



Examinations Access Arrangements/ Disability in Exams Policy Ref E002

This policy applies to all individuals on the school site/premises

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Document Control	
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1. Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how the centre

“recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates...

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”

[Quote taken directly from section 5.4 of the current JCQ publication [General regulations for approved centres](#)]

2. What are Access Arrangements?

Exam Access Arrangements (AA) are intended to allow candidates/learners, with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to:

- Access the assessment;
- Show what they know, and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment.

Access Arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with their duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make ‘reasonable adjustments’. Reasonable adjustments must be made 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. According to the Equality Act 2010, ‘a person has a disability if the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities

Head of Centre/Senior Leaders

- Must familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the JCQ Publication - Access Arrangements a Reasonable Adjustments.
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person appointed is held on file.
- Ensure a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Must lead on the Access Arrangements process within the centre.
- Has full knowledge and understanding of the entire contents of the JCQ Publication - Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments.

- Will work closely with the Specialist Assessor and medical professionals to ensure that candidates are fairly assessed for Access Arrangements.
- Ensures the quality of the Access Arrangements process within the centre.
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations.
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates.
- Holds evidence that an appropriately qualified assessor is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person appointed is held on file.

Access and Achievement Support Coordinator

- Must familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the JCQ Publications - Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

Specialist Assessor

- Has detailed understanding of the contents of the JCQ Publication - Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments.
- Provides the Head of Centre, SENCo and Exams Manager with a copy of the relevant qualifications and ensures that this is up-to-date and valid.

Exams Manager

- Has detailed understanding of the contents of the JCQ Publication - Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments.
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place.
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (Access Arrangements policy).
- Provides policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments.
- Holds evidence that an appropriately qualified assessor is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person appointed is held on file.

3. Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

All AA should be approved before the exam season in which they are intended to be used. They should, first and foremost, reflect the candidate's normal way of working. They should also be backed up by either medical evidence, a statement of special educational needs relating to secondary education, an Education Health and Care Plan (an EHCP) relating to secondary education or a formal assessment completed by our Specialist Assessor.

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

Head of Year/Curriculum Leader

- Refers candidates who are potentially eligible for AA to the Access & Achievement department via the *Access Arrangements Referral* form. In the case of medical conditions, supporting evidence should be provided with the form.

Head of Department/Subject Teacher

- Refers candidates who are potentially eligible for AA to the Access & Achievement department via the *Access Arrangements Referral* form.
- To support all applications, subject teachers must complete the AA mark sheet in the centre's MIS to provide 'Normal Way of Working'.
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking.

Access and Achievement Team

- Complete the AA mark sheet in the centre's MIS to provide 'Normal Way of Working' for assessments and exams completed under their supervision.

SENCO

- Supports the Specialist Assessor in determining the need for, and implementing, Access Arrangements.
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance.
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis.
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the Exams Manager to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments.

Specialist Assessor

- Presents, when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of their qualification(s).
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the Exams Manager to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments.
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate.
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate.
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body.

4. The use of Word Processors

The use of word processors may be granted in order to remove barriers to assessment for disabled candidates. The use of a word processor must prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties, and it must be appropriate to the candidate's needs. (Head of Centre Statement – 2018)

"A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home."

[JCQ Publication - Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments, page 54]

Candidates may be granted use of a word processor under a variety of circumstances, provided it reflects the support given to them as their Normal Way of Working.

Examples include a candidate with (this list is not exhaustive and decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis):

- 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;
- very poor handwriting.

In order for use of a word processor to be approved in examinations, the Exams Manager must be in receipt of all supporting evidence and Normal Way of Working prior to implementation of the arrangement.

4.1 Implementing the use of Word Processors

Word processors must (as per JCQ Publication – Instructions for Conducting Examinations, page 25):

- be used as a type-writer and not a database.
- have no previously saved data, as must any portable storage devices used. Candidates' own memory sticks must not be used under any circumstances.
- be in good working order at the time of the examination.
- be arranged in such a way so that other candidates cannot read the screen. Where a candidate is accommodated in a separate room, a separate invigilator must be used.
- be connected to a printer or have the facility to print from a secure portable storage device. This must take place immediately after the exam has finished. Candidates must verify that all printed work is their own. Word processed answers must be attached to answer booklets.
- be used under secure conditions.
- not be used to perform skills which are being assessed.
- not be connected to an intranet or other means of communication.
- not have access to other applications such as a calculator, spreadsheets (where prohibited in the specification).
- not have predictive text software or automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted the use of a scribe.
- not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has been granted the use of a scribe.

