese and/or English Writing Rubrics and Titles
- Scribe for Maltese and/or English Writing
- Enlarged Print for Visually Impaired Children
- Communicator for Hearing Impaired Children

Fill in Access Arrangements in Place e-template, only if:
- Documentation is available and valid (report conducted in July 2020 or more recently).
- School has already applied for an assessment/review from Dyslexia or SPS Units.
- Parents provide proof of an imminent private report to be presented to the school by end of February 2022.


Section B:
Exemptions: Students with Learning Difficulties

Fill in Exemptions in Place e-template, if:
- Student functions at/or below Year 3 Primary standard (Therefore, currently on Checklist 1 or 2)
- Student is following an alternative learning programme
  - Students’ professional report (dated July 2020 or more recent) explicitly states that student is to be exempted from subject/s.
  - Student has a severe disability (Example: Autism Spectrum Disorder)


Section C:
Exemptions: Migrants

Section A: Requests for

- Reader for Mathematics
- Multiplication Tables
- Electronic Reader for Maltese and/or English Reading with Understanding
  + Digital Recording for Maltese and/or English Writing (Rubrics & Titles)
- Scribe for Maltese and/or English Writing
- Enlarged Print for Visually Impaired Children
- Communicator for Hearing Impaired Children

1. Completing the Access Arrangements in Place e-template.

Heads of School are to complete an **Access Arrangements in Place e-Template**, accessed at [http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/bm_2023_acc_arrang_template.xlsx](http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Benchmark/General-Information/Documents/bm_2023_acc_arrang_template.xlsx) for Year 6 students classified in one of the following five categories:

a) Students who have already been assessed by SpLD or SPS, or the Psychology Service or the Dyslexia Specialist within the Secretariat for Catholic Education or any other professional entity and have a relevant report/s (conducted since July 2020) identifying a learning difficulty and a recommended access arrangement/s specified above is/are regularly provided in the everyday learning process.

The Reader provision is to be given to all students who have this provision written in the recommendation section of a recognised professional report or from literacy updates from the above entities carried out in July 2020 or more recently.

The **Digital Recording for the Maltese and / or English Writing (Rubrics and Titles)** is to be given to those students who **have the Reader provision recommended** in the professional report dated July 2020 or more recently.

b) Students who have been referred to the SpLD or SPS, or the Psychology Service or the Dyslexia Specialist within the Secretariat for Catholic Education before December 2022 for an assessment in connection with the above access arrangements even though they have not yet been assessed, or who require an update or a review.

c) Students with a hearing impairment and who already have regular assistance from a Teacher of the Hearing Impaired or a Learning Support Educator. These students will be given the services of a Communicator for all components in Maltese, English and Mathematics.

d) Students who have an ophthalmic professional, occupational therapist or any other professional report stating the need for enlarged print and are already given this provision in assessments and in their regular learning process.

* Copies of the SpLD and SPS Examination Access Arrangements referral forms are found as appendices on pages 9 to 19.
e) Students whose parents/guardians have informed the school that they will be having the relevant documentation privately drawn and presented to the school by end of February 2023.

For students who have been assessed by SpLD and have not been given Access Arrangements, but the school was asked to refer the students to another professional entity, kindly fill in the particulars of the students in the e-template and tick the appropriate box.

Kindly scan the SpLD report, name it with the student’s name and attach it to the email when the e-template is sent.

Heads of School are asked to complete the Excel template by providing all the information being requested. Additionally, Heads of School are to inform EAU when assessments, reviews and/or updates are made for these identified students.

Once completed, the template is to be sent by email with subject title: **BM 2023 – Access Arrangements e-Template** to Ms Carmen Muscat at **benchmark@ilearn.edu.mt** and cc Ms Julie Attard at **julie.attard@ilearn.edu.mt** by **Friday 16th December 2022**.

2. Points to be noted

- **Heads of School** are to note that the Readers for Mathematics will have to be provided by the school. In the case of the Reading with Understanding (in both Maltese and English), a recorded text will be provided by the EAU on OneDrive, but the school needs to provide the personnel to operate the equipment and invigilate the students.

