

Access Arrangements for Examinations

Guidance on Policies Processes and Procedures 2020 – 2021

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To inform staff and students of the actions that need to be taken to ensure reasonable adjustments are planned for students with Additional Needs (AN).

SCOPE: This policy applies to all further education students

RESPONSIBILITY: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy.

The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

LEGAL CONTEXT: Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice (2014)

Scope

For the purpose of this process students must be identified as having Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability - as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice (2014), to be eligible for consideration for Access Arrangements for Exams (AA).

AA for Exams are provided as part of the support offered to students who are assessed for additional learning support .

Access Arrangements (AA) are identified and planned for as part of the support offer.

AA for Exams are based on the individual needs of each candidate and must be conducive with encouraging independence; must not adversely affect the academic standard of the assessment and be effective use of College resources, to this end AA for Exams are not stand alone additional learning support and are provided in addition to other planned support.

Purpose

This document explains the actions that need to be taken to ensure reasonable adjustments are planned for students with Additional Needs (AN).

Solihull College and University Centre, Stratford Upon Avon College campuses and sites used for learning and assessment are known as the Centre within this and other documents related to AA for Exams.

NB: The phrase 'Additional Need' (AN) is an umbrella term, used to incorporate ALL students **known** to have a disability, medical condition or learning need, which is formally assessed.

What are Access Arrangements for Exams?

Access Arrangements for Exams are a range of additional learning support strategies that are implemented after initial assessment and determining support for learning as part of an ISP. AAs cannot be put in place for exams until 'normal way of working' in the classroom is established. This is to ensure that a learner is not disadvantaged during exams and timed assessments but must 'mirror' support in class. Access Arrangements are intended to give candidates with a Disability, Learning Difficulty or medical condition equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding, however, they are not automatic and have to be approved by the exam board/validating body. Access Arrangements should not take away the candidates ability to be as independent as possible. in timed assessments.

Procedures and practices are governed by the Centre's statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification JCQ^{CIC}). ([http://www. JCQ^{CIC}.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations](http://www.JCQ^{CIC}.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)).

Some arrangements do not require formal approval or evidence of processing scores but will require evidence of 'normal way of working' (NWOW) at the Centre (within College) and individual learning needs reported accurately, with additional information i.e. medical note; ISP; DSA or EHCP used to determine support is appropriate.

Approval for Access Arrangements for controlled/timed assessments will be planned and implemented where there is documented evidence that learners' needs significantly affect their performance and the arrangements are in line with individual Exam Board and validating bodies policies and practices.

Access Arrangements are applied for annually, although they can be approved for up to 2 academic years, as a Centre, we ensure that they are appropriate and relate to differences to NWOW by updating supporting information annually, usually at the start of the new academic year.

It is not permissible to transfer AA for Exams from other centres, as AA for Exams must be NWOW at this Centre. Historically, there has been confusion over transferring AA for Exams from school, other centres and between subject areas at the Centre, therefore, each application is considered on it's merit, taking in to account the candidate's needs and academic rigour of the exam/assessment and cannot be considered in any way as automatic.

Overview

- The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the whole college SEND provision including AA for Exams.
- To maintain standards of good practice and protect academic standard the Centre refers to the current JCQ^{CIC} Regulations and Policy(s) in the first instance
- The AN/Dyslexia Support Tutor will inform the SENCo and report when AA for Exams are to be planned for
- Personal Tutors/subject teachers and learning support staff can make recommendations via a referral to the Additional Needs Team and David Wedgbury – AN Manager
- The Disability Officer /SENCo will ensure there is appropriate evidence for a candidate's AA request to be made
- Submitting completed AA applications to the awarding bodies for approval is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.
- Rooming and Invigilation for AA candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer (but cannot be arranged for mock exams/in class timed assessments).

