

Equality Policy (Exams)

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Vision, Purpose & Values

Our Vision

Our students will be recognised locally & nationally for their positive impact on the communities and industries in which they choose to work.

Our Purpose

To inspire our students to gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be resilient and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our Values

Excellence: A culture of creativity, high expectations, ambition and aspiration

Respect: Showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect to each other and our environment

Integrity: Honesty, openness and trust at the heart of College life

Diversity: Celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a key to our success

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1. Purpose

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide equalities and /or disability/ accessibility policy/ plan which details how the centre will:

“recognises its 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; †for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”

[JCQ’s [General regulations for approved centres](#) 2020-2021 (section 5.4). 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
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 Definition of Disability

A definition is provided in the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024-2025 (Definitions Section).

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

1.1. Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file.

Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role

Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- 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 appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements

Exams Manager/ Exams Officer (EM/EO)

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role

Teaching/ Learning Support Staff

- Where appropriate inform the SENCo (or equivalent role) of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate

Support Staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- Where appropriate, provide comments/observations to support the SENCo (or equivalent role) to 'paint a holistic picture of need' confirming normal way of working for a candidate

1.2. Assessor of Candidates with Learning Difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication [AA](#)
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for all candidates are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of [AA](#)
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates

- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements
- Produces and annually reviews/updates a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- 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 is considered on a subject by subject basis
- 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
- Provide 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
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

2. Use of Word Processors

The Word Processor policy forms part of the centre Access Arrangement Policy and is located on the staff intranet.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g., 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 braille or a tablet. [ICE 14.20]

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. For example, a candidate with...

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. [[AA](#) 5.8]

3. Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

SENCo or equivalent role

- 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 for those qualifications included
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of relevant JCQ Forms such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements-Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc.
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her 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 qualifications (where approval is required), a printout 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 regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates

Exams Manager/Exams Officer (EM/EO)

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role
- 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 for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- Applies for approval where this is required, through Access arrangements online (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures that where approval is required the application is processed on time and no later than the awarding body's published deadline
- Ensures that the full supporting evidence is in place before an online application is processed
- Reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement
- Holds all supporting evidence and presents such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request
- 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 where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- In addition, for those qualifications covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval and a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their

personal details being shared) • Ensures that the agreed adjustment has been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g., internal tests and mock examinations

- Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure AAO approval is in place for early opening of papers where this may be required where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)

Following the appropriate process, orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

4. 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).

Head of Centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

SENCo or equivalent role

- 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)
- 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 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 that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate

Exams Manager

- 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 2024-2025](#)
- Provide the ALS lead/SENCo with external exam schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidate's documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- 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 that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher but where the candidate's own subject teacher has to be used, ensures a separate invigilator is always present

- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate.
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- 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 will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets) that may be required 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, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
 - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
 - the Communication Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
 - the Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening examination 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where 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 particular arrangements

- 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 ALS lead/SENCo where a facilitator 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 where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

Other Relevant Centre Staff

- Support the ALS lead/SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams. Which may include:
 - IT or other specialist equipment that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
 - rooms and non-specialist equipment (chairs, tables, etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate

5. Internal Assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked/standardised 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](#)]

SENCo or equivalent role

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

Teaching Staff

- Support the ALS lead/SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide the ALS lead/SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators

Liaise with the ALS lead/SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

6. Internal Exams/ Assessments

These are exams or tests (usually known as non-examination assessments (NEA) which are set and marked within the centre, normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

SENCo or equivalent role

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

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

7. Facilitating Access – Examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate-by-candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment

- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.