

# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Victoria Pearson SENCo/Jenny Staniforth Assessor	
Date of next review	October 2025

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>Victoria Pearson</b>
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Nicola Goodwill</b>
Head of centre	<b>Jo Bell</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Jennifer Staniforth</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Jennifer Staniforth</b>

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# What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

## Access arrangements

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... **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'.

## Reasonable adjustments

AA (Definitions, page 3) state... 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'.

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Lawnswood 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".

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)]

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/SENCo 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.

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 general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in **AA** (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement 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 does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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) before his/her first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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 equalities policy can be found in the exam policy folder.

The head of centre/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 (GR 5.4)

## 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 [AA 7.3](#).

### The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Mrs Jennifer Staniforth – Postgraduate award of proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements – PAPAA

### 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)

The Assessor's qualifications must be equivalent to a Level 7 in psychometric testing, assessment and access arrangements.

Lawnswood School ensures that candidates with learning difficulties have been assessed appropriately by a qualified assessor as appointed by the SENCo.

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Assessors must evidence their qualifications to the Head of the centre or SLT in charge of access arrangements. A copy must be kept in the access arrangements file by the SENCo.

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

- A candidate will be identified as needing further recommendations by staff. This may be done via the **GST (Guidance Support Team)** referral system where staff complete a referral form highlighting their concerns, and a member of the Inclusion team will investigate through screening or observations.
- A picture of need will be completed by the SENCo/Assessor looking at the candidate's history of difficulties, current needs, and what support and adjustments are already in place (A skeleton Form 8)
- A picture of need will be built by speaking with the candidates Teachers.

- For candidates with an EHCP or medical needs, the SENCo or assessor will write a **Form 9** to place on file explaining the candidate's difficulties, their normal way of working and how the need affects them.
- For candidates with learning difficulties, further testing may be done to assess speed of working and a final Form 8 will be completed.
- **The exam access arrangements assessor or SENDCo would determine what, if any, arrangements are suitable to put in place and their decision is final. Recommendations from external agencies or practitioners (GPs, Consultants etc) would be taken into consideration, but would not determine or dictate the final outcome (JCQ regulations 2024-25 Page 8)**
- An application will then be made via AA online.
- The final approved arrangements are logged on a central spreadsheet which can be accessed by all teaching staff, the SENCo and Examinations officer.

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

- At the start of the academic year, the school collects data from new students about previously held exam access arrangements. The school may use this information from feeder schools as evidence of picture of need.
- A pupil Passport is created which identifies the support the candidate needs and helps Teaching staff to support and build up their normal way of working in the classroom and in assessments.
- Teachers and the SENCo identify students needing exam access through:
  - Screening tests
  - Mock exams
  - Candidate's self-reported difficulties.
  - Information from feeder schools.
  - Comments and feedback from teachers via a questionnaire.
  - Data collection and tracking information.
  - Information contained in agency reports.
  - Where appropriate, feedback from parents will also be gathered.
- **A specialist can confirm a candidate's disability or medical condition; however, they are not required to recommend specific arrangements in their reports as this is ultimately the decision of the SENDCo or assessor.**

## Processing access arrangements

### Arrangements 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.

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.

- An application is made via AAO for the appropriate exam access arrangement.
- If the application is approved, it is printed and stored in the candidates file, which is within the Exam Access paperwork folder.
- The candidates file will hold the approved application, the Form 8 where appropriate, the Form 9 where appropriate, any quantitative and qualitative evidence and the signed candidate consent form.

- If the application is rejected, supporting evidence may be submitted to each awarding body to further provide detailed evidence to substantiate our claim.
- The final approved arrangements are logged on a central spreadsheet which can be accessed by all teaching staff, the SENCo and Examinations officer.
- The Exam Access Paperwork file is located in the SEN administration office.
- Once arrangements have been approved, candidates are informed through a letter that is sent home to parents. Staff are also made aware by it being added to the pupil passport and provision list.

## Centre-delegated access arrangements

Centre delegated arrangements are treated in a similar way to applied for access arrangements.

Evidence of need is collected, particularly by speaking with the candidate and teaching staff to determine if this is the normal way of working for the candidate.

Where appropriate, a Form 9 is written by the SENCo or assessor and is kept in the Exam Access Paperwork folder.

The final approved arrangements are logged on a central spreadsheet which can be accessed by all teaching staff, the SENCo and Examinations officer.

## Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

### 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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. This may be due to slow/poor handwriting, a medical need or a processing need.

A picture of need will be painted, and evidence collated to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working with a word processor.

The policy is available in the exam's policy folder.

### Separate Invigilation Policy

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

The decision will be based on:

- Whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment/disability which has an adverse effect and is known to staff within school.
- It is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre for lessons and tests.
- It is not just because they have mild anxiety over exams.

**"1-1 invigilation and the use of alternative rooms would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's, or a significant behaviour issue which would disturb other candidates in the examination room" JCQ regulations 2024-25, page 84**