

DARE Sensory Criteria Changes for 2020

(DOCUMENT dated 19 November 2019)

1. Auditory Processing Disorder

The consultation process has not produced sufficient evidence to suggest that Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) should be eligible as a 'standalone' condition under the category of Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Where an applicant meets the other criteria for eligibility for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and presents with APD, then that applicant will be considered under the category of Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Where an application is made to DARE with a standalone diagnosis of APD, it will be considered as a Neurological Condition (if diagnosed by a Neurologist OR other relevant Consultant. In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Neurologist or another relevant Consultant, the evidence of a disability can be provided by a Registrar who is a member of their team).

2. Sensory Processing Disorder

The consultation process has not produced sufficient evidence to suggest that Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) should be eligible as a 'standalone' condition under the category of Deaf/Hard of Hearing or under Blind/Vision Impaired. Where an applicant meets the other criteria for eligibility for Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Blind/Vision Impaired and presents with SPD, then that applicant will be considered under the category of Deaf/Hard of Hearing and/or Blind/Vision Impaired.

Where an application is made to DARE with a standalone diagnosis of SPD, it will be considered as a Neurological Condition (if diagnosed by a Neurologist OR other relevant Consultant. In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Neurologist or another relevant Consultant, the evidence of a disability can be provided by a Registrar who is a member of their team).

3. Cortical Visual Impairment

The consultation process has not produced sufficient evidence to suggest that Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) should be eligible as a 'standalone' condition under the category of Blind/Vision Impaired. Where an applicant meets the other criteria for eligibility for Blind/Vision Impaired and presents with CVI, then that applicant will be considered under the category of Blind/Vision Impaired.

Where an application is made to DARE with a standalone diagnosis of CVI, it will be considered as a Neurological Condition (if diagnosed by a Neurologist OR other relevant Consultant. In cases where an applicant is in the care of a Neurologist or another relevant Consultant, the evidence of a disability can be provided by a Registrar who is a member of their team).

4. Irlen's Syndrome

Currently, Irlen's Syndrome is not an eligible condition for DARE. The consultation process has not produced sufficient evidence to suggest that Irlen's Syndrome should be eligible as a 'standalone' condition under the category of Blind/Vision Impaired. Where an applicant meets the other criteria for eligibility for Blind/Vision Impaired and presents with Irlen's Syndrome, then that applicant will be considered under the category of Blind / Vision Impaired.

All other applicants presenting with Irlen's Syndrome should be considered under the category of Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) if the applicant fulfils the other criteria of SpLD.

5. **Changes to Blind / Vision Impaired** - a) qualifying conditions and b) diagnostic criteria

a) Qualifying Conditions

There are an extensive number of blind/vision impaired related conditions that qualify for DARE. DARE has published a list of the most common conditions on www.accesscollege.ie (this list is not an exhaustive list)

b) Diagnostic Criteria

This particular element of the criteria was agreed by DARE HEAR Practitioners on 7 November 2019 and will need to be signed off by the Access Steering Group for HEIs in January 2020. As applications to CAO (including DARE HEAR) have already opened on 5 November, we cannot yet implement this change into DARE 2020. Instead this criteria will become operational in DARE 2021 pending approval by the ASG.

The following criteria is operational for DARE 2020:

- Best Corrected Visual Acuity is equal to or less than 6/24 (Snellen) in one eye OR
- Best Corrected Visual Acuity is equal to or less than 6/18 (Snellen) in both eyes OR
- The Peripheral Field of Vision is reduced by 20° or greater in both eyes OR
- The Central Field of Vision is limited to the extent that it interferes with normal visual acquisition of visual material, e.g. Stargardt's Disease AND
- The applicant meets any combination of two educational impact indicators from Indicators 1 to 5 on the EIS

The following criteria will be operational for DARE 2021:

- Best Corrected Vision Acuity equal or lesser than 6/18 in one eye or both eyes (with glasses or contact lenses when applicable)
- The Peripheral Field of Vision is reduced by 20° or greater in both eyes OR
- The Central Field of Vision is limited to the extent that it interferes with normal visual acquisition of visual material, e.g. Stargardt's Disease OR
- The applicant meets any combination of two educational impact indicators from Indicators 1 to 5 on the EIS.

6. Changes to Deaf / Hard of Hearing diagnostic criteria

The applicant is eligible if:

- the audiogram shows a bilateral mild to profound hearing loss (i.e. anything greater than 40dB) or a unilateral moderate hearing loss greater than 40dB across 3 frequencies AND
- the applicant meets any combination of two educational impact indicators from Indicators 1 to 5 on the EIS.