



Disability Policy (exams)

2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Reviewed by	P Mills
Approved by	R Bakewell
Date of next review	September 2024

Key staff involved in the policy:

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Steve Parkes
Head of Centre	R Bakewell
Exams Officer	TBA
SLT member(s)	P Coleby, M Tully, S Bibb, G Patel, A Dowe, P Mills
Support Staff	

Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide disability/accessibility policy/plan* which details how the senior leadership team will:

recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. 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

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect [Quote taken directly from section 5.4 of the JCQ publication General Regulations for Approved Centres 2023-24]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 202-22.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#).

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre

Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of [AA](#)
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre’s compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams

- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (*Access arrangements policy*)
- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments

Exams officer

- Supports the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Teaching staff

- 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 staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in *painting a holistic picture of need* confirming *normal way of working* for a candidate

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication [AA](#)

Use of word processors

The centre has a detailed Word Processor Policy which outlines the procedures and practices around the use of word processors during examinations.

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) Section 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)

- Applies for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of JCQ Form 8 (*Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties*), and/or centre based evidence including concise file note(s) on centre headed paper, signed and dated, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (Form 8 must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties who are not subject to a current EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs or those requiring a Language Modifier.)
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the form is signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version)
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of [AA](#), are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- Makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is processed at the start of the course and at the latest by the awarding body deadline

Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will either be all in hard copy within the candidate's file **or** all in electronic format within the candidate's e-folder) that will include:

- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
- appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
- appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
- in addition, for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#) (where approval is required), a print out/PDF of the AAO approval and a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised (In the event of an IT failure at the time of an inspection is able to access the required documentation in an alternative format, e.g. a memory stick or hard copy)

Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role
- If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)

- Following the appropriate process (using AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of [AA](#); using *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

Roles and responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE).

Head of centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Is familiar with the instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](#) 2020-21
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues

Exams officer

- Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](#) 2020-21
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional)
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Ensures where the candidate's own subject teacher will be used (in exceptional circumstances) as a facilitator, an invigilator will be present at all times
- Ensures where a facilitator is allocated to support a candidate under exam conditions that they will not be a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early so the facilitator (Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Communication Professional **only**) may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published starting time for the exam in order to prepare
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
 - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Liaises with the SENCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

Internal exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Exams officer

- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required