

Exams - Access Arrangements

Table of Contents

1	What are Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments?	2
2	Definitions	2
3	Purpose of the Policy	2
4	Disability (Exams) Policy.....	3
5	The Assessment Process	3
5.1	Recording Evidence of Need	3
5.2	Gathering Evidence of Normal Way of Working.....	4
5.3	Assessment by Specialist Assessor.....	4
5.4	Evidence of Five Conditions	5
6	Processing Applications for Access Arrangements	6
6.1	JCQ - Access Arrangements Online	6
6.2	Access Arrangements for IGCSE Exams.....	7
6.2	Deadlines.....	7
7	Centre-Delegated Access Arrangements	7
8	Private Candidates	8
9	Review and Development	8
	Appendix 1	9

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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 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’.”

[AA, Definitions, page 3]

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’.”

[AA, Definitions, page 3]

A list of access arrangements typically approved for candidates at Ewell Castle and how they are implemented is shown in Appendix 1.

2 Definitions

In this Policy:

- the current version of JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* is referred to “AA”
- the current version of JCQ *General Regulations for Approved Centres* is referred to as “GR”
- the expression “SENCo” includes reference to the Deputy SENCo(s).

3 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Ewell Castle 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...*” [GR, section 5.5]

The SENCo holds individual files for each access arrangements candidate, that contain detailed records of all the essential information that must to be held according to the regulations.

(Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection) ([AA 4.2](#))

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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) before his/her first examination.

4 Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in Appendix 1 – ~~Disability~~ Equalities (Exams) Policy which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

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

5 The Assessment Process

The assessment process is:

- recording evidence of need
- gathering evidence of normal way of working
- assessment by specialist assessor OR evidence of five conditions
- processing access arrangements

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

5.1 Recording Evidence of Need

In Years 7 to 9, where it is felt that access arrangements may be required in the classroom and for internal tests and examinations, a record of need is built up and recorded by the SENCo.

Candidates may come to the attention of the SENCo as a result of:

- information provided by previous schools
- concerns noted following normal school screening and/or academic monitoring.
- concerns voiced by teachers or heads of year about a candidate with difficulties that prevent them from completing tests or practice papers or accessing the curriculum effectively
- concerns raised by parents
- concerns raised by candidates themselves.

Candidates may have joined the Centre with pre-existing learning difficulties identified by their previous school or in a report by an educational psychologist or specialist teacher. If requested, and supported with appropriate evidence, recommended access arrangements will, in most cases, be applied to entrance tests and kept in place during the candidate's first year at Ewell Castle. However, the Centre reserves the right to interpret the findings of any reports and, together with its own continuing assessments on the candidate's progress, add or remove access arrangements as appropriate. This is because situations change and a candidate's needs may increase or decrease.

This information will be used to paint a picture of the candidate's needs as required by Section A of the JCQ document *Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties (Form 8)* ("JCQ Form 8").

5.2 Gathering Evidence of Normal Way of Working

Evidence of a candidate's normal way of working throughout his/her time at Ewell Castle School is collected from teaching staff. Teaching staff are encouraged to provide the SENCo with relevant copies of tests or classwork and to contact the SENCo with any further information. A historical picture of the use of access arrangements for each pupil is collated. The SENCo will bear in mind that "normal way of working" as defined by JCQ [section 4.2.5 AA] is:

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, for example:

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *literacy intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *mock examinations.*

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

This information will be used to detail the candidate's normal way of working as required by Part 1 of JCQ Form 8.

5.3 Assessment by Specialist Assessor

During the Summer Term of Year 9, where there is evidence of the need for access arrangements for a pupil with learning difficulties who will be taking public examinations in Year 10 or 11, a pupil is assessed by an assessor appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in section 73 AA.