Access Arrangements for Exams:

Scribe (S): a trained member of staff who writes for the student. The student will dictate their answers. The scribe will write exactly what they say. A Scribe is not provided for online or MC exams or where the candidates ability to write English is being assessed. The Candidate may be expected to spell technical or vocationally specific vocabulary. The Scribe has to complete a Scribe Report after every exam, detailing what information was scribed and what information was the candidates own work. In some instances, UOWP (see below) will be recommended rather than a Scribe, this is to encourage independence and to replicate NWOW in the classroom, as very few students have a notetaker in class.

Reader (R): a trained member of staff who will read the question and any relevant written text. The student will then write the answer/s themselves. A Reader is not provided for online or MC exams or where the candidates ability to read English is being assessed. On occasions the use of an Exam Reading Pen or Reading Software is recommended in place of a Reader, as very few students have LSA support in class for reading.

Computer Reading Software (R&W): The Centre launched Read & Write Text Help Gold (R&W) as 'JCQ^{CIC} recommended software' to replace a human reader in exams. The software may not be compatible with software for some online exams, however .PDF question papers are available for most exams and this can also include some online exams to enable the use of R&W.

Use of a Word Processor (UOWP): access to a computer for an exam so the student can word process answers. Spelling and grammar checks may have to be disabled, however where students 'qualify' for a scribe in exams, spellchecker is enabled.

Extra Time (ET): students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time. The Centre SENCo is required to consider SRBs in place of extra time. In some exceptional circumstances students may be

entitled to an allowance of up to 50%, this is automatically rejected when applying on AAO and will need to be resubmitted with robust and detailed evidence of significant need.

Supervised Rest Breaks (SRB): where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time. SRB are not usually available for 'short' Multiple Choice online exams.

Prompter (P): where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained member of staff can prompt the student by tapping the desk; getting eye contact or with a permitted phrase to refocus, no other support is permitted i.e. advise the student to move on to the next question or indicate how much time is left, again Prompters are not usually available for 'short' Multiple Choice online exams.

Personal Assistant (PA) for candidates with a Physical Disability or impaired vision, in exceptional circumstances and where the student has support in class to access learning

Discrete/Separate Room (DR): can be arranged for students with a medical or psychological condition or who are assigned a scribe/reader/use of WP or prompter and their use may disrupt other candidates. This is not a sole occupancy room.

Sole Occupancy Room (SO): some candidates can be adversely affected by or sensitive to their surroundings to the extent that they may be significantly disadvantaged in a room with other candidates.

Adapted Paper: coloured paper, enlarged text, Braille or Language Modified paper may be provided for students not able to access the assigned exam format. A modified (PDF) exam paper is required where R&W is used.

Professional Communication Support - BSL/SSE Interpreter: for D/deaf students whose normal way of working is with the support of BSL/SSE support. BSL support can only sign the instructions and not the exam paper for parts of exams testing English reading and comprehension.

Use of Reading Pen, Coloured overlays and Read Aloud are also available and are identified as suitable if a Reader is not the candidates NWOW.

Other alternative and exceptional AA can be applied for, see JCQ ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021.

When might a student be given approved Access Arrangements?

