

Examinations – Access Arrangements

DRAFTED BY:	The Key	STATUS:	Recommended
APPROVED:	04/2023	LEVEL:	Headteacher
ISSUE:	1	NEXT REVIEW:	11/2024

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Definitions	1
3. The Purpose of the Policy	2
4. General Principles	2
5. Identification.....	3
6. Assessment of Need.....	3
7. Private / Commissioned Reports.....	5
8. Arrangements Requiring Awarding Body Approval / Modified Papers	5
9. Word Processors	5
10. Separate Invigilation within the Centre.....	5
11. Complaints and Appeals.....	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy will make reference to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publications '[General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)' and '[Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration](#)'.
- 1.2. Any references to legislation are to the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 1.3. Throughout this policy the term examination (or exam) refers to all examinations and assessments.
- 1.4. An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student in an examination, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. EAAs are subject to the approval of the exam board.
- 1.5. Isleworth & Syon School is committed to ensuring that all of our students with specific identified needs receive the support that they are entitled to in order to access examinations. This will mean that we will seek every opportunity to identify a student's needs, from their first contact with the school.
- 1.6. The names of key school staff can be found on the [School's website](#).

2. Definitions

2.1. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1.1. These "are pre-examination adjustments for candidates (students). They are based on evidence of need and normal way of working." They fall into two categories, those delegated to centres and others which require prior JCQ awarding body approval.

-
- 2.1.2. 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.
- 2.1.3. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular 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'.

2.2. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- 2.2.1. 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. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.
- 2.2.2. 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.
- 2.2.3. 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'.

- 2.3. **Special Consideration** - is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition or disadvantage at the time of the examination.
- 2.4. **Disability** - Section 6 of the Equality Act 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'.

3. The Purpose of the Policy

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Isleworth and Syon School has a written record which clearly demonstrates that the centre is leading on making and processing access arrangements.
- 3.2. In addition, the policy meets the JCQ regulations to:
- comply with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements
 - has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed.

4. General Principles

- 4.1. The principles for Isleworth and Syon School refer to the JCQ regulations and include:
- 4.1.1. 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 a disabled candidate.
- 4.1.2. The person who leads on additional learning support/special educational needs, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 4.1.3. Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

-
- 4.1.4. Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.
- 4.1.5. Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course.
- 4.1.6. Arrangements must always be approved before an examination.
- 4.1.7. The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.
- 4.1.8. The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination, unless this cannot be facilitated due to late and/or exceptional circumstances, such as an injury.
- 4.2. The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are available on the [school website](#).

5. Identification

- 5.1. In line with JCQ regulations, the School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment, which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working. Appropriate evidence of need will be available for inspection.
- 5.2. Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre must provide the assessor with background information that demonstrates a picture of need or normal way of working. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure that there is a consistent and coherent process.
- 5.3. Access arrangements may be varied and will be allocated with the individual needs of the student. They may include:
- supervised rest breaks
 - extra time allocation
 - reader/computer reader
 - scribe/voice activated software
 - word processor
 - transcript
 - prompter
 - oral language modifier
 - live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components
 - sign language interpreter
 - practical assistant
 - alternative accommodation away from the centre may be made for him/her
 - other arrangements for candidates with disabilities
 - amplification equipment; Brailers; closed circuit TV; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind; coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.

6. Assessment of Need

- 6.1. Assessments are carried out by an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre, in accordance with and as required by, the JCQ requirements.
- 6.2. The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need, a history of provision and a specialist teacher's access arrangements report. Once the tests have been completed and there is a recommendation for EAA, the SENDCo, specialist teacher or Examinations Officer will then make an application to the exam board(s).
- 6.3. **QUALIFICATIONS FOR CURRENT ASSESSORS**
- 6.3.1. A copy of the assessor's qualification will be held in the school files. Evidence of EAA related training will also be retained on file.
- 6.3.2. The assessor will be a current employee of the School and will be line managed by the SENDCo.

6.3.3. The School's SENDCo will ensure that the assessment process is administered correctly.

6.3.4. Should an external assessor be employed/engaged by the School, evidence of qualifications will be checked against current requirements and retained on file. The checking process will take place prior to any assessment being undertaken.

6.4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

6.4.1. For students who potentially require EAA, a formal assessment and application to JCQ is normally undertaken in Years 10/11 and/or Year 12. Assessments may be carried out at other times, where necessary.

6.4.2. Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will then be considered for access arrangements.

6.4.3. Once diagnostic tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation for EAA, there is a named person at the School who is qualified to carry out EAA related assessments and tests and who applies to the exam board, and if the application is successful, informs the Examinations Officer. Since the application requires evidence of need, the School will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice.

