



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Ms S. Stollery November 2023	
Date of next review	October 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Mrs K. Foster
DHT Curriculum & Standards	Mrs R. Spencer
DHT Behaviour, Safeguarding & Student Welfare	Mr M. Tyler
IT Manager	Mr M. Golec
Business Manager	Mrs J. Simmonds
Director of SEND & Inclusion	Mr M. Gibbs
Lead School Assessor	Mrs C. Walsh
AHT Transition, Rewards & Stakeholder Voice	Mr M. Briggs
Examinations Manager	Ms S. Stollery
Examinations Assistant	Mrs A. Warman

Exam Board contact telephone numbers

Exam Board	Contact Telephone Numbers
AQA	0800 197 7162
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www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/

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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 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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

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 several 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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Mark Rutherford School 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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the Director of SEND & Inclusion and Examinations Manager 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.

Where the centre is storing documentation electronically, they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AA, section 4.2)

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**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

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

Equalities Policy (Examinations) is retained by the Examinations Manager and available on the School Portal.

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, section 7.3.

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

Mrs C Walsh - Patoss AAA: Assessing for Access Arrangements

Ms M.Sedgwick - Post Graduate Diploma Adult dyslexia diagnosis and support

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)

- Check that the Assessor's qualification meets the requirements detailed in JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments section 7.3
- Assessor to provide original certificate which will be photocopied and held on file.
- References will be taken and confirmed prior Assessor's appointment being confirmed.
- Enhanced DBS check will be made and confirmed prior to the Assessor commencing student assessments.

- Will provide assessor with JCQ Access Arrangement & Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024
- Confirm Assessor has completed knowledge update for JCQ regulations and Procedures 2023-2024

Provide the assessor with a copy of this policy.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Director of SEND & Inclusion will update Access Arrangements Online when a new Assessor is appointed.
- Director of SEND & Inclusion will retain a copy of the Assessors qualification certificates and relevant training updates on file.
- The Examinations Manager will hold a duplicate copy of the Assessor's qualification Certificates and training updates for inspection purposes.
- Assessor's qualification record will be retained for the duration of students he/she assessed access arrangement approval.

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

- Picture of need built through new intake feeder school liaison as detailed in SEND Policy
- CATS screening is completed for the year 7 cohort, Lucid Exact testing may be completed if CATS screening identifies a there may be a need for additional support.
- The school uses a graduated response as outlined in "The code of practice 2014", further detail can be found in SEND Policy.
Teachers to complete the SEND concerns-Internal referral form if they feel that a student needs additional support, which should include relevant samples of the students work.
- On receipt of a SEND referral the Director of SEND & Inclusion will contact students other subject teachers to see how the student is accessing learning other subjects. Subject teachers requested to provide samples of work.
- The Director of SEND & Inclusion will provide the Assessor with background information prior to an assessment taking place. This will include a providing the Assessor with completed Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.
- The Director of SEND & Inclusion and the assessor will work together to ensure a joined up and consistent process.
- The Assessor **must** personally complete the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments being conducted by another professional.
- The Assessor **must** carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.
- The Assessor should only use current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores. The student's chronological age **must** be less that the ceiling of that test.
- The Assessor is required to establish if the results of the tests in literacy and or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.
- The Assessor must ensure the student understands the Data Protection Notice and gives consent prior to conducting any tests.
- The Assessor should complete Part 2 of Form 8 prior to an Access Arrangement application being processed.
- The Assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the Director of SEND & Inclusion. It is the Director of SEND & Inclusion responsibility to

determine & request appropriate access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for JCQ approval.

Picture of need/normal way of working

The Centre uses the following processes to establish a picture of need and when gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

- New intake feeder school liaison as detailed in SEND Policy
- CATS screening is completed for the year 7 cohort, Lucid Exact testing may be completed if CATS screening identifies a there may be a need for additional support.
- The school uses a graduated response as outlined in "The code of practice 2014", further detail can be found in SEND Policy.

Teachers to complete the SEND Concerns- Internal referral form if they feel that a student needs additional support, which should include relevant samples of the students work.

