

Access Arrangements Policy (2023-24)

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Committee Responsible	Full Governors' Body
Key staff involved in this policy / procedure	
Exams Officer	Zhulieta Stoyanova zstoyanova@greycourt.org.uk
Director of Access and Inclusion	Rebecca Gonyora rgonyora@greycourt.org.uk
Head of Centre	Christopher Rhodes crhodes@greycourt.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Julian Knott jknott@greycourt.org.uk
Date of next review:	October 2024 This procedure is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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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'. ([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;
- 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;
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. ([AA Definitions](#))

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Grey Court 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.

(General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4)

This policy is maintained and held by the director of Access and Inclusion 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 SEN Department 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](#)

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 candidates.

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.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. This policy is policy number 12 in our Exam policies [e-folder](#).

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by the schools Director of Access and Inclusion. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA, section 7.3

The qualification held by the assessor is as follows:

Institution: Middlesex University

Title: Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements

Awarded to: Rebecca Gonyora

Date: 29/11/2009

The certificate is attached to the back of this policy for authentication.

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)

Overtyping here the process followed to check the qualification(s) of the assessor(s).

Bear in mind all relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in [GR](#) and [AA](#) including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... ([GR 5.4](#))

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspection by the SENCo. ([AA 7.3](#))

Make full reference to [AA 7.3](#) (Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the ALS lead/SENCo.

Make full reference to [AA 7.4](#) (Reporting the appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

Overtyping here details of the process followed in your centre.

Make full reference to [AA 7.5](#) (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* ([GR 5.4](#))

Note

...SENcos 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 ([AA 7.3](#))

Also detail any process (where relevant) for a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student (refer to the requirement in [GR 5.4](#))

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Overtyping here information relating to the centre's process for painting a 'holistic picture of need' and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working.

Where relevant include any additional information relating to private candidates.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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. 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 1 of Form 8.

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

Make full reference to [AA 7.5](#) (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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. (Refer to [AA](#), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

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.

Overtyping here any relevant information relating to the centre's processes for using AAO. This might include for example, when applications are submitted, who is responsible, what information is required, printed, kept on file, location of files, dealing with cases that do not gain approval, awarding body referrals, etc.

The SENCo 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. ([AA 8.6](#))

Make full reference to [AA 8](#) (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Overtyping here any relevant information relating to the centre's processes for dealing with centre delegated arrangements (those arrangements which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded).

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may approve 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 schools Word Processor Policy is policy number 5 in the exams policy [e-folder](#).

Overtyping here the location of the centre's policy (and the statement which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams) or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors... A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. ([AA 5.8](#))

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved for separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

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 5.16](#))

Overtyping here the centre's criteria (or policy) on separate invigilation within the centre or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, emotional and mental health needs. ([AA 5.16](#))