Specialist Assessors

The Qualifications of the Current Assessors

Ms M O'Connell (LST)	Postgraduate Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) - 11/2014
Mrs N Andrews (Deputy SENCo)	OCR Level 7 Diploma in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) – 03/11/2011
Mrs S Bailey (Head of SS Learning Support)	OCR Level 7 Diploma in Teaching and Assessing Learners with Dyslexia/Specific Learning Difficulties – 14/09/2016
Dr Jennifer T Simpson	Educational Psychologist – HCPC No PYL28062

Appointment of Assessors

At the time an assessor is engaged/employed in the Centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AA. Members of staff who gain further qualifications whilst in the employ of the Centre are also required to present their original certificates. This process will be carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The Head of Centre will ensure that, as part of the appointment process of an assessor, that the assessor:

- holds suitable and current qualification/practising certificate or is registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) as outlined in AA 7.3.3 and 7.3.4
 - has a thorough understanding of the current edition of AA and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved.
 - is familiar with the Equality Act 2010 in order to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate
- holds an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged learners who have learning difficulties or be an HCPC registered psychologist

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The SENCo will retain on file, for each approved assessor, a copy of the appropriate evidence/qualification/practising certificate or details of the HCPC registration number, as outlined in AA 7.4

Assessment

The Assessor will:

- carry out an assessment using current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores, where published, [7.5.7 AA] AND which are relevant to support the application [7.5.6 AA].
- establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affect their performance [7.5.4 AA].
- complete Section C of JCQ Form 8

Following completion of the assessment and before an online application is processed, the SENCo will review the evidence, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement, and, if appropriate, complete, sign and date the JCQ Form 8.

Ewell Castle School is unable to accept assessments carried out in previous schools although appropriate evidence of need and of normal way of working can be accepted. Therefore, a new assessment will need to be undertaken by an Assessor before arrangements can be put in place for candidates transferring into Years 10 to 13.

Private Assessment

A privately commissioned assessment carried out **without prior consultation with the Centre** cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access Arrangements Online [7.34.6 AA].

5.4 Evidence of Five Conditions

A JCQ Form 8 and an assessment are not required where a candidate has complex needs, i.e.:

- communication and interaction needs or
- a learning difficulty with a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of special educational needs, or
- sensory and/or physical needs, or
- social, mental or emotional needs

which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her speed of working as evidenced by one of:

- a letter from CAMHS or a HCPC registered psychologist or a psychiatrist; or
- a letter from a hospital consultant; or
- a letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or
- a letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or
- a letter from the Occupational Health Service; or
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an EHCP

which confirms the candidate's disability.

It is the responsibility of the candidate (or his/her parents or guardians) to obtain any requisite letters from professionals as above.

In such a case, the SENCo will complete an Evidence of the Five Conditions Form, which will:

- confirm that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information, and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- include evidence of the candidate's then current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for the proposed access arrangement(s)
- confirm that without the proposed access arrangement(s) the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage; (The candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.)
- confirm that the proposed access arrangement(s) is/are the candidate's normal way of working within the Centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

6 Processing Applications for Access Arrangements

6.1 JCQ - Access Arrangements Online

Access Arrangements Online ("AAO") 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. Most access arrangements remain valid for 26 months but need to be renewed should a candidate continue on to GCE qualifications.

Where the SENCo feels that a candidate is eligible to apply for access arrangements for public examinations, she will:

- arrange for the candidate to read, sign and date a completed JCQ Personal Data Consent, Privacy Notice (AAO) and Data Protection Form ("Data Protection Notice")
- liaise with the Exams Officer to make an online application via AAO and/or direct to Cambridge Assessment International Examinations ("CAIE") as appropriate.

If, for some reason, an application is not approved, additional paperwork/evidence may be required to justify the request being made. In this situation, the SENCo will work together with the Exams

Officer to ensure that the correct evidence is submitted to the relevant awarding body or bodies. The Exams Officer will be notified by the awarding body once an outcome has been decided.

Once an application is approved, a printed copy will be kept on file by the SENCo in the Learning Support Department. In addition to Exams Officer will add the application reference number, expiry date and details of the access arrangements onto the candidate's records on the Centre's MIS, iSAMS.

6.2 Access Arrangements for IGCSE Exams

In line with JCQ requirements, access arrangements for candidates sitting Pearson IGCSE exams are applied for by completing JCQ Form 1. Forms are emailed to the Pearson Special Requirements team together with relevant evidence.

Access arrangements applications for Cambridge Assessment International Examinations ("CAIE") require completion of the Preparation: Form 1. If a candidate already has an access arrangement approval from JCQ, this form will be completed up to Section A and submitted to CAIE together with a copy of the JCQ outcome letter.

6.2 Deadlines

In compliance with the JCQ requirements, in most cases, applications for JCQ access arrangements for GCSEs will be processed in the Autumn Term of Year 10 (or the Autumn Term of Year 12 for GCEs).

