Oak Academy

Exam Access Arrangements

September 2026

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1. Introduction

1.1. Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Oak Academy 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, 5.4). This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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 SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([1]AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'. ([1]This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA)

1.2. Audience

This policy is intended for use by all support, teaching staff and management of Authentic Education.

1.3. Revision History

Issue	Date	Author	Changes
V0.01	November 2026	Karen Wyatt-Epapara	

1.4. Definitions

1.4.1. Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo (or equivalent role)	Miss Simranjit Dosanjh – SDO (Interim)
Senior Leaders	Mrs Abbey Wickert - AWI & Mrs Emma Biles – EBI (Vice Principals)
Head of Centre	Miss Danielle Fisher - DFI
Exams Officer Line Manager (SLT)	Mr Benjamin McBride - BMC
Exams Officer	Mrs Karen Wyatt-Epapara - KWY
Assessors	To be appointed and confirmed

2. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

2.1. Access arrangements

- Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment.
- The allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what the 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' (AARA[1], Definitions)

2.2. 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'.
- The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA[1], Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

3. General principles

The head of centre/ senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them 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 a disabled candidate.
- The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 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.
- Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
- 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 their first examination.

4. Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

All exam policies can be found here: Oak Academy - Policies

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

5. 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 AARA 7.3.

5.1. The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)
Current assessor to be appointed and confirmed.

5.2. Appointment of assessors
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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

5.3. Checking the qualification(s) if the assessor(s)
Please refer to policy 'Process to check qualifications of centre assessor and correct procedure followed' which can be found at Oak Academy - Policies

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

- Oak Academy follows the procedures set out in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments when identifying and assessing candidates for access arrangements. The centre ensures that all assessments are conducted in line with JCQ regulations and that evidence of need and normal way of working is fully documented.
- The SENCo oversees the entire process and works collaboratively with teaching staff, support staff, candidates and parents/carers where appropriate. Teachers provide evidence of a candidate's persistent and significant difficulties within the classroom, together with examples of the candidate's normal way of working and any support routinely used in lessons, internal assessments and examinations.
- Where a formal assessment is required, this is carried out by a suitably qualified assessor in accordance with JCQ regulations and the requirements outlined in AARA sections 7.5 and 7.6. The assessor has access to relevant background information, including educational history, teacher feedback, prior data and evidence of need before completing the assessment process.
- Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD) is fully completed and signed where required. The centre ensures that:
    - Part 1 is completed by the SENCo and relevant teaching staff.
    - Part 2 is completed by the assessor following appropriate testing and evidence gathering;
    - Part 3 confirms the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- The centre ensures that access arrangements reflect the candidate's usual way of working and are supported by a clear picture of need. All evidence is retained within the centre for inspection purposes and is reviewed annually or whenever a candidate's needs change.
- By following this process, Oak Academy confirms that the correct procedures are adhered to in accordance with Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4).

5.5. Picture of need/normal way of working
Oak Academy is committed to establishing a clear and holistic picture of need for each candidate applying for access arrangements. The centre ensures that evidence is

gathered from a range of sources in accordance with JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and specifically the requirements set out in AARA sections 7.5 and 7.6.

Prior to any formal assessment taking place, the SENCo gathers and collates evidence which demonstrates the candidate's history of need and their normal way of working within the centre. This information is used to complete Part 1 of Form 8 and provides the assessor with a comprehensive understanding of the candidate's difficulties and the impact on teaching, learning and assessments.

Evidence used to build the picture of need may include:

- teacher feedback and classroom observations;
- examples of classwork and internal assessments;
- records of support and intervention;
- screening results and prior attainment data;
- information from parents/carers and external professionals where appropriate;
- evidence of a candidate's normal way of working in lessons, tests and examinations.

The SENCo and assessor work collaboratively to ensure a joined-up process, as required by AARA 7.5. The assessor is provided with all relevant background information before conducting any assessment and takes this evidence into account when determining whether access arrangements are appropriate.

The centre ensures that Form 8 is fully completed in line with AARA 7.6, including:

- a detailed picture of need in Part 1;
- standardised assessment results and professional observations in Part 2;
- confirmation of the candidate's normal way of working in Part 3.

