

Exam Access Arrangements Explained

Rationale Behind Exam Access Arrangements

Exam access arrangements are put in place for students who have the required knowledge, understanding and the skills but may not be able to demonstrate them in exams due to a difficulty or a disability. We aim to remove these barriers by **'reasonable adjustments'** in place to overcome **'substantial disadvantage'**. The phrases in bold come from the **2010 Equality Act** that we have a **duty** to comply with. We ensure that the integrity of assessments is not compromised. The aim is to create a **level playing field for all students**. We are **under a duty** to make reasonable adjustments.

Students need to agree with any arrangement otherwise they might be inadvertently disadvantaged.

The reasonable adjustment must be the student's normal way of working and must reflect how they work on a day to day basis. In most cases the reasonable adjustment must be put in place **well in advance** of the assessment.

Please be aware that:

teachers must make sure that students are not given any unfair advantage. The rules are strict, and if a student, or a member of staff, are found to be breaking them a student might lose marks.

How are students identified as needing Exam Access Arrangements and, once identified, what happens next?

Step 1

As soon as students join year 7 at Bishop Challoner Catholic College, identified students are added to a list that advises teachers to trial exam access arrangements for them. Identified students include those with a diagnosis of:

- ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder)
- ASC (Autism Spectrum Condition)
- A Specific Learning Difficulty (dyslexia, hyperlexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia)
- A physical disability
- A medical condition (e.g. diabetes)

In addition, we add students based on information provided by the primary school e.g. a student with handwriting that is challenging to read could be allowed to use a word processor for tasks and assessments that require extended writing.

Step 2

The list is continuously revised throughout years 7, 8 and 9, based on feedback from teachers and parents/carers, reviews of students with Pupil Passports, and analysis of progress. Students will be removed from the list if their circumstances change so that they are no longer disadvantaged.

Step 3

In the summer term of year 9 and the autumn term of year 10, listed students on the list are reviewed and online applications made for those needing exam access arrangements in their GCSE exams.

The 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) require us to provide background information to provide a 'pen portrait' of a student's needs. This is generally recorded in Part 1 of Form 8 for students with learning difficulties and in a file note for those with other 'Substantial Impairments'. This information has to be recorded by Miss R Wheeler, the SENCO and Access Arrangements Assessor.

We are expected to:

- Provide evidence from teaching staff that a student has persistent and severe difficulties and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning
- Provide specialist evidence of this such as an EHCP or a Psychiatrist report. A letter from a GP is not sufficient
- Please note that a diagnostic dyslexia report is also not sufficient
- Provide evidence that any exam access arrangements are the student's normal way of working

Use of Assessment Tools

Students who do not have an EHCP or diagnosed condition, need to have two or more below average standardised scores (84 or less) OR one below average standardised score (84 or less) AND one low average standardised score (85 to 89) relating to two different areas of speed of working

The assessments and scores need to be administered and recorded by Miss Wheeler.

Lucid Exact Exam Screening Digital Assessment Explained:

Word recognition

Word recognition is a speed test of the ability to recognise words out of context. It depends on fluent and efficient reading accuracy. In each item the student is presented with six real words shown in the centre of the screen. One (the 'target') is spoken by the computer, and the task is to identify the target word by clicking on it using the computer mouse as quickly as possible

Reading comprehension

The reading comprehension test comprises five passages of increasing length and difficulty. Each passage is accompanied by a number of multiple-choice questions.

Sometimes, assessments are used from the Dyslexia Portfolio.

List of Most Common Exam Access Arrangements

- **Extra time**, for candidates who work very slowly (it is expected that the option of supervised rest breaks rather than extra time has been thoroughly exhausted before this is considered)
- **Supervised Rest breaks**, in the event of concentration difficulties, extreme stress or medical needs
- **Reader/Computer Reader** for candidates who have difficulty reading by themselves
- **Reading Aloud**, for those who can concentrate or understand better if they can hear themselves read
- **Examination Reading Pen**, for candidates who need some words read aloud
- **Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology**, for slow or illegible writers, or those with significant difficulty with writing
- **Word processor**, for candidates who use a Word Processor in class ((please refer to our Word Processor Policy which is updated annually and can be found on the school website)

- **Prompter**, for candidates who lose concentration easily or need help to pace themselves
- **Bilingual Dictionary**, for candidates who have English as an Additional Language
- **Separate Room** (this includes a room up to 20 students. **Please note that the regulations state that nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre**

Updated September 2022 by Ms R Wheeler