



**THE FORUM CENTRE**

Policy Name	<b>Access Arrangements (Exams) Policy 2025/26</b>
Date of approval	May 2026
Next review due	May 2027
Signed	<i>K. Rickford.</i>
Date	12/05/26
Position	Headteacher

## Key staff involved in the Access Arrangements Policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	<b>Mrs K Rickford</b>
SENDCo	<b>Mr J Callender</b>
Exams officer	<b>Mrs S Broughton</b>

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at The Forum Centre is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Acesss Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

## **Introduction**

(AARA Definitions)

### **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 particular 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**

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 The Forum Centre 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

## 1. 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)

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. (AARA 4.2)

The principles for The Forum Centre to consider 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 (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AARA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AARA 4.2)

- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AARA 4.2)

## 2. The assessment process

At The Forum Centre, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AARA 7.3)

### **Appointment of assessors**

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at The Forum Centre:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified (AARA 7.3, 7.4)

### **Reporting the appointment of the assessors**

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AARA 7.4)
- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AARA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AARA 7.4)

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

The Forum Centre confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)

- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AARA 7.3)
- Relevant staff 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 (AARA 7.3)

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

The Forum Centre confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5)

### **3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through 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.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

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.

### **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by our SENDCo

## **Modified papers**

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AARA 6.1)

## **Roles and responsibilities**

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of the SENDCo

- To inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using AAO, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018;
- to submit applications for approval using AAO
- to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, 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 evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)

- to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- to order modified papers

## **Changes 2025/2026**

References to AA changed to AARA

(Added/Removed) Under heading **Roles and responsibilities:**

Added new bullet point to reference the requirement to comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Removed reference to a signed candidate personal data consent form and Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form which are no longer required.