



Helping people with physical disabilities, with special educational needs and those with hearing difficulties.

Special needs accommodations for the Theory Test available during the COVID-19 restrictions

If you have requested special needs help when taking the theory test and the proof of special needs has been accepted by Pearson VUE (the company that administers the theory test) it is possible that some changes to the provision that was requested, and originally offered by Pearson, may be necessary due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

1. Computer voice over (available for any candidate) – no changes necessary.
2. Extra time – no changes necessary.

If a face to face reader/recorder (where the reader/recorder sits next to the candidate, reads the questions and answers and then marks the answer given by the candidate) has been requested an alternative may be offered when booking the test:

3. “Translator kit” (reader only)
 - a. Candidates will be provided with headphones and a standard computer terminal with an attached computer mouse.
 - b. The reader will be in a separate room with a twinned computer and communicates with the candidate via the headphones.
 - c. The reader can talk to the candidate to read the questions but the candidate has no microphone so cannot ask anything of the reader.
 - d. The candidate should “hover” the computer mouse pointer over the selected question and the reader will then read it. If the candidate needs the question repeating they should move the pointer away and then reposition it over the same question, the reader will then repeat the chosen question.
 - e. If the candidate needs the answers reading they should repeat the process above, by “hovering” the mouse pointer above each of the answers in turn and the reader will read the indicated answer.
 - f. The candidate should then mark their chosen answer by clicking the mouse on the selected answer in the normal way.
 - g. The candidate will need to flag any questions themselves if this is required and will then need to operate the standard review controls in the normal way.
 - h. Candidate will need to operate the video play/pause/repeat controls for the case study question themselves in the normal way.

This option will probably not be suitable for candidates with no reading ability or for those that cannot make sense of written words. It requires the candidate to select a question/answer by moving the mouse pointer on the screen so that it “hovers” over the selected question or answer, this will be very difficult if the candidate cannot recognise which question or answer they need to “hover” the mouse over.

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4. "Translator kit" (reader/recorder)
 - a. Candidate provided with an earphone/microphone headset and a standard computer terminal with an attached computer mouse.
 - b. Reader is in a separate room with a twinned computer and communicates with the candidate via the earphone/microphone headset.
 - c. The reader can talk to the candidate to read the questions/answers as they appear on the screen – they are not allowed to explain the meaning of the English language used or to rephrase it. The candidate is permitted to reply to ask for a question/answer to be repeated or asked more slowly; when the answers are read, the candidate should say which answer they are choosing and the reader/recorder will then mark the chosen answer.
 - d. Candidate can ask for a question to be flagged and then go on to the next question. At the end of the test the candidate should ask for the review controls to be selected and operated to review the flagged questions.
 - e. Candidate can ask for the video play/pause/repeat control to be operated for the case study questions in the multiple choice section.

This option may cause problems for candidates having to retake their theory test who previously took the test using a face to face reader/recorder. They may not realise that the provision offered has changed, may not understand how the new system works and would not have had the opportunity to prepare for it. Also candidates with developmental conditions may be averse to change especially if unprepared for it.

5. The previously available option of a face to face reader/recorder is still available but may be more difficult to arrange. The reader, provided by Pearson VUE, sits next to the candidate (but now behind a transparent screen) they are able to talk to the candidate who is permitted to reply to ask for a question/answer to be repeated or asked more slowly. They will read the questions/answers as they appear on the screen (again they are not allowed to explain the meaning of the English language used or to rephrase it), they will then mark the answer chosen by the candidate.
6. For OLM (Oral Language Modification) tests a face to face reader recorder is usually used. For these tests the reader can explain the meaning of the language used and is permitted to rephrase the questions/answers to make them easier to understand, they are not allowed to explain the meaning of technical terms. OLM tests are only available for candidates with severe difficulties in language comprehension.

For candidates using the services of a reader/recorder, it may be necessary to change work stations before starting the hazard perception test, which must be completed by the candidate alone. Pearson will ensure that all workstation equipment is completely sanitised.

For option 4, option 5 or option 6 a complete site closure for the theory test centre will probably be required which will lead to an increase in the waiting time for these theory tests, possibly adding as much as an additional three months wait for the test bookings.

For option 1, option 2 or option 3 there should be no need for a complete site closure so normal waiting times would apply.

For deaf candidates requiring a one to one BSL interpreter a full site closure may also be needed under the COVID-19 restriction precautions, so again there would probably be increased waiting times for these tests. Deaf candidates using the on-screen interpreter service would not be affected and normal waiting times would apply.

If you need further information please contact the Pearson VUE Customer Care Team:

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