<p>Scribe May not be appropriate in 'short online or multiple choice exam</p>	<p>Where there is a physical impairment or where the candidates writing is illegible and may hamper ability to be understood or after assessment there is a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Assessor (100 is the average)</p>
<p>Reader May not be appropriate in 'short online or multiple choice exam</p>	<p>Where a candidate has a sensory impairment or processing difficulty, i.e. is blind or visually impaired or there is significant evidence that the candidate struggles to engage with written materials without support in class</p>
<p>Use of Word Processor (UOWP)</p>	<p>Where there is a physical or processing impairment and handwriting is illegible and may hamper the candidate's ability to be understood or writing speed affects the ability to complete the exam in the allotted time. If a WP is to be used in place of a Scribe, then assessment must show a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Assessor (100 is the average). See also the Word Processor Policy 2019-2020.</p>
<p>Extra Time 25% May not be appropriate in 'short online or multiple choice exam</p>	<p>Where a student's ability to process information is slower than average Assessment must show a standardised score of 84 or below in a test delivered by a Specialist Assessor (100 is the average). Requests for 50% ET are automatically rejected on application by JCQ, so this arrangement will require considerable evidence, including 2 separate processing assessment scores of below 69 reported by a Specialist Assessor. Specific evidence in an EHCP or DSA report must be accompanied by a letter from the SENCo justifying the request.</p>
<p>Supervised Rest Breaks (SRBs) May not be appropriate in 'short online or multiple choice exam</p>	<p>1, 2 or 3 x 10 minute Supervised Rest Breaks are available where a student has significant problems concentrating or performing tasks for extended periods of time; to relieve anxiety or fatigue and is now the recommended option from the Exam Boards before considering extra time. Time Out procedures are indicative evidence of 'normal way of working'. SRBs are not appropriate for a 'short online or multiple choice exams'. A new application for SRBs needs to be made annually to ensure that SRBs remain the candidates NWOW.</p>
<p>Prompter May not be appropriate in 'short online or multiple choice exam</p>	<p>For a student who loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time, a Prompter may be appropriate, however in most cases they are not provided for 'short or online' or 'multiple choice exam'</p>
<p>Use of ICT R&W/Reading Pens/Magnifier etc.</p>	<p>Provided as normal way of working and where a Reader or Scribe is not permitted or where a candidate opts to not use a Reader or Scribe Evidence of NWOW must be available for approval for use in exams.</p>
<p>Support for D/deaf Students</p>	<p>Students whose usual way of working in the classroom requires a BSL/SSE Interpreter a formal request for AA for exams is still required for exams.</p>
<p>Use of Bilingual Dictionary</p>	<p>Requests from students whose first language is not English, who wish to use a bilingual dictionary, must be made directly to the SENCo.</p>

How is a student be identified for consideration for Access Arrangements?

- EHC Plan indicating a history of need **and** normal way of working in class
- Initial assessment with an AN/Dyslexia Support Tutor following a referral from Personal Tutor/tutor
- Dyslexia Assessment/ Screening identifying a possible learning difficulty such as Dyslexia/SpLD
- DSA recommendations (for HE students only)
- Evidence of a significant medical/MH condition or LD/D affecting performance in timed assessments
- Sudden illness/injury likely to affect performance in timed assessments (must provide medical evidence but usually not a GP letter).

How do tutors, students and parents know when Access Arrangements have been requested and approved?

- Tutors and students have a copy of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) which indicates support and confirms in class support which is identified as Normal Way of Working (NWOW).
- The Exam Team update ProSolutions where approval is given.

Malpractice Noncompliance and Regulations

It is considered malpractice or maladministration for AA for Exams to be provided without assessing need, planning for and seeking approval prior to the exam(s), failure to comply can result in sanctions for the Centre, staff involved and disqualification for the candidate.

All staff – Invigilators, Readers, Scribes and other staff providing support in exams must have undertaken updated (annual) JCQ approved training, be briefed and understand their specific role and comply with AA for Exams policies, practise and processes.

Subject teaching staff cannot support individuals in an exam where the candidate is undergoing assessment in that specialist subject , i.e. a GCSE English tutor cannot support a candidate as a Reader or Scribe for GCSE English exams.

What are the current date deadlines for requests?

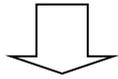
Deadlines for applications are published by JCQ^{ClC} but for other exams the Centre usually require **8 weeks notice before the exam due date**, therefore it is essential that requests are reported as soon as possible.

For 'Short courses or 'Fast Track Functional Skills' discretion is given, however staff must have discussed in class support and referred the student for Additional Needs Support, as part of the selection/interview process to enable resources to be available for exams.

