



Access Arrangement Policy

2026/27
Academic Year

SLT Owner	Mark Salter
Department Area	Quality & Curriculum
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	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	1 of 9
		Version	1

Definition and purpose

The purpose of an Access Arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories:

- Arrangements which are delegated to centres
- Arrangements which require prior JCQ awarding body approval

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 undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

Special Educational Needs

A candidate has “special educational needs” as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years, if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mobility impairment mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						

	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	2 of 9
		Version	1

Available Access Arrangements include:

Computer reader

Scribe/Speech recognition technology

Extra time of up to 100%

Word processor
dictionary

Supervised rest breaks

Prompter

Practical Assistant

Sign Language Interpreter

Modified Papers

Bilingual translation

Coloured/Enlarged Papers

Braille Papers

Fundamental Principles

- Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for Access Arrangements will be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre:
 - in the classroom; or
 - working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
 - literacy intervention strategies;
 - and/or in internal college tests and mock examinations.
- This is commonly referred to as '**normal way of working**'.
- The key principle is that the SENCo or the Access Arrangement Assessor working within the centre can show a history of support and provision. Access arrangements are not introduced for the first time at the point of assessment; they are based on prior evidence and reflect the candidate's normal way of working.
- The candidate must have appropriate opportunities to practise using the Access Arrangement(s) before his/her examination.
- If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to them, e.g., 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it may **not** their normal way of working. In these specific circumstances, a review of access arrangements will take place.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						

	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	3 of 9
		Version	1

Deadlines for submitting applications for Access Arrangements

Applications for Access Arrangements must be processed by the internal deadline. This will allow centres to make provision for Access Arrangements from the perspective of timetabling logistics, accommodation and adhere to JCQ deadlines. If a referral to an awarding body becomes necessary, there may not be sufficient time to process the application if it is made after the respective deadline. Any previously approved JCQ Access Arrangements that have not expired will remain in place until any new or amended Access Arrangements are approved by JCQ. A new NWOW will however, be needed in each academic year regardless.

Core and Supplementary Evidence

All GCE centres will be inspected by a member of the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. Inspectors will expect to see appropriate documentation to substantiate the use of an Access Arrangement processed electronically.

Core evidence for candidates with a **Learning Difficulty**

In order to award extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the college must assess the needs of the candidate based on one of the following documents:

- a statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability; or
- an assessment carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9 by a specialist assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

Assessment

We review all students with existing access arrangements to confirm that the arrangement remains appropriate to their needs. Where required, we carry out re-assessment to provide up-to-date assessment evidence to support applications for Access Arrangements in their written examinations.

Re-assessment is not required for all candidates when arrangements are being rolled forward. For many candidates (e.g., 25% extra time, reader, scribe), existing assessment evidence can be used, provided it is still valid and supported by current centre-based evidence of normal way of working. Mandatory re-assessment applies only in specific cases (e.g., extra time >25%, language modifier, or where evidence is no longer valid/out of date).

A series of psychometric tests (recommended by PATOSS and acceptable to JCQ) are administered to determine processing, reading and writing speeds using standardised scores.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						

	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	4 of 9
		Version	1

The assessment is conducted in-house by either an External Assessor (1) (who has an established relationship with the centre) or an Access Arrangement Assessor (2) (appointed by the Head of Centre), qualified to administer the tests, which compare the literacy of an individual student against a standardised set of peer results. Subsequent support and practice in use of appropriate Access Arrangements is offered by the department.

Privately Commissioned Assessments

The College can only accept privately commissioned assessments where the external assessor has, before assessment, established a relationship with the centre (college). This is set out in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publication, Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment.

- **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.**
 - **The SENCo must complete at least a 'skeleton' Section A of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed (Section C of Form 8).**
- **Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Section A of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.**

1 Certificates of External Assessors are held on file along with written approval from the Head of Centre.

2 Access Arrangements Assessors have successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment and attend annual CPD (communicate-ed JCQ Examination Access Arrangement - Update/Refresher).

- **An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.**

The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						

	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	5 of 9
		Version	1

Literacy Difficulty Referrals

The college must provide evidence of how a literacy difficulty significantly and persistently impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom. Information is gathered from the student, those who work with the student (teachers and/or support staff), progress grades and screening assessment results.

The tests are undertaken purely for educational purposes and in no respect indicate a diagnosis of any underlying Specific Learning Difficulty.

Core Evidence for a candidate with a **Medical/Health condition**

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making a request for extra time, since they may be more appropriate for candidates with a medical condition, a physical disability or a psychological condition.

In addition to the supplementary evidence collated by the college, the file note is supported with, for example:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist; **or**
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; **or**
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); **or**
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care plan which confirms the candidate's disability.

Please note that a letter from a G.P. is acceptable for supervised rest breaks or a request for a small room, though all other Access Arrangements (including extra time) require an up-to-date letter from one of the above.

Supplementary evidence for all Access Arrangements

In all cases, in addition to the core evidence, where new, or revised, Access Arrangements are being applied for the college must paint a picture of the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo or the Specialist Assessor working within the centre must have available evidence which clearly shows that an Access Arrangement is (still) needed for their examinations in line with Awarding Organisations and JCQ requirements.

ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						

	POLICY Access Arrangement Policy 2025/26 Academic Year	Number	
		Page	6 of 9
		Version	1

- confirm that the candidate continues to have 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 current difficulties and how they **substantially** impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- confirm that without the application of extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the candidate would **continue to be at a substantial disadvantage** when taking their examinations compared to other non-disabled candidates;
- confirm that extra time/reader/scribe, etc. continues to be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre **as a direct consequence of their disability**.

Special Consideration

Special consideration in exams is a post-exam adjustment made when a candidate has been temporarily disadvantaged by unforeseen circumstances at or close to the time of the assessment. Applications for special consideration must be made on a case-by-case basis and be submitted to the relevant awarding body in accordance with the awarding body's published requirements. This will be processed by the examination's office.

Temporary Injury

Access Arrangement Online (AAO) is used for a candidate with a temporary injury or impairment, such as a broken arm during the examination period. These arrangements are processed as the need arises. Medical evidence is retained within the department, together with a file note detailing the circumstances, a signed data protection form and a copy of the AAO Approval.

Reviewing the Policy

In light of JCQ regulation updates, this policy is reviewed annually.

Contacts

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ISSUE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
DATE	07/2025	06/2025						