- **Heads of School** are to ensure that parents are informed that students, who have the Electronic Readers for the language Reading with Understanding, will have their result endorsed as such.

- **Heads of School** who are referring students for the first time to the Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD) and/or to the School Psychological Service (SPS) are kindly asked to use the **Examination Access Arrangements/ Referral Forms** found in the Appendix 1 and 2 (pages 9 to 19) of this e-Handbook. These forms are to be completed by the school, obtain the parents/legal guardians’ consent and sent to the respective service unit (SpLD or SPS) by the end of November 2022.

In all cases the decision of the Reviewing Board for Access Arrangements is final.
Section B: Exemptions (Students with Learning Difficulties)

Completing the Exemptions in Place e-template.

While Heads of School are requested to keep exemptions from the End of Primary Benchmark assessments to a minimum, schools may exempt a student from these assessments or from a particular component without submitting an application if:

- The student functions at, or below, Year 3 Primary standard (on Checklist 1 or 2);

Students on Checklists are generally able to sit for the Listening and Speaking components. Therefore, exemptions from these two components should be kept to a minimum and justified in the Comments column. A note endorsed by the Head of School is also requested for such exemptions.

- The student is following an alternative learning programme;

- The student has a severe disability (example: Autism Spectrum disorder).

For these students, a school-based assessment is recommended.

Heads of School are requested to notify the Educational Assessment Unit about students who will be exempted by completing the Exemptions in Place e-Template, accessed at:


and email it, with subject title: BM 2023 – Exemption (Learning Difficulties) e-Template, to Ms Carmen Muscat at benchmark@ilearn.edu.mt and cc Ms Julie Attard at julie.attard@ilearn.edu.mt by Friday 16th December 2022.

Heads of School are requested to identify on the template the reason for which the student is being exempted. Parents’/Guardians’ consent for exemptions should be sought by the school. The impact of the exemption on the child’s future educational path should be clearly explained to parents or guardians.

In all cases the decision of the Reviewing Board for Requests for Exemption is final.
Section C: Exemptions (Migrants)

1. Heads of School are to complete the Exemptions (Migrants) e-Template, accessed at

   for Year 6 students classified in one of the following two categories:

   a) Migrant students who have not followed the subject curriculum during the last two
      scholastic years of Primary school in Malta or Gozo.

   b) Students who are following an alternative language programme at school.

2. In Column G of the e-Template kindly include the date and the Year group the student
   started his/her schooling in Malta/Gozo.

3. The completed e-Template is to be emailed, with subject title: BM 2023 – Exemption
   (Migrants) e-Template, to Ms Carmen Muscat at benchmark@ilearn.edu.mt and
   cc Ms Julie Attard at julie.attard@ilearn.edu.mt by Friday 16th December 2022.

4. Heads of School are requested to identify on the template the reason for which the
   student is being exempted. Parents’/ Guardians’ consent for exemptions should be sought
   by the school. The impact of the exemption on the child’s future educational path should
   be clearly explained to parents or guardians.

5. In all cases the decision of the Reviewing Board for Requests for Exemption is final.
Appendix 1

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES SERVICE (SpLD)

Referral Form
All personal data is processed in accordance with the Education Act (Cap. 327) and the Data Protection Act (Cap. 586) and subsidiary legislation S.L.586.04 Processing of Personal Data (Protection of Minors) Regulations; and S.L.586.07 Processing of Personal Data (Education Sector) Regulations. All personal data will be used solely for the purpose it is being requested and will not be shared with any other entity except as provided in the law. This personal data will only be retained until it is necessary

REFERRAL FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

The Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD) evaluates the performance of students who appear to be encountering specific learning difficulties and offers advice and support to teachers, parents and students regarding appropriate intervention.

The SpLD Service aims at:

• discussing concerns about a student’s literacy development through consultation with the student, legal guardian and school personnel;

• presenting and explaining assessment findings;

• supporting and advising schools re the appropriate intervention.

NB:

The legal guardian reserves the right to withhold information or to terminate professional involvement at any point in the process. Termination of involvement must be forwarded in writing.