Exams & Series	Details	College Deadline	JCQ Deadline
November 2020 GCSE Resits	Final date <u>for requesting modified papers</u>	ASAP	4 th September 2020
November 2020 GCSE Resits	Final date <u>for requesting ALL other AAs</u>	ASAP	1 st November 2020
Under no circumstances can applications be processed after these dates for GCSE resit exams			
January 2021 Series	Final date for <u>all applications for AAs for BTec and OCR</u>	ASAP (Exams Officer to confirm)	21 st October 2020
June 2021 GCSE exams	Final date <u>for requesting modified papers</u> for GCSE exams	26 th February 2021	31 st March 2021
June 2021 GCSE exams	Final date <u>for ALL other AAs</u> for GCSE exams	ASAP (Exams Officer to confirm)	31 st March 2021*
*Under no circumstances can applications be processed after this date for GCSE exams			
Term 1, Term 2 and Term 3 – online and other exams/assessments	including C&G /OCR/VTCT/AAT and other BTec Examinations and Assessments	21 st February 2021 or 8 weeks prior to exam date, (whichever is soonest)	6 weeks prior to exam or as published by the various Boards
All Access Arrangements must be evidenced as the candidate's Normal Way of Working at the Centre			

Access Arrangements for Exams - Application Process

AA Initially Identified at interview (Pre-entry)



Approval for AA Requested (on Programme)

AAs for Exams are discussed and reported at Interview

Checks are made to ensure AAs are appropriate for the identified SEND/AN as set by exam board/validating body and JCQ^{CIC} Regulations.

Documentary evidence is sent by the Support Tutor to the Disability Officer/SENCo:

- Signed Data Protection Statement
- Form 8 or draft Centre Note (i.e Detailed, Concise or File Note)
- Access Arrangements Code List
- Front Cover and declaration of NWOW
- Relevant documentary evidence of need

Additional evidence will be sought via the Specialised Assessors (Form 8 and processing scores) or referred back to the AN Support Tutor for further information.

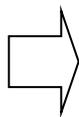
A Centre Note will be attached to requests where appropriate i.e to support EHCPs or medical evidence.

(Transferring AA between exam subjects is not permitted - approval for each subject has to be applied for)

The Disability Officer/SENCo processes documentary evidence with requests for approval to exam board/validating body via the Exams Officer and team

AA for Exams requests cannot be completed unless the request is received within time guidelines. The Centre must comply with these dates as outlined by JCQ^{CIC} Regulations.

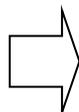
AA Approved



Exams Officer reports approval on ProSolution and this informs the Disability Officer/SENCo, Support Tutors and teaching staff

All approvals are recorded on the ProSolution individual Student Profiles.

