

# AARA Frequently asked questions

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## 1. What is AARA?

### Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)

BrisbaneSDE and the **Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA)** recognises that some students have disability, impairment and/or medical conditions, or experience other circumstances that may be a barrier to their performance in assessment. **Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (AARA)** are designed to assist students who have additional needs, so that they are able to demonstrate their learning, knowledge and skill.

Examples of possible adjustments to assessment and/or conditions can be found on the BrisbaneSDE Application for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) form.

## 2. Who should apply?

Any student who experiences barriers to accessing assessment because of a medical condition or disability may apply for AARA.

The definition of ‘disability’ used in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is broad. It includes **physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities**.

Students may also be eligible for AARA where **illness and misadventure** (i.e. unforeseen circumstances) or other situations may prevent them from demonstrating their learning, knowledge and skill in internal and/or external summative assessment.

Applications for certain cultural obligations or personal circumstances will also be considered.

Students are **not** eligible for AARA on the following grounds:

- Unfamiliarity with the English language
- Matters that the student could have avoided (for example, misreading an examination timetable, misreading instructions in examinations)
- Matters of the student’s or parent’s/carer’s own choosing (for example, family holidays)

### 3. I am enrolled in the medical category of enrolment. Do I need to apply for AARA?

For some students, enrolling with BrisbaneSDE is the only adjustment they need to enable them to access curriculum and assessment. If you require further adjustment to be made, then you must apply for AARA.

Not every student in the medical category will require AARA for their assessment, and not every student who requires AARA will be in the medical category.

The purpose of the medical enrolment form is simply to certify that a student is unable to attend a face-to-face school for a period of 80 days or more. The QCAA medical form for AARA provides much more detail about the needs of the student with respect to assessment.

### 4. What supporting documentation is required?

The following documentation is required when submitting an AARA application:

- BrisbaneSDE AARA application form
- Confidential Medical Report / evidence of Education Adjustment Plan (EAP) verification
- Student Statement (optional)

### 5. What medical information is required in the Confidential Medical Report?

The QCAA confidential medical report requires the provision of the following by the medical practitioner:

- Diagnosis of disability and/or medical condition
- Date of diagnosis
- Date of occurrence or onset of the disability and/or medical condition
- Symptoms, treatment or course of action related to the disability and/or medical condition
- Information about how the diagnosed disability, impairment and/or medical condition affects the student participating in assessment, particularly timed assessment when considering external assessment
- Professional recommendations regarding AARA

If the medical report is not on the official QCAA form, it must still provide **all** of the above information.

**The AARA you apply for must align with the recommendations of your medical practitioner.**

### 6. Who can complete the Confidential Medical Report?

The medical report may be completed by a relevant practitioner who is a **general practitioner (GP), medical specialist, or psychologist** (registered under the Queensland's Medical Practitioners Registration Act 2001 and/or Queensland's Psychologists Registration Act 2001), and who is not related to the student or employed by the school.

### 7. How current does the medical report need to be?

The currency of supporting medical documentation depends on the diagnosed disability, impairment and/or medical condition.

#### **Long term conditions that are unlikely to improve over time**

When a student is not covered by a current Education Adjustment Plan (EAP) verification or equivalent, medical documentation for Year 11 and 12 students must be dated no earlier than 1 January of the year of the student's Year 10 enrolment. For all other students, the most recent relevant medical information should be provided.

## Short-term or temporary conditions

Supporting medical documentation for short-term conditions or temporary injuries, **including mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression**, is to be dated:

- For summative internal assessments (starting at the end of Year 11 and continuing into Year 12), no earlier than six months prior to the relevant assessment.
- For summative external exams (at the end of Year 12), no earlier than April 1 of the assessment year. The QCAA may require an updated medical report closer to the assessment schedule.
- For all other students, no earlier than 12 months prior to the relevant assessment.

## Illness and misadventure

Students whose ability to attend or participate in an assessment is adversely affected by illness or an unexpected event at the time of the assessment must inform the school before, during or immediately after the assessment session. The illness or event must be unforeseen and beyond the student's control. (for example, car accident on the way to the exam, acute medical condition on the day of the exam.) Supporting documentation must be obtained on the day of the assessment if possible.

### 8. What is a confidential student statement?

The student may choose to submit a statement about how their disability, impairment and/or medical condition affects them in assessment. However, the absence of a student statement does not disadvantage an AARA application.

### 9. Who approves AARA applications?

The school approves all AARA applications up until the end of Term 3, Year 11.

From Term 4 Year 11, AARA for summative assessment in QCAA subjects may be either **principal-reported** or **QCAA-approved**, depending on what adjustment is requested.

For internal exams, QCAA must approve extra time and/or rest breaks. All other AARA is approved by the school and reported to QCAA.

For external exams (at the end of Year 12), QCAA must approve a range of AARA including extra time and/or rest breaks, alternative format papers (for example, large print), assistive technology (including the use of a computer), and use of a reader and/or scribe.

The school will submit AARA applications to the QCAA on the student's behalf as necessary.

### 10. When should I apply?

You should apply as early as possible, taking into consideration the requirements for currency of the medical report. (see question 7 above)

## Years 10–12 students

For existing long-term and chronic conditions, you should apply as soon as possible after the commencement of Year 10. (Unless the student has a current EAP verification, medical documentation must be dated no earlier than 1 January of the Year 10 year.)

For short term or temporary conditions, you should apply as far ahead as possible, but medical documentation must be dated no more than 6 months before the assessment event.

## **11. What is the next step? How do I apply for AARA?**

Complete the following documentation and email to [aara@brisbanesde.eq.edu.au](mailto:aara@brisbanesde.eq.edu.au)

- BrisbaneSDE AARA application form
- Confidential Medical Report (unless you have a current Education Adjustment Plan (EAP) verification)
- Student Statement (optional)

## **12. Where can I go for further information, or to discuss my application?**

Email the BrisbaneSDE AARA coordinator [aara@brisbanesde.eq.edu.au](mailto:aara@brisbanesde.eq.edu.au).

For more detailed information about AARA refer to the QCAA QCE and QCIA handbook 2019.

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/certificates-and-qualifications/qce-qcia-handbook-2019/6-aara>