The conclusions of the SpLD Service are based on the information provided by the legal guardian and/or school.

The SpLD Service reserves the right to discuss the student’s needs with other professionals working within the school set-up.

Referrals will ONLY be accepted when consent of legal guardian is obtained. Due to this requirement, referrals can ONLY be effected using this form.
Kindly fill in the attached form and send to the Specific Learning Difficulties Service, Sarria Street, Floriana FRN 1460.
SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES SERVICE
REFERRAL FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of referral:</th>
<th>Ref. no. (for office use):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of child:</th>
<th>ID no:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of birth:</td>
<td>Gender:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of parent/s or legal guardian/s:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home address:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mailing address (if different from home address):</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>email address:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Kindly specify to whom correspondence should be addressed:</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Home tel. no:</th>
<th>Mob. no:</th>
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</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of school:</th>
<th>School telephone number:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Referral Information

Reason for referral *(tick where applicable)*:

☐ assessment for the identification of dyslexia

☐ information regarding parental courses, use of library and other activities at SpLD Service

☐ re-assessment (student already assessed at SpLD Service)

What action has been taken by the school to address the difficulties?

Has the Core Competences checklist been carried out? If yes, please attach a copy.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Has the child been referred to / or assessed by any other agency or professional/s? Kindly attach a copy of relevant reports if available.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the student have a Statement of Needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please specify and attach a copy of the Statement of Needs.

Has the child been previously referred to the SpLD Service? If yes, state when.
Class teacher’s comments (a brief description of type of difficulties noted within the classroom situation):


Parent/Caregiver’s comments (indicate reasons why you would like your child to be assessed):


List of documents to be attached to this application:

- sample of work indicating student’s difficulties (English and/or Maltese)
- Dyslexia Checklist for parents
- Dyslexia Checklist for teachers
- a copy of all professional reports (if available)
- a copy of Core Competencies Checklist (if available)
- a copy of the Statement of Needs (if applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referred by:</th>
<th>Relation to child:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Parents / Legal Guardian/s:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Head of School:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
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</table>
## Checklist for parents *(Tick as appropriate)*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Is there a family history of <em>Specific Learning Difficulties</em>?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Were you concerned about your child's speech development?        </td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Does s/he encounter difficulty when pronouncing longer words?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Did the child enjoy nursery rhymes?        </td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Did s/he have any difficulty remembering:         </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the names of colours?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the alphabet sequence?        </td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the days of the week?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Does the child have difficulty:         </td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>catching a ball?        </td>
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<td></td>
<td>swimming?        </td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cycling?        </td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Does s/he have difficulty with any of the following:         </td>
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<td></td>
<td>front/back?        </td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>up/down?        </td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>left/right?        </td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Can the child organize items in sequence?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Did s/he have any difficulty in learning the names/sounds of the alphabet?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Does s/he confuse similar looking letters, eg. 'p', 'd', 'b', 'q'?        </td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Is reading practice carried out regularly at home?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Is homework completed quietly or is it considered to be a daily challenge for the child?        </td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other comments:
### Checklist for teachers *(Tick as appropriate)*

1. Does the child attend school regularly?  
   - Yes  
   - No

2. Is the child able to understand and communicate in both Maltese and English?  
   - Yes  
   - No

3. Does the child have difficulty following instructions?  
   - Yes  
   - No

4. What difficulties do you note in spelling *(tick as applicable)*:  
   - totally indecipherable?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - is generally able to identify sounds within word?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - omits parts of the word?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - writes words haphazardly – many versions for the same word?  
     - Yes  
     - No

5. What difficulties do you note in reading *(tick as applicable)*:  
   - phonic decoding?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - mainly guess work?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - slow and hesitant – lacks fluency?  
     - Yes  
     - No  
   - reasonably good but below expected level?  
     - Yes  
     - No