AA Implemented

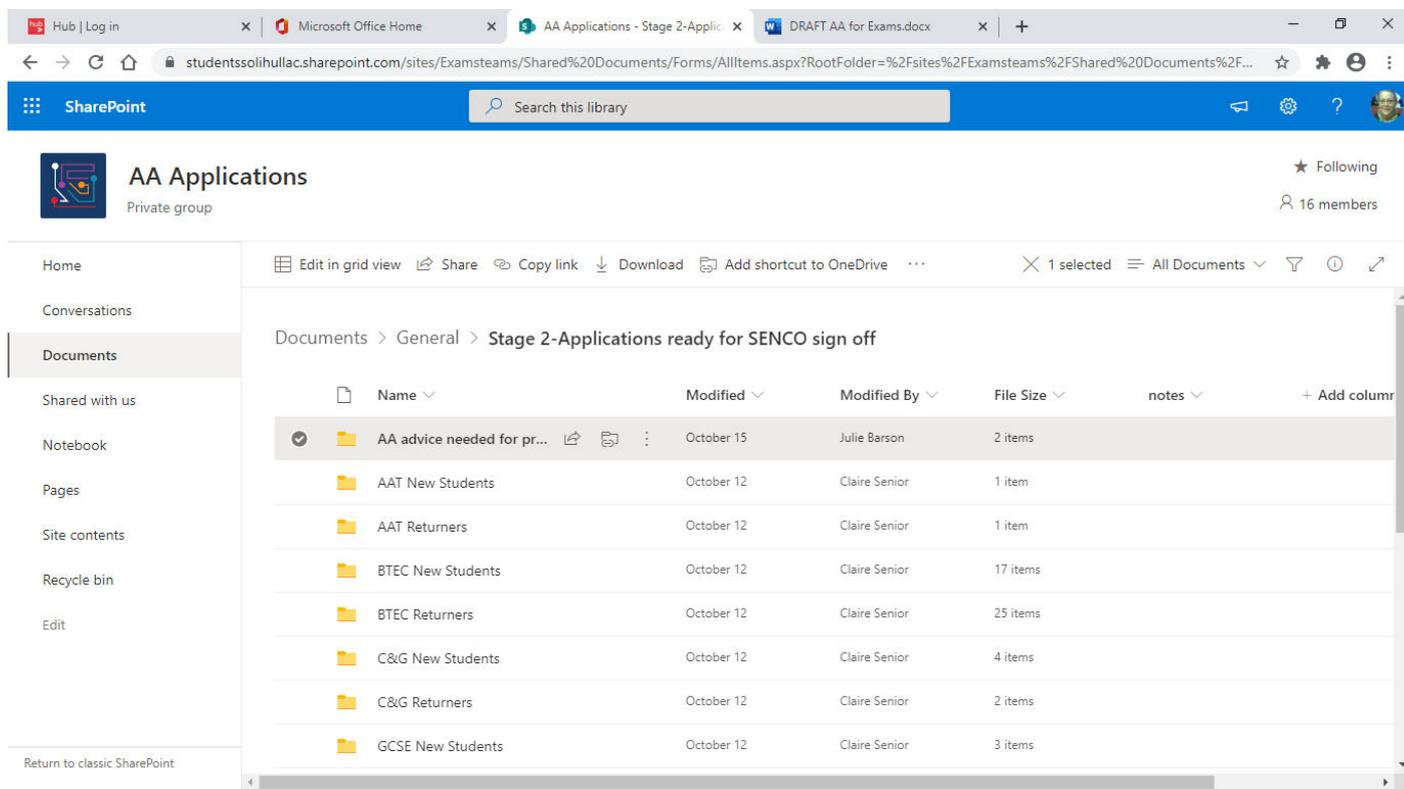


Readers/Scribes and other support is requested by the Exams team and are assigned for planned exams via liaison with the SENCo

The Exams Team confirm arrangements of rooming, equipment etc. to individual candidates.

New 2020-2021 SharePoint/Teams Process

AA Packs are now provided to the SENCo and finalised within the Exams Team processes via E-folders for individual candidates and all AA evidence is stored electronically.



The screenshot shows a SharePoint library view for 'AA Applications'. The breadcrumb path is 'Documents > General > Stage 2-Applications ready for SENCO sign off'. The table below lists the folders and their details:

