

Enterprise Learning Alliance

Examination Access Arrangements Policy



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What are access arrangements?

“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 a number of 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’. In most cases it will not be reasonable for adjustments to be made to assessment objectives within a qualification. To do so would likely undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills and understanding of the candidate. There is no duty to make adjustments which the qualifications regulators have specified should not be made.

[JCQ AA regulations and guidance]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Enterprise Learning Alliance fulfils *“its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.”* [JCQ ‘General regulations for approved centres’]

This document is further referred to in this policy as [Gen regs approved centres 25-26 FINAL.pdf](#)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements 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
General and Vocational qualifications’*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL.pdf](#)

Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in the SEN and Disability policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of 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 appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required in JCQ regulations as follows:

- *an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8; and/or*
- *an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments; and/or*
- *a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website, who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.*

and

An access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which must include training in all of the following:

- *the theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals;*
- *the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested;*
- *the objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered;*
- *the appropriate selection and objective use of tests of cognitive skills, **see paragraph 7.5.12, page 81;***
- *the ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional...*

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

SENCo Qualifications checked by Executive Headteacher

Specialist Assessors Course CTP3A qualification – Middlesex University

Post Graduate Certificate SpLD – Canterbury Christchurch University

Post Graduate Certificate SEN Coordination (NASENCO) – Canterbury Christchurch University.

Exams access arrangements update CPD completed annually through Real Training.

Certificates are held by the exams officer.

How the assessment process is administered

How would students be identified for Exam Access Arrangement?

- From baseline testing completed on referral to The Enterprise Learning Alliance
- Parental Referral
- Subject Teacher Referral
- Information from previous schools

Baseline Testing

All students are assessed in Maths, English and Reading on referral to The Enterprise Learning Alliance. We use the New Group Reading Test (NGRT) a reading and comprehension test. These tests can help identify learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The SENCO will contact parents where this is the case, do further testing, and if necessary, put an appropriate intervention into place.

Parent Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

As with Parent Referrals, teachers can refer a student to the SENCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information and complete a questionnaire to provide evidence of normal way of working within lessons. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCO for further assessment and investigation.

Formal Access Arrangement testing

Formal assessments are conducted throughout the school year due to the rolling intake. Students qualifying for these formal assessments are determined by specified indicators following screening.

Stage 1: Early Screening

- New Group Reading Test
- English and Maths baselines
- Classroom observations of student by Teacher and SENCo

Stage 2: Formal Testing

Depending on outcomes of screening formal assessments are conducted to confirm access arrangements for exams. Assessments are carried out by the SENCo who is a qualified specialist assessor. No one assessment can be submitted as evidence. Assessments may include:

Dyslexia Portfolio

WRIT (Wide Range Intelligence Test)

The tests that the Specialist Tester uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

A report is produced by the SENCo highlighting the key elements including History of Need and assessment outcomes. Classroom Teachers also add NWOW onto learning plans for students.

Stage 3: Formal application for Access arrangements for examinations

The outcome of the assessments are recorded and summarised in a report by the assessor/ SENCo. The online submission is carried out by the SENCo.

By detailing this, you should be confirming
“that the assessment process is administered correctly...”

Recording evidence of need

Evidence of need is recorded using concise file notes, where necessary and appropriate the JCQ Form 8 and Form 9, along with ongoing review via bi weekly Alternative Curriculum forum which logs all assessments and student need. Students have individual learning plans which log their normal way of working and access arrangements needed.

Gathering evidence of *normal way of working*

The normal way of working as defined by JCQ...

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, e.g.

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’ (NWOW). For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Part 1 of Form 8, EHCP or the Form 9.

Evidence of normal ways of working are gathered from referral to The Enterprise Learning Alliance through weekly forum meetings, knowledge of the best way to support pupils in lessons to allow them to develop is discussed between Jenelle Harvey-Aduca and the Head of Centre. On referral from Classroom Teachers and prior to examinations Jenelle Harvey-Aduca conducts Dyslexia Portfolio tests with pupils to assess their reading, writing and cognitive abilities. Following meetings with teachers and TAs pupils are given appropriate support based on their need for the examinations. Care is taken not to provide support which gives them either an advantage or a disadvantage for the upcoming exams, but instead fair support is provided based on their need and abilities. Mock examinations allow a judgement to be made on support offered and slight alterations can be made to pupil’s access arrangements if necessary. All evidence of need is recorded within file notes, Part 1 of JCQ’s Form 8, student individual learning plans, along with supporting evidence from any assessments conducted.

[AARA 4.2.5]

Processing applications for access arrangements

Access arrangements online

Access arrangements online is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

“Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Further information on Access arrangements online is available from:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online>”

[AARA 8]

Access arrangements that **MUST** be processed on Access arrangements online.

25% extra time

Extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time)

Extra time of over 50%

Computer reader/ reader

Scribe/ speech recognition technology

Practical assistant

Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes

Listening to music/ white noise due to a substantial impairment

Appropriate need is gathered from observations, meetings and discussions with Class Teachers. Further evidence of need is acquired from studying pupil referral documents giving details of SEND, medical issues and SEMH difficulties. Testing is carried out by Jenelle Harvey-Aduca (SENCo) to determine appropriate and relevant support.

The SENCo (Jenelle Harvey-Aduca) collates all of the information and evidence of need and along with the Exams Officer completes the application for access arrangements using Access Arrangements online prior to the annually stated deadlines.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Appropriate need is gathered from observations, meetings and discussions with Class Teachers. Further need is acquired from studying pupil referral documents giving details of medical issues, SEMH needs and disability. Testing is carried out by Jenelle Harvey-Aduca (SENCo) to determine appropriate and relevant support. Centre-delegated access arrangements are then implemented and recorded centrally by the SENCo.

Word processor policy

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.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. We as a Centre outline the types of candidates who would benefit from the use of a word processor.

For example, a candidate with:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand;
- poor handwriting.

This list is not exhaustive.

The ELA have a word processor policy for exams.

Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre 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.*

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 Head of Year, 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 must 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.

Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities*

The SENCo must make their decision 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 – these include but are not limited to:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Word processor
- Read aloud and/ or use of exam reading pen
- Alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs
- Amplification equipment
- Brailers
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Non-electronic headphones
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners

- Timer on a candidate's desk – a small countdown clock, a small analogue or digital clock, digital timer, sand timer or stopwatch (the candidate must have an established difficulty and control the device themselves).
- Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties
- Prompter
- Language modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded exams
- Sign language professional
- Blank sheet of paper for doodling, where a candidate has persistent and significant concentration difficulties (this must be included with completed answer booklet).