



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Olivia Newman	
Date of next review	10.09.2025

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mr Matthew Mohamad
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Ms Portia Kamara
Head of centre	Mr David Marillat
Assessor(s)	Carol Thomas – Cassey Gaywood
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Olivia Newman

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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'. (¹AA, 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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA 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 Gatwick School 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**

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo 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 this documentation is stored electronically, the SENCO will create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AA, section 4.2)

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**

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (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 **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)

The Centre's Equalities Policy is appended at the end of this document.

The head of centre will recognise 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

[†]or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

Roles and responsibilities

The Head of Centre is responsible for the quality of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within their centre. They will :

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)
- ensure that processes for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements') for individual candidates is clearly defined and documented
- ensure that staff roles and responsibilities in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined in this policy
- ensure a qualified specialist assessor is appointed and that evidence of the appropriate qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- ensure that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- ensure a disability policy showing the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including [AA](#)
- lead on the access arrangements process

- if not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- ensure that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- ensure arrangements put in place reflect a candidate's *normal way of working*¹ within the centre
- ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- present when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor's qualification

In addition, the SENCO will:

- provide and annually review a centre policy on the **use of word processors** in exams and assessments
- ensure criteria for candidates allowed **separate invigilation within the centre** is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main exam rooms

Teaching staff will:

- inform the SENCO of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- provide information to evidence the *normal way of working* of a candidate
- support the SENCO as required in identifying the need for access arrangements

The specialist assessor will:

- conduct appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- complete appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

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 [AA](#), section 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Ms Carol Thomas - Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties (ATS/APS) Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties (AMBDA).

Ms Cassey Gaywood – CPT3A -

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 is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The head of centre will check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and be satisfied that they have the required level of competence and training. They will ensure that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. ([GR](#), section 5.4)

The head of centre will appoint an assessor who holds a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at/or equivalent to Level 7 or be an appropriately qualified psychologist

registered with the Health and Care Professional's Council. Their training must include all of the following:

- The theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals
- The appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested

The head of centre will 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) **will be** held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA, section 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence of the specialist assessor(s) qualification(s) are held on file with the access arrangements in line with AA, section 7.4.

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

Identifying the needs of candidates

The SENCO organises for all students are assessed on entry using the Lucid Exact Screener. This screening tool assesses students for Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Comprehension Speed, Spelling and Writing Speed. This gives a picture of students' overall literacy skills.

This data is used to identify students for more in depth specialist assessments. From this data, we identify students for interventions, including access arrangements.

We review provision on a yearly basis and all arrangements are organised with a view to meeting future JCQ requirements. Details of access arrangements are held on Bromcom for students due to sit external examinations and on an easily accessible spreadsheet for all year groups. This ensures that the arrangement is the student's usual way of working.

Some students are additionally identified for assessment for access arrangements by teaching staff, student self-referral and EP recommendations.

"The centre agrees to:

- *ensure that it will recruit with integrity with regard to both general and vocational qualifications;*
- *ensure that learners will in an accessible format have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process **must** include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s). The centre's assessment **must** identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations/assessments"*

*"...ensure that where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor **as appointed by the head of centre...**"*

[JCQ [GR](#) 5]

By detailing the assessment process, we are confirming

...that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...*

([GR](#), section 5.4)

([AA](#), sections 7.5 and 7.6)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Picture of Need

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo will 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 will work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

All candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. Using current editions of nationally standardised assessments, the specialist assessor will establish whether the results of the assessments in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the student has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. These results will be reported as standardised scores.

Where an independent specialist assessor has been used, the SENCO and specialist assessor will discuss appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. It is the responsibility of the SENCO to determine and request appropriate and practical access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, (AA, section 7.5)

Normal Way of Working

Normal way of working as defined by JCQ

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, e.g.

- *in the classroom (where appropriate); or*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or*
- *literacy support lessons; or*
- *literacy intervention strategies; and/or*
- *in internal school tests and mock examinations.*

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Part 1 of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre. SENCos and assessors must refer to Chapter 7, paragraph 7.6.1 for information on how to confirm 'normal way of working'.

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3)."

[AA 4.2.5]

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, 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 keeps detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. Where these are in hard copy, they are stored securely in the Exam's Office. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) together with a signed candidate personal data consent form and a Data Protection confirmation form signed by the examination Officer or SENCO, for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA, section 8.6).

In exceptional circumstances, where an online application does not gain approval using the single automated response, the SENCO will reconsider the evidence in the light of whether the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement requested and has a substantial and long-term impairment for the required arrangement. The SENCO may seek to gather further evidence of the substantial and long-term impairment, as appropriate, and may submit a substantiated application with supplementary evidence to each relevant examination board. (AA, section 8.4).

The SENCo ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated) and that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline

The SENCO is responsible for completing forms 8/8a.

The Exams Officer is responsible for completing all other forms and applying for modified papers.

JCQ forms might include, for example:

- Form 8 – Application for access arrangements
- Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements
- Form 9 – Arrangements permitted by the centre
- Form 11 – Notification of access arrangements Entry level
- Form 12 – Application for access arrangements Entry level
- Form VQ/EA – Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications
- Form VQ/IA - Application for reasonable adjustments; Internally assessed units – Vocational qualifications

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

A decision where a candidate may be approved for centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments will be made by the SENCO. This could include the use of Amplification equipment, Bilingual dictionary, Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind, Coloured overlays, Examination on coloured/enlarged paper, Fidget toys and stress balls, Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, Low vision aid/magnifier, Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs, Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners, Prompter, Read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen), Separate invigilation within the centre (sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates), Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties, Supervised rest breaks and the use of a Word processor.

The SENCO holds appropriate evidence on file, together with a file note.

(AA, section 8.5).

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.

The Centre's Word Processor Policy is appended at the end of this document.

Some students with a diagnosis of an SPLD, a history of chronically poor handwriting or with specific medical needs are allocated the use of a laptop. This reflects their usual way of working.

(AA, section 5.8)

Separate Invigilation within the Centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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 (AA, section 5.16)

Some students with extreme anxiety or difficulties focussing in large groups are identified for separate invigilation within the centre.

In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Separate invigilation 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. (AA, section 5.16)

Appendices

Word Processor policy - <https://www.thegatwickschool.org.uk/policies>

Equalities and Exams policy link -

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59033c5b86e6c03c00e3cb6e/t/63bc9651af27b76cf829cb0d/1673303634896/TGS%2BExams%2BPolicy%2B2022-23.pdf>

SEND policy and information report link -

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59033c5b86e6c03c00e3cb6e/t/63bc86ed78e93f635f6498d8/1673299693527/SEN+Policy.pdf>