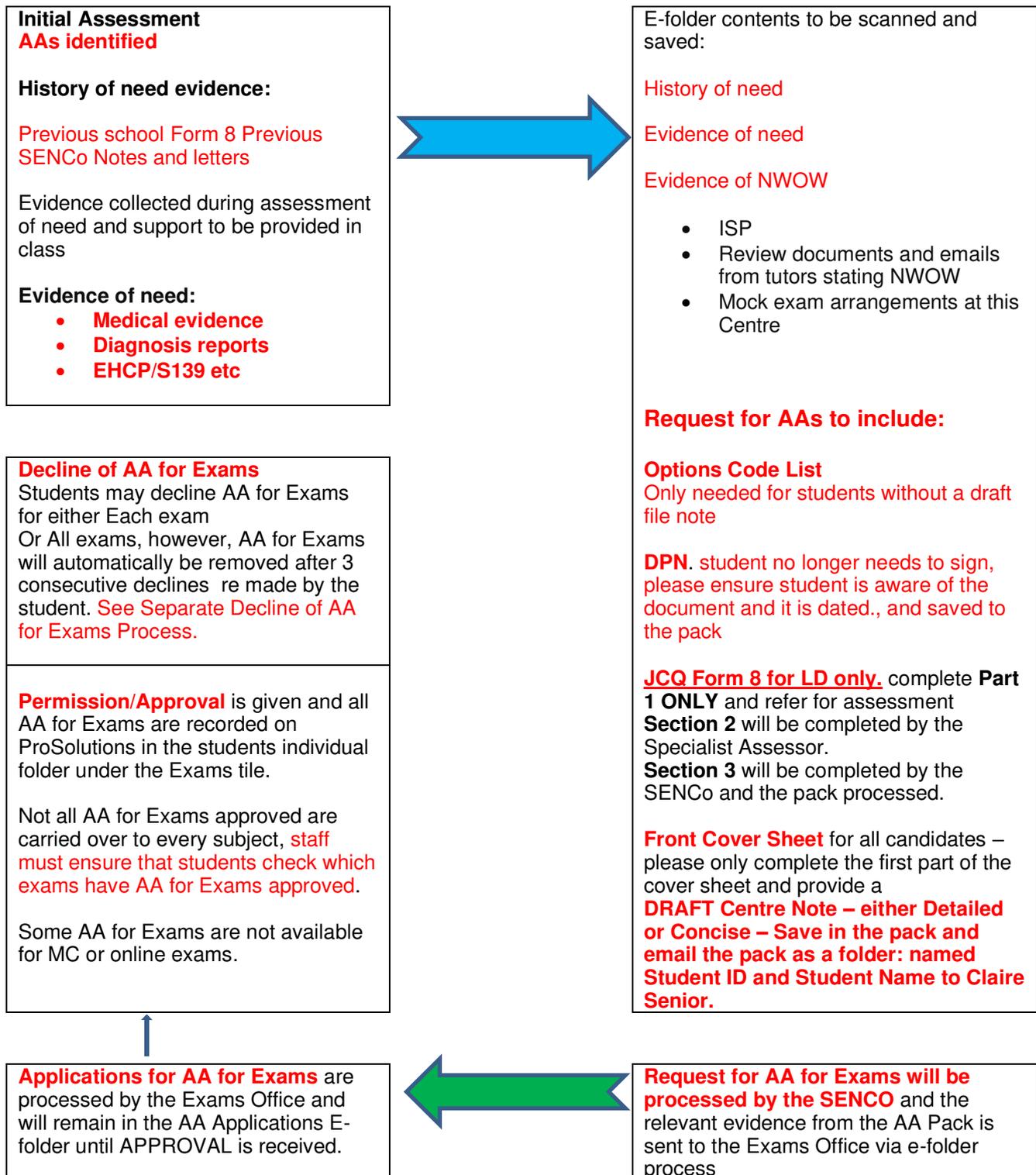
Name	Modified	Modified By	File Size	notes
AA advice needed for pr...	October 15	Julie Barson	2 items	
AAT New Students	October 12	Claire Senior	1 item	
AAT Returners	October 12	Claire Senior	1 item	
BTEC New Students	October 12	Claire Senior	17 items	
BTEC Returners	October 12	Claire Senior	25 items	
C&G New Students	October 12	Claire Senior	4 items	
C&G Returners	October 12	Claire Senior	2 items	
GCSE New Students	October 12	Claire Senior	3 items	

This process is being piloted for all new applications and those requiring updating i.e returning students.

- Stage 1** Re-enrolled students
- Stage 2** Applications ready for SENCo sign off
- Stage 3** Application ready for processing by Exams Team
- Stage 4** Referred back to SENCo for further evidence
- Stage 5** Approved and ready for planning AAs and for inspection.

E Folder process and gathering evidence for Access Arrangements.

