



## An Overview of Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments

### 1. a. What are exam Access Arrangements for?

*Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates 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.*

*Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.*

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### 1. b. Who is eligible for them?

Pupils who may need Access Arrangements include those with:

- **Cognition and learning** needs, such as dyscalculia or dyslexia
- **Communication and interaction** needs, such as speech, language and communication needs, or autism
- **Sensory and physical needs**, such as a physical disability, vision or hearing impairment
- **Social, emotional and mental health needs**, such as mental health conditions or attention deficit disorder.

### 2. How does the school implement Access Arrangements?

Access Arrangements must not be put in place merely for an examination (except for some medical reasons verified by the JCQ). Students are identified by a member of staff as potentially needing Access Arrangements support, or, the school is provided with updated advice by an NHS Medical Consultant or via another JCQ approved means (see below). This would be identified early leaving sufficient time to trial support before a formal examination (ideally identified in Year 9, or as early into the GCSE/A Level course as possible).

In order to comply with the regulations laid out by the JCQ, it is important that the school has sufficient time to collate detailed information of need, trial support, and make relevant formal applications for adjustments to be made.

In some cases, following staff concern and evidence collection, student testing may be completed by the Pupil and School Support (PSS) team in school to ascertain if additional time is required as support. This testing does not diagnose a learning difficulty, but can identify a need for support through the JCQ approved testing procedure. This ensures students are neither at a disadvantage nor an advantage in an examination. Further evidence should then be gathered over time in school, and must show that the adjustment reflects your child's normal way of working, before formal applications are made for external exams.

*The SENCo's detailed information will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability:*

- *a letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);*

*or*

- *a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service†;*

*or*

- *a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multi-sensory impairment.*

*The specialist evidence is not required to recommend 25% extra time but to simply confirm the candidate's disability.*

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## **2. a) Assess-Plan-Do-Review process**

This process begins with an identification from teaching staff and/or Subject Leaders, when there is a concern or, pattern of concern, raised.

The School will then plan to trial support as required, and if a need for this support to continue is shown once it becomes their 'normal way of working', the SENCo can then apply for formal external examinations Access Arrangements. The school will discuss with the child and parents/carers about potential support options if a need arises.

All Parents/Carers of students with an Access Arrangement will be notified in writing by the school before the exam period.

## 2. b) Deadlines

The JCQ publish their Access Arrangements deadlines each year relating to applications for external examinations. For the school, the final application deadline is in March, for both physical and/or learning difficulty support. Therefore, the latest a Parent/Carer should discuss concerns about a potential need for exam Access Arrangements, is ***the last school day before October half-term in an examination year***. This is in order to allow time for evidence collection, the possibility of the PSS testing process for investigation of potential learning difficulties, for application of the support being the student's 'normal way of working' as the JCQ require, and for the formal application process to take place, all before the JCQ's yearly published March deadline.

### 2. Does my child have to be on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) register to receive access arrangements support?

No. However, there should be an identified concern area over a period of time, identified by the deadline stated of a formal examination year (as stated in 2.b), to allow time for appropriate investigation, trials of support and finding the necessary requirements to implement as a student's 'normal way of working'. The JCQ requires support to be the candidate's normal way of working in advance of any applications by school, and does not allow support to be put in place merely in time for exams (unless there is a physical injury requiring support).

### 3. Further information about the testing process for additional time in exams, due to a learning difficulty:

- Anyone can pay privately to have their children assessed to see if they have any learning/literacy difficulties, however:
  - *Assessments by a private assessor cannot be used by any setting to make an application for extra time or any Access Arrangements.* The assessment has to have been commissioned by the school setting to be approved by the JCQ. The school needs to have completed a Form 8 (showing evidence of need and support over a lengthy period of time), prior to any assessment for Access Arrangements to Access *Arrangements Online*.
- Testing does not take place until **year 9 at the earliest within school**, as earlier testing results will not be accepted by the JCQ.

We would ask that if you have any questions or concerns about Access Arrangements, you contact Miss Orr at your earliest convenience, to ensure that any adjustments that your child is entitled to are in place for their examinations.

For further information and guidance, please see the JCQ website:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>