Oak Academy recognises that access arrangements must reflect a candidate's established and consistent way of working and not be granted solely on the basis of test scores. Evidence is reviewed regularly to ensure arrangements remain appropriate and supported by current need.

Through these procedures, Oak Academy confirms compliance with Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and ensures that all candidates are assessed fairly, consistently and in accordance with regulatory requirements.

6. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

6.1. Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

- Access arrangements o*nline* (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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers).

- Oak Academy processes applications for access arrangements in accordance with Chapter 8 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and uses Access Arrangements Online (AAO) to submit applications and manage approvals where required.
- The SENCo is responsible for overseeing the application process and ensuring that all applications are completed accurately and within JCQ deadlines. Applications are submitted once sufficient evidence of need and normal way of working has been gathered and, where required, following the completion of a Form 8 assessment by a suitably qualified assessor.
- Candidates and parents/carers are informed that applications for access arrangements will be processed electronically through Access Arrangements Online (AAO) in compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The centre ensures that all personal data is handled securely and confidentially.
- Before an application is processed through AAO, the SENCo checks that:
    - appropriate evidence of need is available and up to date;
    - normal way of working has been established and evidenced;
    - Form 8 has been fully completed where required;
    - the recommended arrangement reflects the candidate's usual way of working.
- The centre maintains detailed records for inspection purposes in accordance with AARA 8.6. Records may be stored electronically or in hard copy format in a secure location accessible only to authorised staff. Documentation retained includes:
    - a copy of the candidate's approved AAO application;
    - evidence of need and supporting documentation where required;
    - completed Form 8 documentation where applicable;
    - evidence of the assessor's qualifications;
    - records of normal way of working;
    - correspondence relating to awarding body referrals or additional evidence requests.
- Where applications do not gain automatic approval through AAO, the SENCo will review the evidence and, where appropriate, submit a referral to the relevant awarding body with supporting documentation. The centre ensures that any further information requested by awarding bodies is provided promptly.
- Oak Academy also follows JCQ regulations regarding modified papers in accordance with AARA section 6. The SENCo is responsible for identifying candidates who require modified papers and ensuring applications are made by the published deadlines. Appropriate evidence is retained on file, and arrangements are confirmed with teaching staff and examinations staff to ensure candidates receive the correct materials in examinations.
- All approved access arrangements are communicated to relevant staff to ensure arrangements are implemented consistently in internal and external examinations. The centre reviews arrangements regularly to ensure they remain appropriate to the candidate's needs and continue to reflect their normal way of working.

- Through these procedures, Oak Academy confirms that it complies with the requirements of AARA sections 6 and 8 and maintains accurate, secure and auditable records for all access arrangements applications and modified paper order

6.2. Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

- Oak Academy manages centre delegated arrangements in accordance with the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. The centre recognises that certain access arrangements may be approved internally by the centre without an application to Access Arrangements Online (AAO), provided that appropriate evidence is held on file and the arrangement reflects the candidate's normal way of working.
- The SENCo is responsible for overseeing centre delegated arrangements and ensuring that decisions are based on evidence of need, established normal way of working and compliance with JCQ regulations. Teaching staff and support staff contribute information regarding a candidate's day-to-day classroom support and any arrangements routinely used in lessons, assessments and examinations.
- Examples of centre delegated arrangements may include:
    - supervised rest breaks;
    - separate invigilation within the centre;
    - use of a word processor where this is the candidate's normal way of working;
    - prompts;
    - coloured overlays;
    - bilingual dictionaries where permitted by JCQ regulations.
- Where required, the centre retains appropriate evidence on file to support the arrangement. Evidence may include:
    - teacher statements and observations;
    - records of support and intervention;
    - examples of classroom practice;
    - medical evidence where appropriate;
    - evidence confirming the candidate's normal way of working.
- The SENCo maintains records of all centre delegated arrangements and ensures that arrangements are communicated to examinations staff and invigilators in advance of examinations. Arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the candidate's needs and remain consistent with their usual way of working.
- For arrangements that do not require formal recording or submission to AAO, the centre still ensures that appropriate internal documentation is maintained where necessary and that all staff involved in examinations are aware of the support to be provided.
- Oak Academy ensures that all centre delegated arrangements are implemented fairly, consistently and in accordance with JCQ regulations, with the aim of removing substantial disadvantage while maintaining the integrity of the examination process.

7. Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements /adjustments

7.1. 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
- Please see the 'Exams Word Processor Policy' for further information. This can be found at Oak Academy - Policies

7.2. Alternative rooming arrangements policy

- A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).
- 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 withing the centre (AARA 5.16)
- Oak Academy has established clear criteria for awarding alternative rooming arrangements in examinations and assessments in accordance with the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and specifically AARA section 5.16. The centre recognises that alternative rooming arrangements must be based on a candidate's substantial and long-term needs and must reflect their normal and current way of working in internal assessments, mock examinations and classroom tests.
- The SENCo, in collaboration with teaching staff, support staff and the examinations officer, is responsible for determining whether an alternative rooming arrangement is appropriate. Decisions are made on an individual basis following consideration of evidence of need and the impact of the candidate's difficulties within a standard examination environment.
- Alternative rooming arrangements may include:
    - a smaller room with a reduced number of candidates;
    - a separate room for a small group of candidates with similar needs;
    - individual rooming with one-to-one invigilation where appropriate and supported by evidence.
- The centre ensures that alternative rooming arrangements are not granted solely on the basis of:
    - nervousness about examinations;
    - low level anxiety;
    - preference for working alone; concerns about examination performance.
- One-to-one invigilation is only awarded in exceptional circumstances and where there is clear evidence of a serious medical condition or significant behavioural need which

would substantially disadvantage the candidate or disturb other candidates in the main examination room. Examples may include:

  - frequent seizures or medical episodes;
  - Tourette syndrome with significant vocal or physical tics;
  - severe behavioural, emotional or social difficulties;
  - other substantial medical or psychological conditions supported by appropriate evidence.

- Evidence retained by the centre may include:
  - medical evidence or reports from external professionals;
  - records of previous arrangements and support;
  - teacher observations and feedback;
  - evidence confirming normal way of working in internal examinations and assessments.
- The SENCo maintains records of all approved alternative rooming arrangements and ensures that arrangements are communicated to examinations staff and invigilators in advance of examinations. Arrangements are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and compliant with JCQ regulations.

8. Appendix A – Access Arrangements Policy

Candidate Data Information Notice (Access Arrangements Online)
Oak Academy is committed to ensuring that all students who require examination access arrangements receive the appropriate support in line with the regulations set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).
Where a student is assessed as potentially requiring examination access arrangements, the school may submit an application using the JCQ **Access Arrangements Online (AAO)** system.

Purpose of data processing
Personal data is processed in order to:

- determine eligibility for examination access arrangements
- submit applications for access arrangements through the JCQ Access Arrangements Online system
- ensure that approved access arrangements are in place for internal and external examinations.

Information that may be processed
The information used for this purpose may include:

- candidate name
- date of birth
- candidate number or unique candidate identifier
- details of learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions (where relevant)
- results of educational assessments
- evidence of the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Sharing of information
Where required, this information may be shared with:

- awarding organisations (exam boards)
- the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
- authorised staff within the centre who are involved in the access arrangements process.

Data protection compliance
All personal data is processed in accordance with the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Act 2018**. Information is stored securely and only accessed by authorised personnel.
Informing candidates
Candidates (and where appropriate, parents/carers) will be informed that an application for access arrangements may be processed through the JCQ Access Arrangements Online system. This information may be provided through:

- the centre's Access Arrangements Policy

- candidate or parent communication
- the centre's privacy notice
- meetings relating to assessment for access arrangements.

Record keeping
The centre maintains evidence that candidates have been informed about the processing of their data for access arrangements applications. This may include copies of policy documents, communication records, or file notes held by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) or Examinations Officer.

This procedure replaces the previously required JCQ Candidate Personal Data Consent Form.