

Policy Name:	Equalities Policy (Exams)
Policy Type:	Statutory
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Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner:	Steph Brown

Glossary of abbreviations

JCQ	Joint Council of Qualifications
JCQ AA	Joint Council of Qualifications: Access Arrangements
JCQ GR	Joint Council of Qualifications: General Regulations
JCQ ICE	Joint Council of Qualifications: Instructions for Conducting Exams

Summary of updates for 2025 - 26

Roles and Responsibilities change: The candidate is no longer required to sign to give permission to for the SENCo to request exam access arrangements on their behalf.

1. Aims

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- 1.3. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.
- 1.4. The purpose of this policy is to confirm that the centre
 - 1.4.1. has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process
 - 1.4.2. is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements (JCQ GR 5.4)
 - 1.4.3. has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its 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)

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1. 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.

- 2.2. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.
- 2.2.1. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille.
- 2.3. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.
- 2.4. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:
- 2.4.1. the needs of the disabled candidate;
- 2.4.2. the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- 2.4.3. the cost of the adjustment;
- 2.4.4. the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
- 2.5. An adjustment will not be approved if it:
- 2.5.1. involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- 2.5.2. involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- 2.5.3. affects the security and integrity of the assessment.
- 2.6. The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates

3. General Principles

- 3.1. 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, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (JCQ GR 5.4)
- 3.2. 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. (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.3. The principles for the centre to consider include:
- 3.3.1. 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 providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.3.2. Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.3.3. Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of

the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (JCQ AA 4.2)

- 3.4. Applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year the course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working (AARA 4.2)
- 3.5. Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.6. The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.7. The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 3.8. The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in the Equalities Policy.

4. The Assessment Process – appointing qualified assessors

- 4.1. At the centre, assessments are carried out by an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (JCQ AA 7.3).
- 4.2. At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at the centre:
 - 4.2.1. Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
 - 4.2.2. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
 - 4.2.3. Evidence of successful completion of a post- graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified (AARA 7.3, 7.4)
- 4.3. Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (JCQ AA 7.4). When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.
- 4.4. In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. (JCQ AA 7.4)
- 4.5. The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status (JCQ AA 7.4)

5. The Assessment Process – Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

- 5.1. The centre confirms:

- 5.1.1. Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (JCQ AA 7.5, 7.6)
- 5.1.2. Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's assessor (JCQ AA 7.5)
- 5.1.3. Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (JCQ AA 7.5)
- 5.1.4. The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (JCQ AA 7.5)
- 5.1.5. A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements or process an application using Access arrangements online (JCQ AA 7.3)
- 5.1.6. Relevant staff within the centre should always carefully consider privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate should be instigated (JCQ AA 7.3)
- 5.1.7. Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up consistent process. (JCQ AA 7.5)

6. The Assessment Process – Processing access arrangements and adjustments

6.1. For arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval:

- 6.1.1. Access arrangements online (JCQ AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- 6.1.2. AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites and a single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.
- 6.1.3. Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.
- 6.1.4. 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
- 6.1.5. Where awarding body approval is required but not available through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP), approval will be applied for direct to the relevant awarding body.

6.2. Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by the SENCo and appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENCo.

6.3. Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are:

- 6.3.1. The use of a word processor
- 6.3.2. Alternative rooming arrangements e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or 1:1 invigilation.
- 6.3.3. Modified papers ordered using AAO
- 6.3.4. Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (JCQ AA 6.1)
- 6.3.5. Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (JCQ AA 6.1)

- 6.3.6. Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (JCQ AA 6.1)
- 6.3.7. For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (JCQ AA 6.1)

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1. When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 7.2. Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (JCQ AA 4.2)
- 7.3. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to:
 - 7.3.1. to inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
 - 7.3.2. to submit applications for approval using AAO
 - 7.3.3. to 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) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
 - 7.3.4. to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
 - 7.3.5. to order modified papers.