



ST. JULIAN'S  
SCHOOL FOUNDED IN 1932

# External Specialist Assessment Policy

Created May 2024. Revised for 2025/26.

## 1. What is an external specialist assessment?

A specialist assessment may be recommended by the Head of Learning Support in situations where a student exhibits signs of a learning need that has not been previously identified. The goal of a specialist assessment is to determine the nature of the student's needs and what reasonable adjustments might be appropriate to meet those needs in school. This will include consideration of whether the student is eligible for examination access arrangements.

The school's Learning Support Team has the capacity to conduct some specialist assessments in-house. This is part of the school's standard offer and does not incur additional costs for parents/guardians. Sometimes, a more detailed assessment from an external professional is required. In such cases, parents will be asked to commission an external specialist assessment conducted by a qualified educational psychologist and/or other professional. Assessments of this kind are not included in the school's standard offer and are paid for by parents/guardians.

## 2. How is an external specialist assessment commissioned?

In advance of commissioning an external specialist assessment, parents/guardians should meet with the Head of Learning Support to agree on the goals of the assessment. The Head of Learning Support will share guidance on appropriate external professionals to conduct the assessment, and will draft a referral letter to support the process, including observations of the student in school and relevant feedback from teachers. Parents/guardians will be asked to confirm consent for liaison between the school and the external assessor. This will enable the school to share details of the student's presentation in school. The specialist assessor conducting the assessment will also be invited to the school to observe the student in a range of contexts.

In order for an external assessment to contribute to an application for examination access arrangements, specific requirements apply. In particular, parents are asked to note the following guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications:

*"An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the [Head of Learning Support] to assess the candidate. All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background*

*information [provided by the school to the awarding body]. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the [Head of Learning Support]. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the [Head of Learning Support]."*

External specialist assessments must be conducted in consultation with the School and assessments conducted without the involvement of the Learning Support Team may not be accepted.

### **3. Examination Access Arrangements**

Sometimes, an external specialist assessor will recommend that a student be granted examination access arrangements. These are specific accommodations put in place to enable students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access examinations without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

It is important to note that, for international qualifications, a recommendation from an external assessor does not confer automatic entitlement to access arrangements and schools must apply for access arrangements on a case-by-case basis to the qualification awarding body.

If the advice of an external specialist assessor conflicts with the advice of the specialist assessment team at St. Julian's (members of staff holding a current, formally recognised qualification enabling them to assess for examination access arrangements), the recommendations of the St. Julian's specialist assessment team will take precedence.

After receiving a referral, a member of the Learning Support Team conducts an initial review, including consideration of whether further specialist assessment is necessary.

### **4. Criteria for Specialist Reports**

The school will accept specialist assessment reports from external professionals provided that:

- The school has been informed in advance that an external assessment is due to take place.
- The details of the private assessor, including their qualifications, have been passed on to the school.
- Consent has been confirmed to enable liaison between the school and the external assessor.
- The external assessor makes formal contact with the Head of Learning Support to discuss the student's presentation in school and the school's perspective on the student's potential needs

The final assessment report must:

- Be presented on headed paper from the assessment centre
- Include the credentials of the assessor

- Be signed and dated
- Be written in English (or written in Portuguese and translated into English, with the translation also signed by the specialist assessor)
- Include standardised scores from any cognitive testing conducted
- Include the assessor's recommendations for any examination access arrangements the student requires

Where the report includes recommendations for examination access arrangements for (I)GCSE examinations awarded by Pearson Edexcel, the external assessor must also undertake to complete and sign a specific application form (known as a Form 8) in order to enable the school to submit an application for examination access arrangements on the student's behalf.

Examination boards will only accept what they consider to be up-to-date evidence: assessment data gathered within a set period prior to the examination. This set period varies according to the examination board. The school will inform parents when re-assessments are needed to gather fresh evidence.

<b>POLICY APPROVAL</b>	
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