



Access Arrangements Policy 2023-2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Samantha Williams
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	

Head of centre

Chris Steed

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 and adjustments.....	7
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	7
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams).....	7
Separate Invigilation Policy.....	7
Appendices	9

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'. ([AA 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'. ([AA 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 Atam Academy 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...

(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 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 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 a 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.

The Equalities Policy is located on the Google Drive folder for exams.

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)

Amy Evans CPT3ABPS RQTU, Real Training, Middlesex University

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)

The head of centre/senior leadership team will check the qualification(s) of the assessor(s) and 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) is held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA 7.3)

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

Learners will be identified for possible access arrangements through a combination of the following criteria:

- From Year 7 as a result of information from primary schools, prior access arrangements and/or low attainment scores in relevant assessments
- Referral from a teacher and evidence supporting the learners area of need
- EAAs granted/officially approved by previous secondary school– subject to relevant paperwork being sent to the SEND department at ATAM academy, in addition to clear evidence of need and confirmation of qualifications of prior academy's specialist assessor.
- Presentation of a recent medical letter/diagnosis from a qualified healthcare professional
- Parental concern expressed to a subject/form teacher

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

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

The independent assessor will contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This will take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor will be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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

The independent assessor will discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 7.5)

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 SENCo will keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA, section 8.6) These are retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The most commonly used access arrangements at ATAM Academy are as follows:

Scribe: a trained adult who writes for the learner. The learner would dictate their answers including all punctuation, grammar and relevant spellings and the scribe would write exactly what the learner says.

This provision is usually not encouraged for Maths or Modern Foreign Languages. This provision also includes the use of a word processor with spelling and grammar functions disabled.

Reader: a trained adult who would read the question and relevant text (with the exception of an exam testing reading such as English comprehension and Modern Foreign Languages) for the learner. The learner would then write the answers themselves although this text could then be read back to the learner if requested. Under JCQ Regulations, three or four candidates may share one reader and candidates with individual readers will be in a separate room.

Word processing: access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate but not usually for subjects such as Maths and Modern Foreign Languages) so the learner would word-process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled. 25%

Extra Time: Learner may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time depending on their history of need and 2 standardised scores below 84 relating to speed of reading, writing or processing.

Rest Breaks: where learners are permitted to stop for short breaks during the exam and this time is then added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.

Prompter: used for learners with little sense of time or ability to concentrate, a trained adult/invigilator can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus or move the learners on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

The above list is not exhaustive but does cover the most commonly used exam access arrangements but the academy would ensure each learner's needs are met as required. EAAs may also differ according to the learner needs within each subject i.e. extra time may be awarded to extended writing subjects only.

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.

The Word Processor Policy is located on the Google Drive folder for exams and on the centre's website.

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 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, 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 Director of Learning, the SENCo 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 will 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 separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)