

Access Arrangements Policy 2025–26

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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. 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'. (AARA¹, Definitions)

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'.

¹ This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AARA](#) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Windsor Forest Colleges Group 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**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements 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 SENCo (or equivalent role) 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. (¹[AARA 4.2](#))*

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

3. General Principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 a disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 (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 Equalities Policy can be found in Shared drive/Policies, Information and Resources/Exams
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This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

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 AARA_7.3.

The Qualification(s) of the Current Assessor(s)

M Smith- Level 7 in Assessing and Teaching Learners with Specific Learning difficulties
K Clark- CCET 3 CPTA

Appointment of Assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

Please refer to Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure found in Shared drive/Human Resources/Policies

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* (GR 5.4)

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 SENCo. (AARA 7.3)

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

When a student is brought to the attention of the ALS lead/SENCo, the ALS Lead/SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator will investigate further. If further testing or screening is indicated, this will be carried out. The outcomes of the assessments will be recorded and summarised; where an Access Arrangement is recommended due to a learning difficulty, JCQ Form 8 Part 2

(the assessor's report) will be completed and used as evidence for online submission of a formal Access Arrangement application. The College will then apply to the Awarding Bodies using the Access Arrangements Online application system. The feedback is instant, and, where the Access Arrangement is approved, the arrangement is allocated to the student. The evidence of need is held on file, and the ALS Lead/SENCo monitors and ensures that the Access Arrangement is normal working practice for the student within college.

Also detail any process (where relevant) for a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student (refer to the requirement in [GR](#), section 5.4)

Picture of Need / Normal Way of Working

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), depending on the arrangement required.

These could include:

- Form 8 report from Access Arrangements Assessor
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. spelling, writing, reading comprehension tests
- Any letters from outside agencies, hospitals or doctors
- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo **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 SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process... (AARA 7.5)

Make full reference to AARA 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) and record your 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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers)).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

The Exams team is responsible for the application.

Electronic files are managed by ALS with access by the Exams Team

ALS Lead/SENCo are responsible for completing and providing all relevant paperwork before the exams team can make any approval requests

Applications are made through CAP by the exams team

Approval confirmations are saved as PDF and kept on electronic file with the evidence and relevant forms, including signed data protection

Access arrangements are logged on EBS which pulls the information through to student ILP.

Exams team are responsible for ordering modified papers

The SENCo **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 copy of the candidate's approved application;
- appropriate evidence of need (where required);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

Make full reference to AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated Arrangements / Adjustments

Centre delegated arrangements are assessed by ALS Lead/SENCo evidenced, kept on file and logged on EBS

7. 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.

Shared drive/Policies, Information and Resources/Exams/Policies

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce 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. This policy must be available for inspection. (AARA 5.8)

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).

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 (AARA 5.16)

Where a student has a diagnosis or significant need they may be awarded the arrangement of alternative rooming. This will be discussed between assessor and student.

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.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room must only apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)