

Disability Policy (Exams) 2020 – 2021

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To inform staff and students how the Centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010

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)

Key Staff Involved in Access Arrangements for Exams

Role	Name
SENCo	Julie Barson
Senior Leader	Adam Thomas
Exams Officer	Manjit Kaur
Head of centre	John Callaghan
Assessor(s)	Elizabeth Meredith Julie Siassipour Madeleine Edwards Matthew Scott
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Hourly Paid Exams Support Workers Additional Needs Support Tutors Dyslexia Support Tutors Lead Learning Support Assistants Learning Support Assistants (A file is maintained of staff trained in Access Arrangements which is provided annually)

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Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams specific supplement to the centre wide disability/accessibility policy/plan which details how the centre will:

“recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, 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”

[Section 5.4 of the current JCQ publication [General regulations for approved centres 2020-2021](#)]

This policy details how the Centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

- ▶ identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- ▶ requesting access arrangements
- ▶ implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- ▶ good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 Definition of Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a

‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities’.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long term adverse effects on normal day to day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions)

The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means ‘limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people’.

‘Substantial’ means ‘more than minor or trivial’.

‘Long term’ means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.

‘Normal day to day activities’ - study and education related activities are included in the meaning of ‘day to day’ activities.)

Definition of special educational needs

A candidate has “special educational needs” as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements for Exams

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- ▶ Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

Senior leaders

- ▶ Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

SENCo

- ▶ Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA

Additional Needs Support Tutor/Dyslexia Support Tutor

- ▶ Informs the SENCo of any support for exams that might be needed by a candidate
- ▶ Provides relevant details of the candidate to support the SENCo in *painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working (NWOW)* for a candidate

Specialised Assessors

(An appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- ▶ Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication AA Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- ▶ Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of AA
- ▶ Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- ▶ Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

Role of SENCo

- ▶ Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- ▶ Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- ▶ Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is assigned for processing scores
- ▶ Provides evidence to the Exams Officer, annually, of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed and ensure that these are held on file
- ▶ Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- ▶ Ensures all policy documents relating to AA for Exams demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- ▶ Supports the Head of Centre in determining the need for and implementing of access arrangements meet resource allocations
- ▶ Ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams
- ▶ Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- ▶ Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements
- ▶ Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- ▶ Liaises with the Specialised Assessor(s) appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process for AA for Exams
- ▶ Ensures the Specialised Assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives needed for the relevant exams a candidate is undertaking
- ▶ Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- ▶ Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments are evidenced by and reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- ▶ Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- ▶ Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the Specialised Assessor's qualifications
- ▶ Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the Exams Officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved Access Arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- ▶ Ensures processes are in place to provide information to evidence the *normal way of working* of a candidate
- ▶ Conducts and/or arranges appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- ▶ Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- ▶ Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Use of word processors

The Word Processor for Exams Policy is available via Moodle and the Exams Officer.

Copies are available to all relevant staff within the Centre, to ensure students are advised of the Policy.

Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

SENCo

- ▶ Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA
- ▶ Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place
- ▶ Advises Centre staff of the relevant processes for requesting Access Arrangements.
- ▶ Ensures where Form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed by hand and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- ▶ Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of AA, are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- ▶ Confirms by ticking the '*Confirmation*' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the '*malpractice consequence statement*' has been read and accepted

Exams officer

- ▶ Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role
- ▶ Follows guidance in AA Section 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements
- ▶ Applies for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- ▶ Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (*Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties*), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- ▶ Ensures where a Form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought, and is maintained for inspection purposes along with the appropriate body of evidence for each application as directed
- ▶ Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of AA, are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- ▶ Confirms by ticking the '*Confirmation*' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the '*malpractice consequence statement*' has been read and accepted

- ▶ Makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- ▶ Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- ▶ Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- ▶ Maintains a (hard copy or electronic) file/e-folder for each candidate that will include:
 - ▶ completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
 - ▶ appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
 - ▶ appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
 - ▶ in addition, for those qualifications listed on page 2 of AA (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- ▶ Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- ▶ If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised
- ▶ Liaises with staff regarding appropriately modified paper requirements for candidates
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- ▶ Following the appropriate process (AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of AA; *JCQ Form 7* or *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

Implementing Access Arrangements and the conduct of exams

Roles and responsibilities

External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* (ICE).