Although arrangements for a late diagnosis of a disability or late manifestation of an impairment may be processed as the need arises, evidence of need is still required to the same standard as applications processed in usual time.

The deadline for applications for exams taking place in the summer series is **21st February** in that year. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

7 Centre-Delegated Access Arrangements

Some access arrangements can be "Centre-delegated" which means that an application to JCQ/Pearson/CAIE is not required. Examples of such arrangements include supervised rest breaks, candidates who read aloud, use of a word processor (with spell and grammar check disabled), use of a prompter, coloured overlays and separate invigilation within the Centre.

The SENCo must be satisfied that there is a genuine need for the arrangement to be put in place. In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established within the Centre and thus well known to a Form Tutor, Head of Year, SENCo and/or senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. Centre-delegated access arrangements, including the reason for the need, will be noted on a candidate's Form 8 or Evidence of Five Conditions Form.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor (spell and grammar check disabled)

A 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. See the Word Processors in Examinations Policy for more information.

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision as to whether a candidate may be given approval for separate invigilation within the Centre will be based on whether the candidate:

- has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- is the candidate's normal way of working within the Centre.

Separate invigilation will reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

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

8 Private Candidates

When accepting any private candidates in the Centre, the Exams Officer will seek information from the candidate on whether the candidate has any history of additional needs. If required, the SENCo will undertake the necessary steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working as well as:

- providing advice
- arranging an assessment by a Centre Assessor (if required)
- completing either a JCQ Form 8 or Evidence of Five Conditions Form
- obtaining a signed Data Protection Notice
- liaising with the Exams Officer to obtain the necessary approvals from the awarding bodies.

9 Review and Development

9.1 Procedure

This document is reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of AA.

9.2 Links with other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Examinations Policy
- Disability (Exams) Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Word Processors in Examinations Policy

Appendix 1

This list of access arrangements is not exhaustive but is typical of access arrangements approved for candidates of Ewell Castle School and how those arrangements are applied. Some candidates may have one access arrangements, others more than one.

For full information on access arrangements, reference should be made to the current JCQ's publication Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, which can be viewed on the JCQ website at <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance>

Extra Time

The majority of candidates allowed this arrangement will receive 25% extra time. In rare and exceptional cases, a candidate may be granted up to 50% extra time. Candidates with extra time will usually be seated in the main examination rooms.

Word Processor

Candidates will usually be seated either at a laptop in the Sports Hall or at a computer in Room 24. Please refer to the Word Processors in Examinations Policy for further information.

Human Scribe

Candidates with the use of a human scribe would be accommodated separately to other candidates.

Human Reader

Candidates with the use of a human reader would normally be accommodated separately to other candidates. However, a small group of candidates may share a reader if the amount of reading required is minimal.

Computer Reader

Candidates with the use of computer reader would use headphones to listen and may be sat at a laptop in the Sports Hall or at a computer in Room 24

Reading Pen

Candidates with the use of a reading pen would use headphones and be seated in the main examination rooms.

Separate Invigilation

Candidates who have the access arrangement of separate invigilation will be accommodated away from the main examination rooms, more often than not in small groups. Candidates with this arrangement will often be seated with candidates doing different exams for different lengths of time.

Supervised Rest Breaks

Candidates with this arrangement are allowed a pause in their exam, usually up to a maximum of fifteen minutes per hour of the exam. During the rest period, the candidate is not permitted to have access to the exam paper. Candidates are permitted to leave their desks but not leave the room unless an invigilator is available to supervise them.

Prompter

Most candidates with the arrangement of a prompter will be seated in the main examination rooms. They will be identified to the invigilators who will keep a regular eye on the candidate to ensure they are actively working. If the candidate is not working, the invigilator will check in with the candidate and remind them to keep working. Invigilators will complete a log to indicate the regularity of the checks and whether the candidate required prompting.

Colour Naming

Candidates with the arrangement of colour naming (for colour blindness) would be seated in the main examination rooms and can request an invigilator to identify colours for them when necessary.

Bilingual Dictionary

Candidates for whom English is an Additional Language with the arrangement of a bilingual dictionary will be provided with a hard copy of an appropriate bilingual dictionary which may not be removed from the examination room.