- On receipt of a SEND referral the Director of SEND & Inclusion will contact student's other subject teachers to see how the student is accessing learning other subjects. Subject teachers requested to provide samples of work.
- Approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, Mock Examinations and External Examinations.
- Following each Mock Examination season, the usage of exam dispensations will be collated and reviewed.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments 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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

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 for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The Centre uses the following processes to for Access Arrangements/Reasonable adjustments requiring approval by the awarding body.

- The Lead School Assessor to process Access Arrangement applications on Access Arrangements online (AAO).
- Applications should only be made on Access Arrangements Online if the student has given consent (completed data protection notice). When processing from GCSE to GCE qualification the student will need to sign a new Data Protection Notice.
- The Lead School Assessor will update the Examinations assistant when a new Access Arrangement application is approved, confirming the access arrangement the student requires.
- The Lead School Assessor will provide the Examinations assistant with a print of the Access Arrangements approval from AAO, the completed JCQ Form 8, signed Data Protection Notice and all relevant supporting Evidence.

- The Examinations assistant will file all Access Arrangement Evidence alphabetically by year group in a locked cabinet. These files will be made available for the JCQ inspector on request.
- The Examinations assistant will maintain a central record of Access Arrangements/Reasonable Adjustments for all students in Years 10-13, this will be time stamped in order to track changes/additions made. This will include approval code and expiry date and record of completed Data Protection Notice.
- The Examinations assistant will ensure that the Sims Examinations package records students access arrangements and is updated if amendments or additions made.
- The Examinations assistant will maintain the Approved Access Arrangement record in Sims & overview document on the school portal.
- The Examinations Manager/Assistant will disseminate Access Arrangement information to Teachers and other relevant centre staff.
- The Examination Manager/Assistant will make applications for qualifications not included in the AAO Approval (Btec qualifications) for students who already have an approved Access Arrangement.
- The Director of SEND & Inclusion will ensure all Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are made before the published deadline (see table below) whenever possible at the start of the student's course.
- The Examinations Manager/Assistant will ensure that applications for qualifications not included in AAO (Btec qualifications) are made before the published deadline (see table below) whenever possible at the start of the student's course.
- The Examinations Manager/Assistant will ensure that applications for modified papers are made before the published deadline (see below).

Month of Examination	Access Arrangement	Final Deadline
November 2023	Modified Papers	20/09/2023
November 2023	All other Access Arrangements	01/11/2023
January/February 2024	Modified Papers	04/10/2023
January/February 2024	All other Access Arrangements	21/10/2023
May/June 2024	Modified Papers	31/01/2024
May/June 2024	All other Access Arrangements	21/03/2024

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The Centre uses the following processes to establish a picture of need and when allocating Centre-delegated access arrangements within the centre

- Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments will be awarded only to candidates who are entitled as they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared to other non-disabled candidates undertaking assessment and it is therefore reasonable to provide the arrangement, (JCQ Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Chapter 4).
- The centre delegated arrangements/adjustments reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and Mock examinations.

• Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments will be included in the Approved Access Arrangement record in Sims & overview document on the school portal.
For the purpose of this policy centre delegated arrangements/adjustments that may be awarded are listed below (see JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments)

- Amplification equipment
- Bilingual Dictionary
- Brailers
- Closed circuit television (CCTV)
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Communication Professional (for candidates using sign language)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys & stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners
- Prompter
- Read Aloud (which can include an examination reading pen).
- Supervised rest breaks
- Alternative rooming arrangements, e.g., a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation), please see additional section.
- Word Processor (please see additional section)

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Word Processor Policy (Examinations) is retained by the Examinations Manager and available on the School Portal.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g., a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the Director of SEND & Inclusion.

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, section 5.16)

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the Director of SEND & Inclusion or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre.

The Centre uses the following processes to establish a picture of need and when allocating alternative rooming arrangements within the centre

- alternative rooming arrangements awarded only to candidates who are entitled as they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared to other non-disabled candidates undertaking assessment and it is therefore reasonable to provide the arrangement. (JCQ Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments sections 5.16 and 4.14).
- The candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to their Form Tutor, Head of Year and the Director of SEND & Inclusion.
- Head of Year/ Director of SEND & Inclusion will provide a statement outlining the candidates area of need and if the student is externally supported i.e., CAMH, CHUMS.