Head of Centre

- ▶ Supports the SENCo, the Exams Officer and other relevant Centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

SENCo

- ▶ Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- ▶ Is familiar with the *Checklist for Heads of Centre and Examination Officers – The Equality Act 2010 and Conduct of Examinations* provided in the current ICE (page 44)
- ▶ Liaises with the Exams Officer regarding facilitation and invigilation of Access Arrangement candidates in exams
- ▶ Liaises with other relevant Centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate Access Arrangement candidates in exams
- ▶ Assists with the appointment of staff as Exams Support Workers to support candidates (Practical Assistant, Prompter, Reader, Scribe or Sign Language Interpreter, etc.)
- ▶ Ensures Exam Support Workers supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ▶ Ensures a record of the training given to Exams Support Workers is kept and retained on file until the deadline for enquiries about results has passed or until any appeals, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- ▶ Ensures the Exam Support Worker is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- ▶ Ensures an Exams Support worker acting as a Prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- ▶ Ensures an Exam Support Worker acting as a Reader or Scribe is aware of any complies with the regulations regarding this role in exams that may be assessing reading or writing
- ▶ Liaises with the Exams Officer to ensure that Invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability awareness
- ▶ Liaises with the Exams Office where an Exams Support Worker may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- ▶ Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams

Exams Officer

- ▶ Is familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current ICE (page 44)
- ▶ Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access Arrangements in ICE 2020-2021*.
- ▶ Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates as detailed in ICE 2020-2021
- ▶ Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates

- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo to ensure that Invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- ▶ Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- ▶ Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- ▶ Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- ▶ Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early where preparation is required by the facilitator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter only)
- ▶ Ensures that the facilitator only has access to the papers 60 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- ▶ Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
- ▶ prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)
- ▶ Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- ▶ Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- ▶

AN Support Tutors and Dyslexia Support Tutors

- ▶ Support the SENCo and the Exams Officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate equitable access for SEND candidates to assessments and exams
- ▶ Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- ▶ Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- ▶ Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates

Personal Tutors/Subject Tutors/Learning Support

- ▶ Liaises with the Exams Officer where an Exams Support Worker may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

Other relevant Centre staff are aware of their role in AA for Exams including:

- ▶ IT Services are aware of **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
- ▶ Estates/facilities and site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) may need to be adapted for a candidate
- ▶ **Senior staff** responsible for **Health and Safety** and for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated
- ▶ **First Aid staff** are aware, where assistance may be required for a candidate who has a current Risk Assessment for a health condition.

Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

“Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as ‘NEA’.”

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*, Foreword]

Teaching staff

- ▶ Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates undergoing internal assessments
- ▶ Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- ▶ Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

AN Support Tutors and Dyslexia Support Tutors

- ▶ Support the SENCo to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate equitable access for SEND candidates to internal assessments
- ▶ Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- ▶ Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- ▶ Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- ▶
- ▶ Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- ▶ Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at the assessment time

- ▶ Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- ▶ Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- ▶ Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- ▶ Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- ▶ Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- ▶ Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- ▶ Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ▶ Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- ▶ Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

SENCo

- ▶ Liaises with teaching staff and AN Support Tutors and Dyslexia Support Tutors to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates undertaking internal assessments

Internal exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

SENCo

- ▶ Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- ▶ Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- ▶ Provide the SENCo with exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- ▶ Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

Facilitating access - examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- ▶ adapting assessment arrangements
- ▶ adapting assessment materials
- ▶ the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- ▶ adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the Centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised Rest Breaks Additional Invigilation to support "Sole Worker Policy"	<p><i>SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i></p> <p><i>Relevant Tutor provides written statement to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Personal/Subject Tutor has discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>Exams Officer submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'</i></p> <p><i>Exams Officer provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Relevant Tutor confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Relevant Tutor agrees with candidate that prior to each exam a call will be made to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>Exams Officer allocates Invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator supervises and records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs Exams Officer after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>Exams Officer discusses with SENCo and advises relevant tutor if candidate is eligible for Special Consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>Exams Officer processes request(s) for Special Consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence</i></p> <p><i>Relevant Tutor informs candidate that Special Consideration has been requested</i></p>
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader/Reading Pen UOWP	<p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p>

	<p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Separate room and invigilation within the Centre</p> <p>Adapted Exam paper i.e. enlarged print/Braille or coloured paper</p>	<p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>Original information is kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice</i></p>
Significant difficulty in concentrating	<p>Prompter</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p> <p>Provide SRBs to alleviate fatigue and refocus</p>	<p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and advises Prompter of the method of prompting needed (gently say name to bring his attention back to the paper; gently tap the desk and say OK?- Confirms requirement for separate room/ seating plan</i></p>
A wheelchair user	<p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>	<p><i>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; Approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted toilet facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed and inserted inside the candidate's work.</i></p>

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