

## Process to check qualifications of centre assessor and correct procedure followed

<b>SCOPE:</b>	Academy Policy
<b>AUTHOR/ORIGINATOR:</b>	AVP - Standards
<b>NAME OF RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL:</b>	Mr J Webb, Sector Director & Mrs H Richley, Academy Principal
<b>APPROVING COMMITTEE:</b>	Sector Director
<b>STATUTORY BASIS:</b>	Statutory Policy
<b>REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH ON WEBSITE:</b>	Yes
<b>DATE RATIFIED:</b>	May 2023
<b>DATE DISTRIBUTED TO STAFF:</b>	May 2023

**Outstanding Achievement for All**

## Contents

Statement of intent.....	3
1. What is exam access arrangements.....	3
2. What are reasonable adjustments .....	4
3. General principles .....	4
4. Equalities policy (exams) .....	5
5. The assessment process.....	5
6. Staff roles in determining and managing AA.....	6
7. Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties .....	8
8. Processing access arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	9
9. Centre specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments .....	9
10. Parent/Carer guide to examination arrangements/reasonable adjustments ...	10
11. Malpractice.....	12
12. Further information.....	12

## 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4]

This policy is maintained and held by the Exams Officer/SENDCo/specialist assessor 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.

When the SENDCo/Assessor is storing documentation electronically he/she must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection (AA 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. This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

### 1. What is exam access arrangements

- 1.1 Exam 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 particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- 1.2 Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* 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. [AA Definitions JCQ regulations, page 3]
- 1.3 AAs are designed for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment in its normal format due to a difficulty or disability.
- 1.4 AA must not confer additional benefits to a student but are designed to level the playing field in terms of access.
- 1.5 AAs should reflect the normal way of working for which there is evidence of need, unless such arrangements would affect the integrity of the assessment.
- 1.6 AAs are intended to increase access to assessments but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- 1.7 Credit is only given for skills demonstrated by the candidate working independently.
- 1.8 AAs will not be permitted if they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

- 1.9 AAs may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- 1.10 JCQ guidance indicates that the school and not a body external to the school should initiate AAs.

## **2. What are reasonable adjustments**

- 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. 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 a number of 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.
  - The likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.
- 2.5 An adjustment will not be approved if it:
- 2.6 Involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body.
- 2.7 Involves unreasonable timeframes.
- 2.8 Affects the security and integrity of the assessment.
- 2.9 This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'." [AA Definitions, page 3]
- 2.10 All AAs have to be a student's normal way of working with evidence provided.

## **3. General principles**

- 3.1 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 a disabled candidate.
  - The SENCo, 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.

#### **4. Equalities policy (exams)**

- 4.1 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. The policy can be found: U Drive, Staff Common, Policies.
- 4.2 The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more details.

#### **5. The assessment process**

- 5.1 Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3.
- 5.2 Year 6:
- The feeder schools and parents provide the SENDCo with any history of need/provision in transition meetings.
  - KS3 teachers monitor students closely and gather evidence of need for AA.
  - AA are trialled in tests/exams and subject-based assessments during Year 9.
  - AA information is added to SIMS and shared with staff.
  - Form 8s started for students in KS3 and evidence is added as a student moves through the school.
  - The specialist assessor is provided with background information, i.e. where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan the SENDCo is painting a picture of need and demonstrating the candidate's normal way of working as per Section.
- 5.3 A of Form 8:
- Year 9 summer term – Section A Form 8 is completed based on evidence supplied by teachers. Specialist Assessor then tests students, applies online and informs the examination manager.
  - KS4 – AA in place and being used regularly.
  - KS4 teachers to submit evidence to support regular use of AA. Mock examinations are the last chance to trial AA in formal examination setting. Students must use them then or lose them.
  - If AAs are not being used, they will be withdrawn and a letter will be sent home to the parents/carers explaining the reasons behind this decision.
  - Summer year 11 – exams completed with correct AA in place as 'normal way of working'.

## 6. Staff roles in determining and managing AA

### 6.1 Exams officer

- To ensure that the agreed AA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To manage any 'on the day' questions and queries regarding AA provision.
- To put in place (in conjunction with the SEN department) any 'on the day provisions' – such as medical emergencies.
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their access arrangement and to ensure no disruption for other students also sitting exams.
- To make arrangements for students who require special consideration due to individual circumstances.
- To ensure that external invigilators, readers and scribes are fully competent with JCQ requirements.

### 6.2 SENDCo:

- To ensure there is a whole centre approach to access arrangements/reasonable adjustment it is therefore the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team, SENDCo and specialist assessor within the centre to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidance.
- The SENDCo, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within the centre.
- Teaching staff, SLT must support the SENDCo and assessor in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements after thorough gathering of evidence to demonstrate.
- Sign Form 8s and any file copies supporting EHCP candidate provision and/or centre delegated access arrangements.

### 6.3 Specialist assessor

- To work with the SENDCo, TAs and students at KS3/KS4 to identify candidates, do basic assessments and build a 'picture of need and provision'. (AA 7.5.2)
- To administer recognised psychometric testing after gathering evidence from teachers, teaching assistants, student interviews and classroom observations (AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties).
- To obtain signed Data Protection Notice.
- Complete Form 8s and apply online applications via E-AQA as per AA 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, profile of learning and difficulties. Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.
- Specialist assessor and SENDCo to consult each other regarding the decision-making process for an access arrangement, sharing expertise. (AA 7.5.2)
- To ensure the agreed access arrangements provision is recorded in SIMS and on mark sheets and teachers are informed of trial periods and JCQ approvals.

- To ensure their own training is up to date with current guidance with specific regard to administration of psychometric assessments and the annual update from JCQ on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.
  - To communicate with parents/carers regarding decisions made about access arrangements/adjustments for an individual and ensure the help/guidance sheet is up to date with current advice/practice for students and their parents/carers.
  - Write and sign, on headed notepaper, any EHCP candidate provision; signed by the SENDCo and placed on file for the JCQ inspectorate.
- 6.4 SEN Department
- To timetable support staff in order to support subject based assessments and therefore provide readers/scribes.
  - To track use of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on record sheets as evidence of arrangement use.
  - To liaise with exams manager, teaching staff, specialist assessor and SENDCo.
  - To hold teaching assistant/student briefings concerning use of access arrangements.
- 6.5 Teaching Staff
- To provide relevant information and evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties.
  - To show how the candidate's disability has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the specialist assessor and/or SENDCo.
  - Detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement/adjustment. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
  - Tutors to ensure access arrangements/adjustments are recorded in student planner/diary.
  - To ensure that the correct access arrangements/reasonable adjustment are in place for assessments.
  - To liaise with the SEN department to ensure access arrangements can be provided for subject based assessments throughout the academic year.
- 6.6 An assessor appointed by the head of centre carries out assessments. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations AA 7.3 as follows:
- An access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8
  - A specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or Patoss and listed on the SASC website, who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.

- An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.
- 6.7 An access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent at Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which must include training in 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 objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered.
  - The appropriate selection and objective use of tests of cognitive skills.
  - The ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional.
  - The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s):
    - Mrs Sarah Buxton, Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements – Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (Level A)

## **7. Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties**

- 7.1 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 access arrangements/reasonable adjustments.
- 7.2 This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.
- 7.3 Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s):
- 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 SENDCo and/or Exams Officer. JCQ regulations AA 7.3.
  - "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.
- 7.4 The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8.
- 7.5 An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo." JCQ regulations [AA 7.5.3]



## **8. Processing access arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

- 8.1 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 listed on page 92 of JCQ Regulations booklet. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.
- 8.2 AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.
- 8.3 The specialist assessor is responsible for the submission of applications to AAO. Approved applications are printed and kept on file in the exam manager's office along with the signed data protection notice, Form 8 and all relevant evidence of need. (AA 8.6)
- 8.4 Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments:
- Coloured overlays
  - Braille
  - Supervised Rest Breaks (to be considered before extra time)
  - Separate room
  - Read Aloud
  - Prompter
  - Word Processor (without spell checker, grammar checker or auto correct) – see separate Word Processing Policy.
  - Bilingual dictionary
  - Modified papers (e.g. coloured/enlarged paper)
  - Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
  - Alternative site for the conduct of examinations
- 8.5 A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list above. These arrangements, which may be granted by the centre, may have appropriate evidence held on file to support the need for that access arrangement.

## **9. Centre specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments**

- 9.1 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 the use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidates' normal way of working with in the centre.
  - The Word Processor policy for exams can be found on Common (U); Staff Common; Policies; General.
- 9.2 Separate invigilation policy
- A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENDCo.
  - 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 .
- 9.3 Procedure for medical letters
- Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice.
  - AAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.
- 9.4 Private assessments/Education psychologist's reports
- We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence.
  - A student's 'normal way of working' in school is paramount. AAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a private assessment/Ed Psych report.
  - JCQ guidance indicates that the school not a body external to the school should initiate AAs.

## **10. Parent/Carer guide to examination arrangements/reasonable adjustments**

- 10.1 In years 9/10 exam arrangements/adjustments are approved by the exam boards (Joint Council for Qualifications) in cases where students have a genuine need and a history of support in examinations.
- 10.2 As a school we complete certain tests to measure whether those students' abilities in key skills fall below a set benchmark. If they do not, then the exam boards will not grant exam access arrangements.
- 10.3 The regulations say that whatever support a student has been granted, it must be the student's 'normal way of working'. This means that wherever possible in school, students should have this support.
- 10.4 Why might a student not have support for an assessment? There are a range of different assessments in school from years 7 to 11 and in all subjects. These include:
- Formal national exams such as GCSE or Nationals in year 11.
  - Mock exams in year 10 and 11 which are an 'in school' measure but are important part of the preparation for the real process.
  - End of unit assessments/tests which measure a student's progress within the subject and are used to measure progress within the school only. These are for years 7 to 11. The order given highlights the priority as showing those candidates sitting a GCSE must have precedence over any other assessment/test.
  - Unfortunately, there may be times we are unable to offer support, for a variety of other reasons. We try our best to support any access arrangements.
- 10.5 We encourage our students to be proactive in reminding staff of the support they require when they are told a pending assessment.
- 10.6 Students with an access arrangement will have a page in their diary outlining the support needed which students can use to remind staff of the support they need.
- 10.7 Sample of evidence sheets:
- AA Evidence Collection Sheet

Name Tutor Group

This Student has been granted the following access arrangements:

To the teacher: please delete as appropriate on this student's use of the above listed access arrangement(s) this term. Please indicate if you are not able to verify this and state why.

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

13

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

Date Subject Staff initials

The above named student has or has not used their access arrangement for assessments/unit tests this term.

I will send copies of work to evidence this need Yes No

I will email the SENDCo with further details as evidence Yes No

## **11. Malpractice**

- 11.1 Schools are inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually every summer during the terminal examination period.
- 11.2 The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification for the student from one or more examinations, disqualification for a whole cohort of students, or even the centre being closed down for up to 5 years.
- 11.3 Examples of malpractice include:
  - Students being granted AA which are not their normal way of working.
  - AA being 'suddenly' granted before examinations.
  - AA being granted when a student has no history of need or provision.
  - AA being granted without sufficient evidence.
- 11.4 Students not using their AA in a mock examination and still being allowed it in the real examination.

## **12. Further information**

- 12.1 Further information can be found at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website <http://www.jcq.org.uk>
- 12.2 Any questions about exam access arrangements, please phone the SENDCo on 01202 774600