AA Pack to be created and all documents saved and paper evidence scanned and saved to the students individual AA E-folder



Notes for AN Support Tutors and Dyslexia Support Tutors

FORM 8 – for referring students for assessment for **processing scores for Extra Time or Scribe ONLY** - **please email the AA pack with Form 8 – Part 1 completed** to Elizabeth Meredith who

will arrange an appointment with a Specialist Assessor (Dyslexia Support Tutor). Part 2 will be completed by the Assessor and Part 3 will be completed by the SENCo

Form 8 is no longer required for a Reader. If this is the students NWOW this needs to be requested on a **Centre Concise Note** – you can request an Exam Reading Pen, Read Aloud,]Use of Computer Reader/R&W etc. here too as an alternative to a Human Reader 1:1 or Shared, if a Human Reader is not permitted by the Exam Board for certain exams.

For **SRBs, Prompt, DR, Coloured paper, Modified Paper, UOWP, PA, Read Aloud/Exam Reading Pen** (if this is NWOW) a **Centre File Note** is needed.

A Centre Detailed Note is required for students with an **EHCP/SEN Statement** (still current) or **students with a diagnosis of ASD, have complex needs – meet the 5 Conditions – (e.g SEMH and other diagnosis i.e. ADHD).**

All **Modified Papers** must be requested by the JCQ deadline for GCSE exams- which is earlier than the JCQ final deadline.

RETURNING STUDENTS Returning candidates may require a new application to Exam Boards–if their NWOW changes or they change course or qualification level. Please complete the **Front Cover for Returning Students** and attach amended documents and evidence in the pack:

- Front Cover
- ISP
- Evidence
- DPN
- AA Options List

Any queries please let me know.

Julie Barson – Disability Officer/SENCo
Julie.barson@solihull.ac.uk

Guidance for Internal Subject Specific Tests, Internally Validated Tests and Timed Classroom Assessments (BTec; Access to HE and HE Exams and Assessments)

Access Arrangements for internal subject specific tests and timed classroom assessments must mirror the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working' (NWOW).

A minimum of 8 weeks notice (2 weeks for internal processing) must be given for an assessment and application for AAs, as late requests can be rejected.

Candidates who meet the definition of 'disability' within the Equality Act (2010) may need Reasonable Adjustment and therefore AA for Exams for in-class assessments must be considered, indeed we are duty bound to make these reasonable adjustments under the Act.

History of Need

In some instances students report a history of need, where they have received approval for AA at other institutions. History of need does not entitle the student to receive newly approved AA at this Centre – secondly, Regulations have changed over the years and the Centre has to comply with current regulations, for further guidance please contact the Disability Officer/SENCo or refer to the JCQ^{CIC} Regulations for Access Arrangements for Exams (2020- 2021)

Use of a Word Processor Statement (see also Word Processor Policy for Exams 2020-2021)

Some students may need to use of a word processor during examinations.

For example, candidates with a learning difficulty, disability or medical condition which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on:

- The ability to write legibly
- the ability to affectively plan and organise responses when writing by hand
- speed of responding by writing.

The use of a word processor will not be granted to a candidate solely because he/she prefers to type, works faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop/PC at home.

In all cases the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's NWOW within the Centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs and be planned for, in line with processes for AA for Exams.

NB: a considerable number of candidates have historically declined AA for Exams for Maths and Science- particularly the use of a PC in GCSE Maths for example, as candidates often prefer to handwrite in their exams.

