



Exam Access Arrangements Policy

2016/17

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Approved/reviewed by: **David Thompson**

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Assistant Principal

Introduction

The Exam Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure all candidates with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have the support they need during all Public Examinations and assessments.

Definitions of terms included in the policy

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines **disability** as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Special Educational Needs

A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0-25 years.

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Long Term

Means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.

What are Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow students to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of a 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'.

Reasonable Adjustment

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.

Exam Access Arrangements

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a candidate (subject to exam board approval) in a national or public examination, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the candidate has appropriate access to the exam. This can be in the form of:

- Adapting assessment materials
- Adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes
- Adaptation to equipment
- Assessment material in an enlarged format or Braille
- Assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- Bilingual dictionary: EAL (English as an Additional Language) candidates are permitted to use a bilingual dictionary during an exam, apart from during GCSE English Literature, Geography, History and Religious Studies exams. Where an EAL candidate has been in the country for less than 2 years with no prior knowledge of the English Language, an application can be made for them to have up to 25% extra time to use the dictionary, depending on need.
- British Sign Language
- Changing or adapting the assessment method.
- Changing usual assessment arrangements.
- Extra time: candidates may be entitled to an allowance of up to 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher. In some exceptional circumstances candidates may be entitled to an allowance of up to 50%.
- ICT: access to a word processor for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the candidate can word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks will be disabled and a special exam account will be used with no internet access. In some exceptional circumstances candidates may be entitled to use a spell check enabled computer.
- Language modified assessment material.
- Practical assistant.
- Prompter: where a candidate has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the candidate on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

- Providing assistance during assessment.
- Reader: a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the candidate. The candidate would then write the answer(s) themselves.
- Rest breaks: where candidates are permitted to stop for short break(s) during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- Scribe: a trained adult who writes for the student. The candidate would dictate their answers. The scribe would write exactly what they say.
- Transcript
- Use of assistive software
- Use of assistive technology
- Coloured overlays, low vision aids
- Use of a different assessment location

When might candidates need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?	
Scribe	<p>A scribe will be allowed where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidates writing. • A candidate cannot write or type at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time as a result of a substantial or long term impairment.
Reader	<p>A reader will be allowed where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A candidate has language and vocabulary difficulties which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to access written text. • Where there is a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by a Specialist Teacher.
ICT	<p>A word processor will be allowed where there is a physical disability and a candidate's writing would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood, or their • Speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time.
Extra Time	<p>Extra Time will be allowed where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A candidate's ability to process information is slower than average. • At least one below average standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Teacher.
Rest Breaks	<p>Rest Breaks will be allowed where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A candidate has a physical disability which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time. <p>Supervised rest breaks should always be considered before making an application for extra time.</p>
Prompter	<p>A Prompter will be allowed where</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A candidate who has little or no sense of time • Persistently loses concentration
Separate Room	<p>For a candidate with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit in an exam in the main exam hall. Candidates who are agoraphobic or have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room.</p>

Any Exams Access Arrangements awarded to a candidate must reflect the support given as **‘their normal way of working’**

- In the classroom
- Working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- Literacy support lessons
- Literacy interventions and strategies
- In internal school tests and mock examinations (Pre Public Examinations)

Evidence of Normal Way of Working

The ‘normal way of working’ as defined by JCQ is as follows:

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example,

- *in the classroom;*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons*
- *literacy intervention strategies*
- *mock examinations*

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Section of Form 8.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.”

The SENCO and Student Support Team will gather evidence from the following areas to record the normal way of working:

- if known, arrangements made for Key Stage 2 tests;
- comments and observations from teaching staff who have noted the candidate’s difficulties;
- intervention plans;
- screening test results;
- records of normal way of working in the classroom (Student Support classroom logs);
- the candidate’s self reported difficulties;
- comments in school reports and tracking data;
- end of year internal examinations or Pre Public Exams results.

Supporting evidence will be filed and documented to comply with JCQ monitoring and inspections.

Referral and Procedure for Exam Access Assessment

Candidates who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, it does not necessarily mean that they automatically receive it at KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a candidate who had a Reader for KS2 may not qualify for a Reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria. Formal assessments for Exam Access Arrangements take place in Year 9, during the Spring and Summer term.

All students in Year 7, who are on the School Record of Action for Special Educational Needs or Disability are assessed during the transition period using the Access Reading Test and the Single Word Spelling Test (SWST). These tests can help identify learning difficulties and possible Dyslexic tendencies. The Student Support Team will contact parents where this is the case, complete further testing, and if necessary put an appropriate intervention into place.

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the Student Support Team will investigate their concerns through feedback from a pupil's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

As with Parent Referrals, teachers can refer a candidate to Student Support where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a candidate in their class. All of the candidate's current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this, a decision will be made as to whether to test a candidate for EAA. Teachers are asked to refer candidates to Student Support initially if they feel that a child may have dyslexic tendencies rather than contacting parents about their concerns. Student Support will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

Candidates who are on the SEND register will be assessed during Year 9, ready to process any any Exams Access Application during Year 10 by a Specialist Assessor.

'For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangements.'

Further information on Access Arrangements online is available from:

<http://www.jcq.or.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online>

Responsibility

Access arrangements are the responsibility of the SENCO, directed by the Principal. Access arrangements for exams need to be conducted by a member of staff who processes the relevant qualifications in accordance with JCQ guidance **or** indeed a qualified person may be bought in. The SENCO can direct appropriate staff to be part of the assessment process, i.e. those with appropriate qualifications as cited in JCQ document *Adjustments for Candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments*.

