

**POLICY COVERSHEET**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name of Policy and Version:</b>        | <b>EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT (DYSLEXIA) POLICY v2.0</b>   |
| <b>Policy Status:</b>                     | New Policy <input type="checkbox"/><br>Revision of Existing Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>      |
| <b>Approval for this policy given by:</b> | DAI Board   |
| <b>Date of Approval:</b>                  | This version of the policy was approved on 9.12.2021  |
| <b>Review Due Date:</b>                   | 31.12.2023  |
| <b>Contributors:</b>                      | DAI staff & Governance & Risk sub-committee   |
| <b>Document Location:</b>                 | Approved Policy folder on Governance & Risk Google Drive Folder and on Staff Shared Drive in Policy folder. |

1. The purpose of this document is to outline the policy of the Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) in relation to the Educational Psychology Assessment service that it provides for dyslexia.
2. Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty affecting the acquisition of fluent and accurate reading and spelling skills. This occurs despite access to appropriate learning opportunities. Dyslexia is characterised by cognitive difficulties in (1) phonological processing, (2) working memory, and (3) speed of retrieval of information from long term memory. Dyslexic difficulties occur on a continuum from mild to severe and affect approximately 10% of the population. People with dyslexia may experience greater stress and frustration as they endeavour to learn, resulting in heightened anxiety, particularly in relation to literacy acquisition. People with dyslexia may also have accompanying learning strengths.
3. The DAI offers an individualised assessment service that investigates the presence and nature of literacy difficulties and establishes if the difficulties are consistent with a profile of dyslexia.
4. The educational assessment offered by the DAI is informed by the following principles:
  - Informed consent
  - Best interests of the individual being assessed
  - Evidence-based practice
  - Early assessment and intervention
  - Contextualised assessment
  - Least intrusive assessment
5. The service is offered to children, young people and adults. Children should be at least six years of age and have completed at least 18 months of primary education.
6. Referral forms are completed by the parents/guardians or the individual (and their school as appropriate). All information is reviewed by the educational psychologist before the assessment appointment date. In a small number of cases the educational psychologist may contact the individual (or their parents/guardians) in advance to get additional information.
7. DAI educational psychologists take a contextualised approach and take account of relevant background information from parents, individuals, mainstream and support teachers, schools and colleges, and any other relevant sources. This information is analysed alongside results of tests administered by the educational psychologist.

8. The assessment process usually takes between two and three hours for children and young people; and up to two hours for adults. This includes interviews, test administration and feedback.
9. The assessment can be conducted in-person or via video-conferencing (Zoom). Both are valid assessments following the same process and the client can decide which format better suits their circumstances.
10. The assessment covers a range of literacy skills including reading of single words (both real and non-words), phonological awareness, reading fluency/speed, reading accuracy, comprehension and spelling. Related cognitive skills including memory, rapid naming and other language skills are also investigated. The actual tests used will depend on the individual's age and needs.
11. The DAI will only conduct an IQ test if it is in the best interest of the individual, or to support certain resource applications. (Traditionally a discrepancy model, measuring the gap between IQ and literacy skills, was used to diagnose dyslexia, however this model is now outdated and does not reflect current research evidence).
12. A full written report is sent four to six weeks after the assessment. Clients are encouraged to contact the DAI at any time if they have a query about the report.
13. The DAI operates this assessment service on a not-for-profit basis, and offers reduced rates to those in financial need.
14. The DAI advocates that the approach taken by our in-house team of professionals be adopted by other educational psychologists and suitably qualified teachers when conducting dyslexia assessments.
15. This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains in line with current best practice and evidence base.