

Disability Policy (Exams)

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Purpose of the Policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to both the school *Accessibility Policy* and *SEN/Learning Support Policy*. They detail how the school

“recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010[†]. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the Centre provides to disabled candidates.

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”

[Quote taken directly from chapter 5.4 of the current JCQ publication [General regulations for approved Centres](#)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy details how the Centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

The Equality Act 2010 - Definition of Disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the current JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. (A copy of p4 of this publication is attached at the end of this policy)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#).

Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Directs relevant Centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents of [AA](#), and refers to and directs relevant Centre staff to this annually updated JCQ publication
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the Centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures that appropriately qualified assessors are appointed and that evidence of the qualifications of the assessors appointed are held on file.
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (*SEN/Learning Support Policy*)
- Is responsible for all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the Centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis where applicable
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure Centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Provides information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate

Exams Officer

- Ensures a policy demonstrating the Centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Teaching staff

- Are involved with the identification of students who are clearly having difficulties accessing the curriculum, through their own departmental assessment procedures
- Are responsible for supporting students with SEN in their learning within a classroom setting
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

Assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

- Have detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication [AA](#). (*The school assessors of candidates with learning difficulties are qualified access arrangements specialist assessors*).

Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is Centre-delegated
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8, where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the Centre
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:
 - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the Centre
 - in addition, for GCSE and GCE (A Level) qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector
- Liaises with teaching staff and exams officer regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Maintains an up to date list of all pupils within the school who are working with Access Arrangements

Exams team

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) which may be relevant to the EO role
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure AAO approval is in place for early opening of papers where this may be required i.e. when the Centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (e.g. copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- Following the appropriate process (AAO for GCE and GCSE; *JCQ Form 7* or *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, when they are required for a candidate
- Works from the up to date list of pupils with SEN and liaises closely with SENCo to ensure the correct examination arrangements are in place for each of these pupils
- Responsible for updating the SIMS Examiner module with correct Access Arrangements information prior to the start of the examination series
- Applies for approval when required, in conjunction with the SENCo, via *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body if qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- 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, in conjunction with the SENCo, should the initial application for approval not be approved by AAO, but where the Centre believe that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)

Implementing Access Arrangements and the Conduct of Exams

Roles and Responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication [*Instructions for conducting examinations*](#) (ICE).

Assistant Headteacher

- Support the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant Centre staff, including the Facilities Manager, in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Are familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of Centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#)
- Are responsible for the Centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Is familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of Centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#)
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Ensures a invigilator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- Liaises with the EO if a invigilator is required to support a candidate who needs an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Appoint appropriate Centre staff as invigilators to support candidates (e.g. to act as a practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)

Exams team

- Is familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of Centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#)
- Liaises with Facilities Manager/IT Support/Cover Manager/SENCo regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures invigilators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures the invigilator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Ensures an invigilator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate

QESstudio

- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by invigilators
- Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant Centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Liaises with the SENCo and ensures that exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be necessary for a disabled candidate to access it
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding any needs for the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding any rooming needs for access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not contacts the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes any required modifications that are permitted to be done by the Centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format if a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) and, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early if preparation is required by the invigilator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter only)
- Ensures that the invigilator only has access to the papers one hour prior to the published start time of the exam
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam if required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
- prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and A Level qualifications
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Liaises with the Head of Year, and informs the SENCo, when a invigilator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body if qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

Lead Invigilators

- Are familiar with the *Checklist for heads of Centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#) (page 44). *A copy is attached to this policy.*

Facilities Manager

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a Centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the Centre and moderated by the awarding body.

“Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across Centres are classified as ‘NEA’.”

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication [*Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments – Foreword, page 3*](#)]

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff and EO to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures invigilators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Liaise with the exams officer regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

Exams Officer

- Ensures Centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Liaises with the Head of Year where a invigilator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by invigilators

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

Internal exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the Centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Heads of Year

- Provide exam materials to the School Office in order that they can be modified for a candidate
- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when require candidate’s work where applicable