



SASC CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT for 2023-24

Welcome to this 2024 AGM.

SASC continues its core remit by working in a highly collegiate way to ensure that best assessment practice is available and maintained.

We have made good progress on the goals we set out at last year's AGM. We continue to work to support our professionals and their learners to underpin standards in assessment practice across the range of specific learning difficulties assessors are called upon to assess.

SASC Consultation on Literacy and Dyslexia - Dyslexia Delphi Definition

SASC has supported three years of research and consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders culminating in a Delphi exercise to reach consensus around a definition and identification criteria for dyslexia.

Led by Professor Maggie Snowling (Oxford University), Professor Julia Carroll (Coventry University), Paul Thompson (Warwick University) and Lynn Greenwold and Caroline Holden (Chair and Vice-Chair of SASC). 71 academics, practitioners (including psychologists and specialist assessors), representatives from stake-holding organisations and other interested individuals across the UK, Europe and farther afield, participated. This study concluded in the spring of this year, with the publication of 2 papers, currently under peer review. The papers set out a new definition of dyslexia and an assessment model, with guidelines for assessors based on the Delphi's findings.

We sincerely hope that this strong consensus will be formative in providing universal and equitable assessment for dyslexia. The Delphi papers have been submitted to academic journals for peer review. Minor revisions may be required prior to publication, if accepted by those journals. In the meantime, assessors are free to use the Delphi dyslexia definition but advised to look out for any relevant updates if and when the Delphi papers are accepted for publication. Links to the papers and information on how to reference the Delphi definition can be found in our SASC briefing paper accessible from our website news item¹.

SASC acknowledges and recognises the importance of this Delphi definition in shaping current thinking about the nature of dyslexia. I would like to

¹ <https://www.sasc.org.uk/media/3imfgx54/sasc-briefing-paper-delphi-dyslexia-study-may-2024-final.pdf>

acknowledge our gratitude to the team which led this study and all those who have participated in this important work.

Maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance

We have continued our working group concentrating on updating our maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance. The group has been first concentrating on reviewing and updating the definition and identification criteria before looking at intervention strategies. We are continuing to explore how best to resolve issues with specialist assessor training in this area.

SASC Website

We successfully launched our new website last spring and feedback has been very positive. We are continuing to make improvements including a site-wide search facility which should be available by the end of the summer.

Working with other organisations

We continue to broaden our consultations with groups with regular meetings and with a range of other professionals in our working groups, with course leaders, and our test evaluation committee, STEC, is working with the BPS test standards committee to share information and reviews of relevant tests.

We continue to update guidance in response to questions received and to address updates on SASC work, updated assessment guidance and new developments. These are announced on the website and circulated to SASC members by email. Topics addressed during the past year included:

Planned work for 2024-2025

- To update SASC assessment report formats to take account of the Delphi dyslexia definition and updates on maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance.
- Produce updated guidance on maths difficulties and dyscalculia assessment and underpinning training.
- A protocol for a shorter report format for assessors carrying out formative/interim assessments in schools.
- A protocol for a shorter report format for an optional post-16 re-assessment.
- Develop some guidance notes relating to referral to speech and language therapist, including correct referral pathway and obtaining parental consent.
- Guidance for independent assessors on opportunities for establishing closer links with schools.

- Guidance on how to characterise profiles that do not meet the diagnostic criteria for dyslexia.
- Explore benefits of SASC's becoming a charity
- Updates on other SASC initiatives

Two individuals who have made major contributions to SASC are retiring this year. Caroline Holden as Assessment Issues Coordinator has steadfastly driven forward our work on supporting the development of the Delphi definition of dyslexia while overseeing the significant number of other initiatives we undertake. Caroline has also supported me as acting chair for a number of years. We will be advertising for a new Assessment Issues Coordinator shortly.

Rachel Simpson has served as excellent chair of STEC, our test evaluation committee, and made significant contributions to assessment guidance and our review protocols. We greatly value the contributions they have made. And I would like to welcome Louise van der Valk as our new chair of STEC who moves into that role having served on the committee for a number of years. I know she will continue the tradition of dedicated work with her colleagues at STEC.

We have also had a number of changes to the board this year. Through new members we have increased the areas of interest with representatives from the schools sector, from research and teacher training. Joining the board as directors are Mark Loveday, Michelle Luciano. Also contributing to our work we have 3 new observers with additional experience in teacher training, Sharon Dobson Waters and Sarah Guest and local authority specialist advisory service, Alison Szalay. The thirteen (13) current directors and all observers are named at the end of this report.

Our Conference this year around the theme 'New definitions and tests: implications for the assessment of specific learning difficulties' was exceedingly well attended and our work is drawing increasingly wider followers.

I would like to thank all members of the SASC board, STEC and our Cross-Standardisation Committee as well as all the advisors who have contributed to our consultations and policy development. Members of the SASC board, STEC and other subcommittees contribute their time voluntarily.

They have given so generously of their time, and expertise; and also, you, our members, who through your communications and collaboration help develop policy and bring further issues to be explored. Working together we strengthen guidance and standards in assessment practice and training.

Once again, I want to invite others to join in supporting our consultations and developing practice. Please write to us with your interests.

Directors	Institution Represented (or Affiliation)	Term
Lynn Greenwold (Chair)	Independent	2024-2028
Caroline Holden (Acting Vice Chair)	Independent	2022-2026
Julia Kender (Financial Director)	Independent	2024-2028
Sarah Bevan	Patoss	2022-2026
info	Independent	2021-2025
Helen Duncan	Independent	2024-2028
Katherine Kindersley	Independent	2021-2025
Mark Loveday	Independent	2023-2027
Michelle Luciano	Independent	2023-2027
Jennifer McDermott	Independent	2022-2026
Rachael McMullen	HADC	2022-2026
Chivonne Preston	BDA	2023-2027
Anna Smith	DA	2022-2026
Mark Turner	Independent	2022-2026
Jane Miller	ADSHE	2023-2027

Observers: Hannah Farndon BPS, Denise Thornton ACHIPP, Lynn Lovell BDA, Sarah Guest, Alison Szalay, Sharon Dobson Waters

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