The centre must:

- ensure that the battery capacity of all portable word processors (laptops etc.) is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination.
- remind candidates to ensure that their centre number, candidate name/number, unit and component code appear on each page as a header or footer.
- remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals.
- remind candidates to use a minimum 12pt font and double line spacing.

5. Requesting Access Arrangements

The Access Arrangements application process is complex and time consuming, plenty of time must be allowed for the testing referrals to be completed by the in-house Specialist Assessor. Candidates are tested using cognitive/literacy assessments; these support the Access Arrangements application process and provide most of the data included in Form 8. Exam Access Arrangements expire after 26 months. The result of the most recent testing is binding.

In the case of in-year transfer of a student from another centre requesting Access Arrangements which had previously been approved; full, written evidence must be provided to justify the arrangements. They will be referred for further testing on the advice of their teachers/Head of Year. The original JCQ Form 8 and Access Arrangements outcome from their previous centre would be used as evidence only; approved arrangements cannot be transferred from one centre to another.

In order for the Exams Manager to proceed with any Access Arrangement application, the following documentation must be present:

- Data protection notice, signed and dated by the student.
- Form 8, fully completed and signed and dated by the in-house specialist teacher and SENCo (see appendix).
- Any supporting evidence, letters, proof of Normal Way of Working.

Private Assessments or an Educational Psychologist's report will not suffice as evidence on their own. As detailed in the JCQ Guidelines (p84, 7.5.3):

“An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.”

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

SENCo/Specialist Assessor

- Follows guidance in AA Section 8 to process approval applications for Access Arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2 of the JCQ Publication – Access Arrangements.
- Must provide the Exams Manager with appropriate evidence and testing required to apply for all Access Arrangements by the awarding body deadline for the exam series.
- Will inform all centre staff of proposed Access Arrangements so as to allow candidates to receive their arrangements in internal assessments and exams, thus building on their Normal Way of Working.
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed by hand and dated as required prior to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes.
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated).

Exams Manager

- Applies for approval where this is required, through Access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of AA, are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre.
- Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted.
- Makes 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 meet the criteria for the arrangement(s).
- Maintains a file for each candidate (that can be presented upon request to a JCQ inspector), which will include:
 - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms.
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required.
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre.
 - in addition, for those qualifications listed on page 2 of AA (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared).
- Orders modified papers, where these may be required for a candidate, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series.

6. Implementing Access Arrangements

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

Access and Achievement Support Co-ordinator

- Liaises with the Exams Manager and Specialist Assessor to ensure that all Arrangements are in place for all eligible candidates.
- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate Access Arrangements for candidates for internal assessment.
- Produces a timetable of all upcoming exams which details candidate arrangements, rooming information and invigilation arrangements.
- Ensures that candidates are aware of the Access Arrangements that are in place for their assessments; making sure that they are aware of what the arrangement will allow them to do/not do.
- Ensures that cover sheets are completed as required by the JCQ/awarding bodies.

Exams Manager

- Ensures that all Access and Achievement staff/invigilators are aware of the JCQ regulations in relation to providing Access Arrangements support and invigilation within a secure exam setting.
- Ensures that all staff are aware of approved Access Arrangements by updating the MIS with appropriate evidence and completing spreadsheets within local Staff Shared networks.
- Ensures that candidates requiring Access Arrangements are seated within the Access and Achievement department for all appropriate exams/tests/assessments.

Teaching Staff

- In the case of in-class testing/assessment, support the Access and Achievement department in implementing appropriate Access Arrangements for candidates.
- Informs the Access and Achievement department of any upcoming testing well in advance so that arrangements can be put into place for every candidate.
- Where arrangements are being provided for internal testing, provides the Access and Achievement team with papers/resources at least 24 hours in advance of the testing date.

IT Support

- Liaises with the Access and Achievement Support Co-ordinator to ensure that word processors are available for all assessments and that appropriate controls are in place (i.e. no internet access, spell-check disabled if required).
- Ensures that printing facilities are available within the Access and Achievement department which guarantee secure printing of all candidate examinations.