

# Access arrangements policy

## 2019/20

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
TH	
Date of next review	Jan 2020

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	<b>Dr Martha Hawes</b>
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	<b>Ms Barb Timms</b>
Head of centre	<b>Mr Chris Price</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Ms Sally Morrish</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Mrs Lynn Banerji</b>

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## What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

### Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. [\[AA Definitions, page 3\]](#)

### Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010\* requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. [\[AA Definitions, page 3\]](#)

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that [insert centre name] has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...

[\[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5\]](#)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

### Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Disability Policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Disability policy (exams) is stored on the shared area in the Exams Policies folder

The Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA 7.3](#).

### The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Sally Morrish holds:

IPQ Level 7 Organisation Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment Arrangements (PAPAA)

### Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

A copy of the assessor's qualification certificate Lynn Banerji, Access Arrangements Co-ordinator.

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in [GR](#) and [AA](#) including: [AA 7.3](#)

Make full reference to [AA 7.3](#) *Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties* and record your process that reflects the requirements.

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence of the assessor's/assessors' qualification(s) held by the SENCo.

Make full reference to [AA 7.4](#) *Reporting the appointment of assessors* and record your process that reflects the requirements.

### Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

- During Year 9 – 13, where there is evidence to suggest that a student may require exam concessions, a specialist assessor is employed to conduct the relevant assessments.
- Assessments take place within the school day, with relevant students and parents and carers being informed as to the details of time and place.
- Depending on the outcome of this assessment, the school will apply on the students' behalf to the JCQ for access arrangements to be applied.
- The specialist assessor that we use carries a recognised qualification as specified by the JCQ. This is checked by the Exams Access Co-ordinator on an annual basis.
- All documentation relating to our specialist assessor's qualifications is kept securely in the Learning Support Department.

In order to identify the need for access arrangements, we use the following process:

- LUCID online testing of all students in KS3 during Year 7, in order to identify student need or tendencies which may require further specialist assessment.

- In Year 9, all students are monitored and evidence considered to establish whether exam access arrangements are required. Evidence will include LUCID data, concerns raised by staff or parents and carers, reading ages and academic performance.
- Subsequently, assessments can be arranged at any point through Year 10 – 13, where there is evidence in place to suggest that a need is present.

Please note: If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement then access arrangements can be removed.

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* or *Statement of Special Educational Needs* the SENCo will demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working by completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Make full reference to [AA 1.5](#) *Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor* and [1.6](#) *Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties* and record your process that reflects the requirements

[GR 5.4]

### **Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working**

Evidence to support painting a picture of need is recorded in various forms. These include:

- Documented feedback from teachers
- Photocopied examples of student work
- Print outs of LUCID assessment results

Where applications to the JCQ are made, the following forms are used:

- Form 8 – Application for access arrangements
- Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements

In order to gather evidence of normal way of working we:

- Ask for written feedback from teachers. This is then collated and kept in student files.
- Take photocopies of students' work from different subjects, illustrating the students' normal ways of working.

## **Processing access arrangements**

### **Arrangements requiring awarding body approval**

**Access arrangements online** (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The SENCo/specialist teacher will:

- determine if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- follow guidance in [AA](#) to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site in order to gain access to *Access arrangements online* (AAO)
- apply for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- ensure appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO; examples might include:
  - painting a picture of need on section A of JCQ form 8
  - a completed specialist assessment to substantiate the picture of need recorded on section C of form 8
  - a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- confirm by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- make an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does not meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- ensure that arrangements, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- maintain a file for each candidate that will include:
  - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
  - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement
  - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications, a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ centre inspector

The Exams Access Co-ordinator will:

- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for GCSE and GCE qualifications, through *Access arrangements online* by the deadline date for the November (GCSE only) and summer exam series
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Progression, ELC and Functional Skills qualifications at least 10 weeks before the date of the assessment
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for vocational qualifications, by submitting JCQ Form VQ/EA - Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications to the awarding body no later than 10 weeks before the date of the assessment

- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for any other qualifications, by identifying and following the awarding body process by the deadline date

### Centre-delegated access arrangements

The SENCo, along with the Access Arrangements Co-ordinator, will determine need based on internal assessments or medical evidence for any centre-delegated access arrangements

### Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

#### Word processor policy (exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

The Word processor policy is stored in the policies folder of the shared area and a hard copy is held in the Exams Office.

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the Head of Centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

#### **Awarding word processors**

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be **awarded** the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- ▶ a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- ▶ a medical condition
- ▶ a physical disability
- ▶ a sensory impairment
- ▶ planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- ▶ poor handwriting

#### **Allocating word processors**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be **allocated** by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

#### Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a **substantial and long term impairment** which has an adverse effect; **and**
- **the candidate's normal way of working within the centre** [\[AA 5.16\]](#)

Where there is evidence to suggest that separate invigilation is required for a candidate, this will be assessed by the SENCo and appropriate arrangements made via the Exams Officer for a separate room to be provided. This will reflect the student's normal way of working in assessments. [\[AA 5.16\]](#)