Queen Elizabeth High School

Exams Appendix 6 Access Arrangements Policy

#EX26

Last updated: 28 January 2026

Review Date: 28 January 2027

Key staff involved in examinations procedures

Role	**Name**
Head of Centre:	Mr. M Farmer
Central Team Support:	Mrs D Wiles
SLT Members:	Mr. S Seneque, Mrs M Watkiss
SENCO:	Mrs E Davies
Exams Officer:	Ms G Mitchell
Lead Invigilator:	Mr P Staddon

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'. (AARA 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)

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA[1], 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 Queen Elizabeth High 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.

(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 SENCo or equivalent role 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 or equivalent role 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. ([1]AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ document. Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in in AARA (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.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 their first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/ reasonable adjustment process is covered in the Disability 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 for examinations – Appendix 4

The head of centre/senior leadership team will… recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, particularly Section 20 (7). 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. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must no**t charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment processes

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3

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

Ms Laura Taylor

Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangement

Appointment of assessors

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

Copies of certificates for internal and external assessors are located in the AARA and Exam Policies file.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Staff written engagement procedures are in place to check the qualifications of assessors at the point of engagement and prior to undertaking any assessment of candidates.

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

Exam Access Assessment processes are administered with regard to the equality Act 2010 regulations and SEN code of Practice (2014).

The school makes every attempt to identify pupils to be assessed for access arrangements as early as possible.

All pupils have a history and chronology of need. Pupils are identified by internal testing, and by referral of classroom teachers and SENCo for specialist testing as appropriate.

Testing is carried out in accordance to the JCQ regulations and timeframes. Evidence for the school setting is used to inform the assessor before they make any recommendations.

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

Candidates are assessed after the appointed assessor (SENCo) is informed that a potential need exists. This may come from class teachers as a result of reviewing a pupil's normal way of working or after reviewing class tests and exams.

In addition, the SENCo will formally remind all teachers to identify relevant pupils in each year group at least annually. Parents and pastoral support teachers are also encouraged to identify any student who they feel has learning or other difficulties.

Once pupils have been identified, their class teachers are asked to notify SENCo detailing any arrangements that they need to make to ensure progress in the classroom or to allow them to succeed in school tests. These notifications are then collated and if it is possible to build a picture of need, the student is tested to see whether we can evidence that need.

Tests used for access arrangements in school include:

Access Reading Test

Key Maths 3 (UK)

Single Work Reading Test

Level 1 Reading Fluency

WRIT

TOMAL-2

The evidence from the school setting is used to inform the assessor before the candidate is assessed or any recommendations are made.

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 AARA 8) **Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments** and (chapter 6) **Modified papers**)

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of 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.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

The SENCo, and Exams Officer apply for approval where this is required, through Access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

The SENCo:

The Candidate **Personal data consent from** and the **Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo**, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of JCQ Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), and/or centre based evidence including concise file note(s) on centre headed paper, signed and dated, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. Form 8 will only be used for candidates with learning difficulties who are not subject to a current EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs or those requiring a Language Modifier.
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the form is signed and dated as required prior to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- Ensures the names of all assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- Makes an awarding body referral through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is processed at the start of the course and at the latest by the awarding body deadline
- Maintains a file for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will either be all in hard copy within the candidate's file and will include:
- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
- appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required or appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
- in addition, for those qualifications covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval and a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- EO presents, if the SENCo is unavailable, the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates

- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify timetables written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy single sided print)

Centre-delegated arrangements /adjustments

The school follows JCQ guidance when providing centre delegated access arrangements.

The SENCo will make a decision to approve a centre-delegated access arrangement based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; **and**
- there is a genuine need for the arrangement, and it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Where a student may need centre-delegated arrangements such as the use of a small room or supervised rest breaks, a note on headed paper with the reason for the adjustment is made by the SENCo after discussion between them. This is stored in relevant student file, within the Access Arrangements Folder, in the Access Arrangement Facilitator's office.

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. 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

Appendix 9

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) within the centre will be made by the SENCo or equivalent role

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 (AARA 5.16)

Appendix 8 - Candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement.

The SENCo makes their decision based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- there is a genuine need for the arrangement, and it reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. (AA 5.16)

(The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)