6. Do you consider the kind of errors made in reading and spelling to be peculiar?  
   - Yes  
   - No

7. Can the child cope with classwork independently?  
   - Yes  
   - No

8. Is the child given adapted work? If yes, can he cope with work independently?  
   - Yes  
   - No

9. Is homework completed satisfactorily?  
   - Yes  
   - No

10. Are you satisfied with the kind of progress the child has made during the last months?  
    - Yes  
    - No

11. Does s/he have difficulty copying from the Interactive White Board?  
    - Yes  
    - No

12. Does s/he tend to isolate him/herself from peers?  
    - Yes  
    - No

13. What subject does the child enjoy most?  

14. What are the child’s main strengths and interests?  

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**Any other comments:**
Appendix 2

School Psychological Service (SPS)

Examination Access Arrangements Referral Form
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICE

EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS REFERRAL FORM

When a learner is referred solely for Examination Access Arrangements, the School Psychological Service (SPS) follows the following procedure:

- Discusses concerns about the learner’s development and learning through consultation with the child, parents or legal guardians and the school personnel;
- Identifies a child’s needs through consultation and assessment as appropriate;
- Presents and explains findings to the parents or legal guardians of the minor, the relevant educational authorities and when necessary with other public welfare and/or health services.

The relevant details provided will facilitate the processing of the referral in a more efficient and effective way. It is thus of utmost importance to provide as much relevant information as possible on this referral form. The psychologist’s conclusions and decisions are based on the information given by the parents and/or the school.

NB:

Referrals will be accepted ONLY when consent of the parents or other legal guardians of the minor is obtained. However, by virtue of regulation 2 (2) of the Subsidiary Legislation 440.04 Processing of Personal Data (PROTECTION OF MINORS) Regulations, such consent shall not be required if this may be prejudicial to the best interest of the minor.

Subject to the provisions of any other law, the parents or the legal guardians reserve the right to terminate professional involvement at any point in the process.
# DETAILS OF THE STUDENT REFERRED

**Name & Surname of the Student Referred:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Birth:</th>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>ID Card No.:</th>
<th>Nationality:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College:</th>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Student’s Address:**

**Home Telephone No.:**

**Legal Guardian mobile number:**

**Legal Guardian email address:**

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# SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL DELEGATE

Please indicate, by marking the appropriate box, for which examinations is this application being submitted:

- School Examinations
- Benchmark
- VET
- SEAC
- SEC
- Other: ________________

If applicable, please indicate the access arrangements currently being provided to the student for school-based examinations:

__________________________________________________________

With this form please attach copies of related documents (e.g. reports or certificated issued by psychologists or other specialists). Please give details of the attached documents:

- ____________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________
- ____________________________________________________________

Signature of Head of School or delegate: ____________________________
GENERAL DATA PROTECTION POLICY

The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act (Cap 586.07 of the Laws of Malta) regulate the processing of personal data whether held electronically or in manual form. The School Psychological Service is set to fully comply with the Data Protection Principles as set out in the data protection legislation (kindly refer to: Article 21, A, B and D).

The personal data included in this Referral, or such personal data collected during the rendering of service, shall only be used for the purposes of, or in connection with the rendering of service or in the exercise of rights and obligations arising under the same service.

The personal data can be recorded, stored and administered by the School Psychological Service in fulfilment of the service and as required under any applicable law. Legal Guardians are entitled to ask for information, related to this referral, should they ask for it in writing.

Electronic and Manual data will be available to restricted SPS personnel and data administrators.

Data might be used for statistical reports. In this event, data will be edited to omit information that would identify the student or any member of his/her family.

Legal guardians have the right to request in writing the withdrawal of this Referral, at any time.

All personal data would be kept until the person referred reaches the age of 25.

PARENTAL / LEGAL GUARDIAN CONSENT

I/we have read Pages 1 – 3 of this referral and understood this statement of consent and declare that my / our child will be sitting for the examinations as indicated by the school. I understand that my child’s needs will be reviewed by the School Psychological Service and assessed if necessary for examination purposes only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent / Legal Guardian 1</th>
<th>Parent / Legal Guardian 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name &amp; Surname:</td>
<td>Name &amp; Surname:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.D. Card no.:</td>
<td>I.D. Card no.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature:</td>
<td>Signature:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date: