

## **EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

- **What is the purpose of Access Arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are the way examination boards meet their duties under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for candidates who may have persistent and significant difficulties as defined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Joint Council for Qualifications published Access Arrangements, which would place them at a substantial disadvantage in accessing examinations compared to other candidates. Access arrangements allow students with specific needs to access an exam. They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam. It is stipulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications that candidates with Exam Access Arrangements must not be unfairly advantaged through Exam Access arrangements. Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements, it depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

- **What is an Access Arrangement?**

Access arrangements are adjustments for candidates that are determined before exams, based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are 'delegated to centres', others require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Arrangements that are delegated to centres mean that we as a school set out the evidence required for the student to be granted the arrangement. Arrangements that require JCQ approval have strict rules on the evidence required for them, and a regulated application method. Both of these sets of evidence are detailed later in this document.

- **How is an application made?**

The SENDCO is made aware of concerns regarding a pupil having a disability or learning difficulty either from screening tests which are carried out in school, information from a previous school, or through referral from one of the pupil's teachers. Requests for Access Arrangements should not come directly from pupils or parents. If pupils or parents have a concern, they should approach the pupil's Form Tutor in the first instance. The student is then referred to the Exams Access Assessor for assessment.

- **When should an application be made?**

All applications for Access Arrangements should be made just before, or at the beginning of the GCSE course of study, usually late in Year 9 or early Year 10.

- **When are arrangements used?**

Students are given opportunities to use their arrangements as their 'Normal Way of Working' (NWOW). For laptops and docs+ students are responsible for collecting and returning for in class use and in class assessments. Teachers facilitate other arrangements such as extra time and rest breaks in class. Separate rooms for students are not possible during in class assessments. For formal examinations the Exams Officer facilitates the arrangements.

- **Which Access Arrangement should be applied for?**

Applications are not for a specific Access Arrangement. Based on the evidence gathered in school, including from appropriate assessments carried out in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications' Regulations, the SENDCO with the Exams Access Assessor will make a judgement as to the most appropriate Access Arrangement in each individual case. To maintain the integrity of the assessment, this will be the least significant arrangement which appropriately addresses the pupil's needs.

- **Who can provide the evidence?**

Evidence will be sought from the pupil, from the pupil's teachers and from other data the school holds on the pupil and the specific testing that meets JCQ criteria. The pupil's 'Normal Way of Working' (NWOW) must be in line with the Access Arrangements applied for e.g. if a pupil is allowed to use a laptop in a specific exam, this must be the pupil's usual or 'normal' way of working in class to record written work. Additional evidence of need may be sought from the SENDCO or Exams Access Assessor using Joint Council for Qualifications approved further appropriate tests.

- **Who decides whether an Access Arrangement should be granted?**

In all cases it is the school who makes the decision about whether the Access Arrangement should be applied for. Some Access Arrangements need only to be approved by the SENDCO and accompanied by a "File Note"; other Access Arrangements must be applied for online by the Examinations Officer and are subject to approval by the Joint Council for Qualifications. Evidence from other professionals may count towards this decision but, in line with the relevant regulations, it is the school who makes the final decision to apply for the Access Arrangement in all cases.

- **Can an Access Arrangement, once granted, be removed?**

If the candidate is seen by the centre to make no use of an Exam Access Arrangement – such as refusing to utilise a 25% Extra Time allowance - then the centre has the right to remove that Access Arrangement. This includes if a pupil does not make the arrangement their 'Normal Way of Working' (NWOW).

- **When is it appropriate to use external assessors?**

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without the prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process an application. Any external assessor must have an established relationship with the school or, prior to the assessment, establish a relationship with the school. This includes the school holding records of the assessor's qualifications and the assessor having the appropriate evidence of the candidate's needs from the school before the assessment is carried out. In line with the Joint Council for Qualifications' Regulations, the school can choose not to accept the findings of external assessors. Recommendations from any professionals' reports can be considered but do not have to be adhered to, decisions lie solely with the school.

- **Can doctors grant access arrangements?**

Evidence from a medical professional should be to state the impact of a disability or injury on a candidate and how they will work. Medical evidence from appropriate medical professionals will be considered in the decision about the granting of Access Arrangements; however, the decision about granting the access arrangement does not lie with the medical professional but with the school. For long term impairments the evidence should be from a Consultant or Registrar, or a Clinical Paediatrician. It is for the school to determine which Access Arrangement is most appropriate considering the medical evidence provided. All supporting medical letters must be dated and hand signed. Recommendations from any professionals' reports can be considered but do not have to be adhered to, decisions lie solely with the school.

- **Can you re-test for access arrangements?**

We do not re-test for access arrangements, once granted and applied for. If a student does not meet the criteria we would be committing malpractice if we re-test on request. There are time limits for testing, and applications last for 26 months.

- **Do Access Arrangements apply to all subjects?**

No, Access Arrangements can be granted specific to individual subjects, as the demands, and hence the need for the arrangement, will vary from one subject to another. Evidence is gathered in school by subject teachers and we will not continue to ask for evidence if there isn't any present, this would be committing malpractice.

- **When do teachers refer pupils that they teach?**

Teachers should refer pupils at the earliest opportunity to the SENDCO or Exam Access Assessor and provide appropriate evidence alongside any concerns.

- **What could I do if I wished to query the outcome?**

Parents wishing to query the outcome of an assessment for an Access Arrangement should contact the SENDCO by email. Decisions lie solely with the school and Head of Centre and must meet criteria as set out by The Joint Council for Qualifications. Deviating from these regulations would be committing malpractice.

- **Can parents contact the Joint Council for Qualifications directly?**

The Joint Council for Qualifications will not engage in communication about Access Arrangements with parents directly. All communications about access arrangements with the Joint Council for Qualifications are through the school. Decisions lie solely with the school and Head of Centre.

- **Where can I find out more information?**

Access Arrangements for all GCSE examinations are governed by the special consideration document available at:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>. This document is updated annually.

Access Arrangements possible:

Delegated to Centres	JCQ Approval Required
Alternative rooming arrangements Amplification equipment Bilingual dictionary (EAL students) Braille transcript Braillers Colour naming (colour blind students) Coloured overlays Communication Professional Examination on coloured/enlarged paper Examination reading pen Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations, Low vision aid/magnifier, Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs Non-electronic headphone Prompter Read aloud Squared paper (visual spatial difficulties), Supervised rest breaks Timer on a desk Word processor (with the spelling and grammar check switched off).	25% extra time Extra time of more than 25% Computer reader Human reader Scribe Speech recognition technology (including the use of a word processor with the spelling and/or grammar check switched on)

### Evidence needed:

The table below summarises the evidence required for each access arrangement, but please be aware that the evidence of need will vary depending on the pupil's perceived need and the Access Arrangement for which application is made. Different GCSE qualifications have different criteria for Access Arrangements, and different subjects make different demands of the pupil, so each application is considered in the light of the specific criteria and need. For more information see the [JCQ Overview of Evidence requirements](#).

“NWOW” means the students normal way of working, an established pattern of work used regularly in school and shown to support the student to access the exam fairly. This must have scanned/photocopied/electronic documentation to show the fact that the way of working is established (i.e. used over a significant period of time). To establish a NWOW, evidence for the need must be established

Delegated to Centres	Evidence required
Alternative rooming arrangements	<a href="#">GP/mental health specialist/psychiatrist or clinical psychologist diagnosis of GAD/ another anxiety disorder or medical condition affecting exam conditions (e.g. Tourette's).</a> OR <a href="#">Internal school record of significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.</a>

	<p>OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher OR Internal school record of significant SEMH issues, going beyond nervousness, low-level anxiety or examination worry which would otherwise significantly impair exam performance AND NWOW as a consequence of one of the above</p>
Amplification equipment	<p>GP/specialist diagnosis of hearing impairment OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
Bilingual dictionary (EAL students)	<p>EAL declared by parent/carer and <a href="#">EAL assessment in school</a> during KS4 showing high need AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
Braille transcript	<p>Ophthalmologist report/letter or certificate of sight impairment/severe sight impairment OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher AND NWOW as a consequence of VI</p>
Braille	<p>Ophthalmologist report/letter or certificate of sight impairment/severe sight impairment OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher AND NWOW as a consequence of VI</p>
Colour naming (colour blind students)	<p>Optometrist/consultant report/letter stating colour blindness and effect in examinations AND NWOW based on colour blindness that has an adverse effect</p>
Coloured overlays	<p>Behavioural optometrist/consultant report/letter stating concerns around visual stress or Irlen's syndrome OR School based observations that coloured overlays improve reading AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
Communication Professional (sign)	<p>GP/specialist diagnosis of hearing impairment OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher</p>

language)	AND NWOW for students who communicate through sign language
Examination on coloured/enlarged paper	Behavioural optometrist/consultant report/letter stating concerns around visual stress or Irlen's syndrome OR Stated need in Section F of EHCP AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
Examination reading pen	Considered only if AA testing has been completed and a computer reader/human reader is not suitable for the candidate's need. OR In school observations and Exact test showing reading accuracy difficulty OR Dyslexia diagnosis AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations	GP/specialist diagnosis of hearing impairment or receptive language difficulties OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher AND NWOW to make reasonable adjustments for students who have persistent and significant difficulties in following speech at normal speed.
Low vision aid/magnifier,	Ophthalmologist report/letter or certificate of sight impairment/severe sight impairment OR Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs	Specialist diagnosis of sensory need OR Internal school record of significant sensory issues, which would otherwise significantly impair exam performance AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
Prompter	GP/specialist diagnosis of ADHD/ASD/OCD/GDD OR Pre-referral action plan for ASC OR ADHD referral completed and submitted to CAMHS OR

	<p>Internal school record of significant and persistent loss of concentration, which would otherwise significantly impair exam performance</p> <p>AND</p> <p>NWOW to make reasonable adjustments for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have little or no sense of time (e.g. candidates with ADHD or ASD); or</li> <li>• Persistently loses concentration; or</li> <li>• Is affected by an Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder which leads them to keep revising a question rather than moving onto other questions.</li> </ul>
Read aloud	<p>In school observations and NGRT/EXACT showing reading comprehension difficulty</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Internal school record of significant improvement in exam performance when using read aloud</p> <p>AND</p> <p>NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
Squared paper (visual spatial difficulties)	<p>Ophthalmologist/consultant report/letter or certificate of sight impairment/severe sight impairment</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist Teacher</p> <p>AND</p> <p>NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
Supervised rest breaks	<p>Specialist evidence to show a disability under the Equality Act</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Medical report/letter showing need</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Stated need in Section F of EHCP</p> <p>OR</p> <p>School based observations of substantial and long term difficulty with exam conditions</p> <p>AND</p> <p>NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Part 1 Form 8 or Part 1 Form 9</p>
Timer on a desk	<p>GP/specialist diagnosis of ADHD/ASD/OCD</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Pre-referral action plan for ASC</p> <p>OR</p> <p>ADHD referral completed and submitted to CAMHS</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Ophthalmologist/consultant report/letter or certificate of sight impairment/severe sight impairment</p> <p>OR</p>

	<p>Recommendation from a Qualified Specialist teacher OR Internal school record of significant and persistent loss of concentration, which would otherwise significantly impair exam performance AND NWOW based on substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect</p>
<p>Word processor (with the spelling and grammar check switched off)</p>	<p>Specialist letter/diagnosis of a firmly established need (see below). OR Internal school record of significant writing issue, which would otherwise significantly impair exam performance AND NWOW to make reasonable adjustments for firmly established need, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on ability to write legibly</li> <li>● a medical condition</li> <li>● a physical disability</li> <li>● a sensory impairment</li> <li>● planning and organisational problems when writing by hand</li> <li>● poor handwriting</li> </ul> <p>OR a temporary injury at the time of the assessment affecting writing ability (evidence from GP/hospital)</p>

JCQ Approval Required	
<p>25% extra time Extra time of more than 25% Computer reader Human reader Scribe Speech recognition technology (including the use of a word processor with the spelling and/or grammar check switched on)</p>	<p><a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a> <a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a> <a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a> <a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a> <a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a> <a href="#">JCQ Infographic</a></p>

[Form 8](#) Part 1 (Profile of Learning Difficulties) requires:

- Detail of the students current difficulties, showing how they impacted on teaching and learning and performance in examinations
- A summary of evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff.
- Detail of the support and adjustments that are in place for the candidate in the classroom, tests and examinations.

[Form 9](#) Part 1 (Profile of Need) requires:

- Evidence for specific access arrangements (computer reader/human reader/ supervised rest break as below, and all arrangements requiring JCQ approval as below)