A Specialist Assessor is

- A specialist teacher with a **current** SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate; or
- An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council

All Specialist Assessors must

- **Have a thorough understanding of the current edition** of the JCQ publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved.
- Be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a 'reasonable adjustment', but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate).
- Hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties, for example:
 - a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website
 - An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council.

In addition to these two categories, other educational professionals may conduct Access arrangements assessments if they meet the following criteria.

- They must hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 which must include training in all of the following:
 - The theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals
 - the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested
 - The objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered
 - The appropriate selection and objective use of cognitive tests including tests of verbal and non-verbal ability and wider cognitive processing skills
 - The ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional.

For notification on the qualifications our specialist assessors that we use hold, copies of qualifications are held on file and also submitted via *Access Arrangements online*.

Role of the Exam Access Team and the Examinations Officer:

The Exams Access Team will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.

- Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's access arrangement is the responsibility of the Specialist Assessor.
- The SENCO/Specialist Assessor will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector.
- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Specialist Assessor and the Examinations Officer.
- Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Examinations Officer.

- Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Examinations Officer and the Exams Access Team.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has Exam Access Arrangements?

- All subject teachers and support staff are given access to the Exams Access Arrangements (EAA) via the staff area. The SEND register and Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) spreadsheet/information are updated whenever students become entitled. Staff are informed of any changes to the SEND register and Exam Access Arrangements via internal school communication systems. The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy and are shared on a need to know basis.
- Parents will be informed of any test results via a letter home which states what the student is entitled to, why and when.

When Access Arrangements are granted:

- When a student is granted Access Arrangements by the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ), there may be exceptions subject to individual exam boards criteria. For example, subjects such as sports, musical performances and expressive arts may not allow some concessions to be used.
- Students who are allowed Access Arrangements will be given guidelines on how to use them. Parents will be informed by letter.
- The student is responsible for using their Access Arrangements correctly during all assessments and examinations. If a student does not consistently use their arrangement during their examinations, then they may have that arrangement taken away.

Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies do occur and will be treated urgently as to whether Access Arrangements are required for exams.

Other Considerations

- Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be automatically considered for possible access arrangements.
- Reports from Primary Schools are not eligible for exam access arrangements in a secondary school setting.
- All access arrangements are under time restraints, which will be reviewed regularly.
- Access arrangements for medical emergencies will be processed as needed if the cut-off date has passed.
- It should be noted that a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.
- Separate invigilation within the centre must be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and/or as a result of a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect.

Procedure for Exam Access Arrangements

How would students be identified for Exam Access Arrangement?

- They would have had EAA at KS2 for their SAT's (although some students who had EAA at Primary school may no longer need AA)
- Parental Referral
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from previous schools

What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from Specialist Teacher or Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Previous EAA from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests

Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCO as evidence that their child should be awarded extra time, or EAA. Private educational psychologist's reports cost a significant amount of money. This therefore means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is 'either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Often private educational psychologists, recommend that children should receive EAA which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Teacher) recommends. We will also look for evidence of a history of need.

JCQ states that *"if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time."*

As such the school we will not accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist reports, but will instead follow the recommendations of the Specialist Tester.

JCQ also states that *"Where a centre elects either to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre [the Principal] or a member of the senior leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes."*

Formal Access Arrangement testing

Formal assessments are conducted early in the Spring term of Year 9.

Students qualifying for these formal assessments are determined by specified indicators following screening. Students with a statement would automatically qualify for a need matched Access arrangements screening and the formal assessment is a staged process:

Stage 1: Early Screening

- Access reading test
- Diagnostic reading analysis
- Dyslexia portfolio (processing cluster, Literacy cluster, digital recall, free writing)
- WRAT EXPANDED

A report is produced by the SENCo highlighting the key elements including History of Need and screening outcomes.

Stage 2: Formal Testing

Spring and Summer Term of Year 9

Depending on outcomes of screening formal assessments are conducted to confirm access arrangements for exams. Assessments are carried out by qualified specialist teachers. No one assessment can be submitted as evidence. Assessments may include:

WRAT (WIDE RANGE ACHIEVEMENT TEST)

WRIT (Wide range intelligence test)

CTOPP (processing)

DASH

PhAB

TOMAL-2

YARC Secondary

Access Reading Comprehension test

Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)

British Picture Vocabulary Scales (2&3)

Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP)

Phonological Assessment Battery

The tests that the Specialist Tester uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

Stage 3: Formal application for Access Arrangements for examinations

The outcome of the assessments are recorded and summarised on the pupil profile sheet by the assessor. Completed forms are then passed to the SENCo as evidence for online submission. The online submission is carried out by the Exams Officer.

Stage 4: Ensuring the Access Arrangements are normal practice

It is the responsibility of the SEND team to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the Exams officer and wider staff body. The SENCo, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that EAA are normal working practice. The SENCo and exams officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order.

In rare and exceptional circumstances the centre may need to refer a candidate to an alternative professional, such as a clinical psychologist or a neuropsychologist, where further investigation is warranted. The initial assessment may have indicated specific/global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns.

Procedure for Processing an Application

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the SENCo, Specialist Teaching Assistant or Exams officer then applies to the exam boards. The feedback is instant and at this point the EAA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed of the EAA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP)
- Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s:
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester

- A data protection form signed by the student
- A record of all occasions when a student has been supported by EAA
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

Author

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