



# Access Arrangements Policy 2023-2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Andrew Jones	
Date of next review	October 2024

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	<b>Jane Elcome</b>
SENDCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Andrew Jones</b>
Head of centre	<b>James Richardson</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Jane Elcome/external specialist assessors</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Fiona Hutton-Potts</b>

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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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Pate's Grammar 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 SENDCo 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 SENDCo is storing documentation electronically she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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**'.

<sup>1</sup>This 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 SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **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.

## **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)**

**Jane Elcome – Centre SENDCO** - Level 7 Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA) – Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors – July 2022

**Emily Vincent – External Assessor** - MSc. Educational Psychology – University of Birmingham – December 2005. HCPC Registration PYL01512

### **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 Centre's SENDCO is a qualified assessor and undertakes exam access assessments. See preceding section for qualification details.

In the event that the Centre needs to use the services of an external assessor eg full Dyslexia Screening, DSA Assessment we have a working relationship with Emily Vincent. See preceding section for qualification details.

In the event that the Centre is contacted by another external assessor the following process is in place to check qualifications. Assessor requested to provide copies of certification/HCPC or SASC registration, or other suitable evidence ([AA](#), Section 7.4.1), confirming that they hold appropriate qualifications ([AA](#), Section 7.3.3). These are then signed off by the Head of Centre. No student assessment can take place until the assessor qualifications have been verified and a Form 8, with Sections I completed, has been provided by the school to the assessor ([AA](#), Section 7.3.5).

In the event of a student joining the school, with learning disabilities that qualifies them for exam access arrangements, the previous school is contacted to request a current Form 8 and associated proof of assessor qualifications. These are then signed off by the Head of Centre.

### **Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)**

Assessors' qualifications are held centrally in the exams office and in individual student AA files.

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

The SENDCo gathers evidence to develop a full learning profile and detailed picture of need, including information from teaching staff, the student, parents and other professionals where appropriate. If a substantial need is identified, then the SENDCo will arrange for appropriate assessment of the student. ([AA](#), sections 7.5 and 7.6)

JCQ regulations state that 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. However, SENDCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any 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 themselves should be instigated.

Any candidate entering as a private candidate will already be known to the school, as we only accept ex-students. We will therefore be aware of any access arrangements as they will have been conducted whilst the student was at school. ([GR](#), section 5.4)

### Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENDCo gathers information and evidence from teachers throughout the school year, including lesson observations, teacher feedback forms; pastoral information; student grade cards; discussions with the student and parents; discussions with external agencies; and from internal tests and exams.

If an independent assessor contacts the centre regarding student assessment, then the school and assessor **must** work together to gain 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 **must** be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part I of Form 8.

An independent assessor **must** discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo. ([AA](#), section 7.5)

### 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.

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.

Applications are processed as closed to the beginning of the course as possible by the SENDCo and AAF. Form 8 and evidence are kept on file in the exams office/AAT office. For applications which are not approved, as they require Awarding Body approval, evidence is submitted via AAO. The exams manager will liaise with the SENDCo/AAT regarding the ordering of modified papers.

The SENDCo must keep detailed records, 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 a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

The SENDCo must complete the [Data protection confirmation](#) and the [Personal data consent form](#) prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

#### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For centre delegated arrangements/adjustments, evidence of need is gathered and kept on file, including a concise form on centre headed paper, signed and dated by the SENDCo, confirming the need for the arrangements.

## 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 Word Processor Policy is held in the exams office.

### Alternative Rooming Policy

The SENDCo will decide and approve any alternative rooming arrangements for exam candidates within the centre.

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)

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, 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 SENDCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

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. ([AA](#), section 5.16)