

**Access Arrangements Policy**

Date: September 2023

Review: September 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

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| --- | --- |
| Role | Name(s) |
| SENCo | Marius Dan |
| Head of centre | Kelly Osborne-James |
| Exams Manager | Campus Co-ordinator, Michelle Bishop is currently supporting this role with our new Exams Officer starting in April’ who will be permanent |

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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’.

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’.

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 1.8). The definitions and procedures in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Deanery CE Academy 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.

(JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

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**’.

1This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) (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 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **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 his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

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

The Centre will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010.

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 will be appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance), section 7.3.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor’s qualification will be obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance). This process will be carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor

Where a candidate is disabled and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement If Special Educational Needs, the SENCo will prepare a referral demonstrating the candidate’s normal way of working and completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidates assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, ie a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of the Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.

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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6(Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within 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.

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the access arrangements information. This includes a copy of the candidate’s approved application, appropriate evidence of need and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams 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.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (eg computer, laptop or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body’s specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic brailler or a tablet.

Alternative Arrangements Rooming Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre which may include sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates or one-to-one invigilation) will be made by the SENCo.

The decision 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.