

Access Arrangements Policy

2020/21

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	October 2021

This template is provided for members of **The Exams Office** [only](#) and must not be shared beyond use in your centre

Access arrangements policy template (2020/21) Hyperlinks provided in this document were correct as at September 2020 (updated 22/09/2020)

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Lisa Pitman
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Jemma Harding
Head of centre	Rachel Kitley
Assessor(s)	Lisa Pitman
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	

Contents

Key staff involved in the policy	2
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?	4
Access arrangements.....	4
Reasonable adjustments	4
Purpose of the policy.....	4
General principles	4
Equalities Policy (Exams)	5
The assessment process	5
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)	5
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor	6
Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working	6
Processing access arrangements	6
Arrangements requiring awarding body approval.....	6
Centre-delegated access arrangements	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams)	7
Separate Invigilation Policy	7
Appendices.....	9

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... **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'.

Reasonable adjustments

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... 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'.

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, (section 5.4)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as **GR**

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/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.

Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 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.

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

General principles

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

The purpose of an access arrangement 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 a disabled candidate.

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

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) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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.

Overtyping here the location of the centre's policy, alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document or include sections from this policy that you feel may be relevant to your centre's Access Arrangements Policy within this document

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010[†]. This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates...

[†]for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR 5.4](#))

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)

Overtyping here details of the current assessor(s) and the qualifications held.

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)

Overtyping here the process followed to check the qualification(s) of the assessor(s).

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

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... ([GR 5.4](#))

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. ([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 that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the ALS lead/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

Overtyping here details of the process followed in your centre.

Make full reference to [AA 7.5](#) Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* (GR 5.4)

Note

... SENCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated ([AA 7.3](#))

Also detail any process (where relevant) for private candidates, distance learners and home educated students (refer to the requirement in [GR 5.4](#))

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Overtyping here information relating to the centre's process for painting a *picture of need* and gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*.

Where relevant include any additional information relating to **private candidates**.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo. ([AA 7.5](#))

Make full reference to [AA 7.5](#) Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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 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 (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.

Overtyping here any relevant information relating to the centre's processes for using AAO. This might include for example, when applications are submitted, who is responsible, what information is required, printed, kept on file, location of files, dealing with cases that do not gain approval, awarding body referrals, etc.

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. ([AA 8.6](#))

Make full reference to [AA 8](#) Processing applications for access arrangements and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Overtyping here any relevant information relating to the centre's processes for dealing with centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded).

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.

Overtyping here the location of the centre's policy (and the statement which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams (provision for this statement has been included in **The Exams Office Word Processor Policy template** Appendix 1) or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors... A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. ([AA 5.8](#))

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the ALS lead/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](#))

Overtyping here the centre's criteria (or policy) on separate invigilation within the centre or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs. (AA 5.16)

Appendices