



DISCOVERY
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Access Arrangements Policy (Examinations) 2023/24

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1. 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'. ([Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, Definitions](#)). This publication is further referred to in this Policy as AA.

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 is considered reasonable depends on several factors, which 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 is not 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.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to confirm that Chase High School (CHS) and St. Martin's School (SMS) have a written record, which clearly shows that 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. (Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) 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 CHS and SMS Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) with the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangement 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 SENDCo 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. (AA, Section 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'.

3. 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 them 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 disabled candidate.
- The SENDCo 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 their first examination.

4. Equalities Policy (Examinations)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Examinations), which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of examinations. Refer DET Equalities Policy (Examinations) for further detail.

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team ... recognise their 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 not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

5. 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)

CHS - Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Studies in Education approved programme in The Teaching of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia).

SMS - Associate Member of the British Dyslexia Association (AMBDA).

Appointment of Assessors of Candidates with Learning Difficulties

At the point at which an assessor is engaged/employed by 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 must 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) **must** be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCo. (AA, Section 7.3)

Reporting the Appointment of the Assessor(s)

The assessor's qualification is held on file in the Examinations Office.

Process for the Assessment of a Candidate's Learning Difficulties by an Assessor

The Centre follows JCQ's guidelines in AA, Chapter 7 when assessing candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor.

...SENDCos and assessors working within the Centre 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 (AA, Section 7.3)

The assessment process begins with initial information from primary school around the needs and requirements of certain students.

Where students join the School mid-term, information provided by the previous school is used. An initial whole year assessment is carried out in the Autumn term with Year 7 students to determine whether provision needs to be made throughout School. Necessary interventions are implemented for relevant students with ongoing monitoring and assessment.

A whole year assessment is carried out for Year 9 students to identify any further students, who may qualify for access arrangements. The timing of this assessment allows for the 26-month valid period to see the students through their formal examinations.

There is a great deal of collaboration between the assessor, SEND staff and teachers in order to ensure that a detailed picture of students can be formed. There is also an ongoing official assessment process throughout the academic year, which consists of referral from class teachers, parents/carers, self-referral, other School support staff and external professionals. The qualified assessor conducts an initial assessment using internal assessment methods.

The use of LUCID EXACT, LUCID RECALL, Access Reading Test help to determine whether to proceed with an application for access arrangements. The assessor/SENDCo then works with the Assistant SENDCo to process an application and detail the recommendations to parents/carers as well as to staff, and then to update the School Provision Map.

SENDCos and assessors always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment. This is used to ascertain whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating

the normal way of working within the Centre and, ultimately, assessing the candidate themselves, should be instigated.

For a private candidate, such as, a distance learner or a home-educated student, SMS puts steps in place to support the students in taking the examinations, such as sending the paper home with an invigilator. All access arrangements are applied for through the School. Refer to [AA](#), Section 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and Section 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) for further information.

Picture of Need/Normal Way of Working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo 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 SENDCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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

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

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo. (AA, Section 7.5)

Full reference to AA, Sections 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) must be made and a record made of the process that reflects the requirements.

6. 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 Administration 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.

Note the requirements around the completion of a candidate personal data consent form and the requirement for completion of the [data protection confirmation by the Examinations Officer or SENDCo](#), prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENDCo must 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 SENDCo* 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)

Full reference to AA, Chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), and Chapter 6 (Modified papers) must be made and a record made of the process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-Delegated Arrangements/Adjustments

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments are decided in collaboration with the SEND Department and the Wellbeing team. This is recorded by the SENDCo and the Examinations Officer, and recognised as a reasonable adjustment.

Examination Access Arrangements are designed for candidates with the required knowledge, skills and understanding, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment or examination in its normal format due to a disability or difficulty. These arrangements are designed to enable all candidate's equal opportunity to access examinations and assessments. Examination Access Arrangements should replicate the normal way of working, for which there is evidence of need, unless such arrangements would affect the integrity of the assessment. The Equality Act 2010 insists that an Awarding Body makes reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a significant disadvantage in comparison to someone, who is not disabled. JCQ guidance indicates that Examination Access Arrangements should be initiated by the Centre and not by an external body to the Centre.

The Examination Access Arrangements available are:

- Supervised rest breaks (these have to be considered before extra time);
- Separate room;
- Read aloud;
- Reading pen;
- Extra time;
- Scribe;
- Computer reader/reader;
- Word processor;
- Prompter;
- Modified papers;
- Overlays;
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components;
- Alternative venues for the administration of examinations;
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities;
- Bilingual translation dictionaries.

A reasonable adjustment may be exclusive to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. All of the above Examination Access Arrangements have to be a student's normal way of working, with evidence provided. The SENDCo and the Examinations Officer determine and manage all Examination Access Arrangements.

7. Centre-Specific Criteria for Particular Arrangements/Adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Examinations)

An examination 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 examinations 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.

Refer to the DET Word Processor Policy (Examinations) for further detail.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an examination candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, for example, a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) is made by the Additional Learning Support Lead/SENDCo.

The decision is 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 AA Chapter 4, Section 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo 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. (AA, Section 5.16)