Internal Subject Specific Tests, Internally Validated Tests and Timed Classroom Assessments & Mock Examinations

Student/ Curriculum Team	AN/Dyslexia Support Tutor	Disability Officer/SENCo	Centre Exams Officer
<p>Discuss need at earliest opportunity, i.e. at selection interview</p> <p>Provide documentary evidence of need</p> <p>Refer student to the Additional Needs Team for in class support assessment*</p>	<p>Ensure AAs are discussed for in-class and timed assessments and where needed are recorded for processing</p> <p>Check AAs are appropriate for the identified need and exam/test.</p>	<p>Check AAs requests meet JCQ^{CIC} Regulations</p> <p>Request Update of Processing Scores or other evidence where appropriate</p> <p>Determine appropriate AA for Exams in line with the given assessment, exam criteria and JCQ^{CIC} Regulations</p>	<p>Check documentary evidence and seek approval for AAs,</p> <p>Monitor and make recommendations for future planning of AA</p> <p>NB: The Exams Officer and Team do not provide rooms or invigilation for in class, mock or classroom timed assessments.</p>
Personal/subject Tutor	<p>Ensure documentary evidence is forwarded to Disability Officer/SENCo for processing</p> <p>Inform Personal Tutor and student AA approved/arranged</p>	<p>Process the AA Pack and forward documentary evidence to the Exams Team</p> <p>Exam Resource Allocation - Ensure resources are requested for AA and implemented to meet need</p>	
<p>Check AA have been considered and requested via the AN Support Tutor when planning or arranging timed assessments</p> <p>Inform AN Support Tutor of any changes</p>	<p>Review normal way of working and check AA still appropriate.</p>	<p>Exam Resource Allocation - Ensure resources are requested for AA and implemented to meet need</p>	
Subject Tutor	<p>Complete Decline of AA as appropriate and pass form on to Disability Officer/SENCo</p>	<p>Exam Resource Allocation - Ensure resources are requested for AA and implemented to meet need</p> <p>Liaise with tutors and others on Regulations and criteria for AA for Exams</p> <p>Provide appropriate training and awareness of AA for Exams across the Centre and for staff providing support in exams</p> <p>Monitor and make recommendations for future planning</p> <p>Process "Decline of AA for Exams" as appropriate and inform others of actions taken</p> <p>Review process for AAs</p>	
<p>Provide Invigilators and plan rooming etc for mock exams and in class assessments</p> <p>Liaise with Disability Officer/SENCo regarding allocating Readers/Scribes etc for planned mock exams and in class assessments</p> <p>Inform Disability Officer/SENCo of any concerns</p> <p>*Assessment cannot be solely for the purpose of AA for Exams</p>			

Special Consideration, Appeals, Complaints and Concerns

In the unusual situation that expected arrangements have not been provided, are inadequate or unforeseen events impact negatively on the candidate's performance in the exam, then concerns must be timely reported.

To enable the Centre to make requests to Exam Boards for Special Consideration (See also Special Considerations Policy) or to report events that have impacted on the candidate in the exam the Invigilator must be informed during or at the end of the exam.

For concerns raised after the day of the exam, then it should be reported directly to the appropriate member of staff via email usually:

- Support Tutor
- Disability Officer/SENCo
- Exams Officer

so that immediate and appropriate actions can be taken.

Appropriate processes are also in place via the usual Complaints and Appeals Procedure to enable concerns to be raised by candidates and/or parents.

NB: as of 2017-2018 the Centre has been advised that parents are no longer permitted to contact JCQ^{CIC} directly but must liaise with the Centre's Exams Officer.

Confirmation of Approval for AA for Exams

Approval will be detailed on ProSolutions for each candidate. Staff will need to check they are advising students and parents correctly, as misinformation can cause distress. Please be aware that not all AA for exams are relevant to each subject area. Readers are not permitted for some exams, scribes are not permitted for others and Supervised Rest Breaks are not provided for short, on-line multiple-choice exams.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Student information for AA for Exams is stored and shared in line with the Centre's Policy and JCQ^{CIC} Regulations for Access Arrangements for Exams (2020-2021).

Other Documents Relevant to Exams and Access Arrangements:

Disability Statement: Statement of Our Commitment to Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities - <i>Equality Act 2014</i>	Disability Policy (Exams) – JCQ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021
Exams Policy - JCQ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021	Word Processor Policy (Exams) JCQ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021
Special Consideration Policy - JCQ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021	Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - JCQ^{CIC} Regulations 2020-2021

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