This can include:

- educational psychologist reports
- speech therapist reports
- occupation therapist reports
- letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors, and CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service)
- reports from hearing impairment (HI) and visual impairment (VI) advisory teachers
- copies of Statements of Special Educational Needs, or Education, Health Care Plans (EHCP)
- permission from the exam board for the arrangements
- a signed copy of Form 8 report by the School's designated assessor/tester
- a record of all occasions when the student has been supported by EAA.

6.5. Parents/carers must declare at the time of enrolment of the student to the School, and when completing the school application form, if their child/ward has any medical or psychological condition, SEND needs, previous EAA at another educational institution, or any other issues that may require an EAA. Failure to disclose this negates the School from their responsibilities.

6.6. Parents/carers may request an independent assessment. However, the School may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report. If rejected the SENDCo or a member of the Senior Leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision, which must be available for inspection purposes.

6.7. If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

6.8. If the SENDCo and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/carers.

6.9. DEADLINES

6.9.1. Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) deadlines are fully adhered to. There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports from specialist teacher carrying out EEA assessments/tests
- a previous EAA from another school
- subject teachers - examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams
- results from baseline tests such as reading age, writing tests
- medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability
- an educational psychology report, which explicitly diagnoses severe dyslexia
- a speech therapy report, which diagnoses severe language impairment.

6.9.2. The deadline for online applications for access arrangements varies slightly from year to year and is set by the government. Additional time is also applied for on the basis of whether a student requires a reader.

- 6.9.3. Within school the expectation is that all access arrangements will be confirmed by the end of the term preceding the exam. This will apply in all cases, except where there is a late or unforeseen injury or illness.

6.10. INFORMATION

- 6.10.1. When a need for access arrangements has been made, relevant parties are informed as follows:

- parents/carers in writing - the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded
- students are informed verbally
- the access arrangement list is made available to the exam officer
- a list of those who receive access arrangements is made available to all staff.

- 6.10.2. The information will be recorded on the School's SharePoint (Staffroom).

7. Private / Commissioned Reports

- 7.1. It is important to note that the School cannot use reports for EAA applications that have been produced by a person who is not known to the School. Only staff, employed by the school, can complete Form 8 (the Profile of Learning Difficulties form produced by JCQ) which has to be completed as part of the application process for access arrangements.
- 7.2. Whilst a parent/carer may have their child assessed by a private educational psychologist and submit the report to the School's SENDCo as evidence that their child/ward should be awarded extra time or EAA, the parent/carer should discuss this option with the School before proceeding with the assessment. This is to avoid proceeding with an external assessment that will not be of any benefit to the student and which will not be able to be used in applying for access arrangements.
- 7.3. Private educational psychologists' report cost a significant amount of money. Therefore, this means that parents/carers who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre the School must be consistent in its decisions and ensure that no student is either given an unfair advantage or disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Therefore, when parents/carers submit such reports, the School will look for evidence of a history of need.
- 7.4. Such privately commissioned reports can be in conflict with what the School's tester (specialist teacher) recommends. If the School's diagnostic tests contradict privately commissioned reports, then the School's tests and assessments will take precedence and will inform EAA decisions and no further negotiation regarding this matter will take place with the parent/carer.

8. Arrangements Requiring Awarding Body Approval / Modified Papers

- 8.1. Access Arrangements Online (AAO) & Pearson's Access Arrangements Online (PAAO) 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.
- 8.2. Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned.
- 8.3. Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper.

9. Word Processors

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. See the School's policy 'Examinations - Word Processor Policy'.

10. Separate Invigilation within the Centre

- 10.1. There may be occasions where an assessment will allow for arrangements to be made for candidates to sit exams in a smaller exam venue rather than in the main exam hall or to have specific seating arrangements in the main exam hall.

-
- 10.2.** A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENDCo and this will be based on the following guidelines.
- 10.2.1.** Students with an anxiety and/or mental health issue for which they have specialist support or intervention from CAMHS, an NHS Psychiatrist, etc. (but not just a letter from a GP or parent/carer) can be considered for specific seating arrangements, including a room rather than the exam hall, if required and requested. This should also have been their “normal way of working” over time leading up to the examination period.
 - 10.2.2.** Students whose “normal way of working” involves specific seating arrangements across the board in lessons and / or does not attend hall events e.g., assembly, may qualify to have a similar provision for exams (SEN / Pastoral Leader will hold the paperwork and evidence of this).
 - 10.2.3.** Students with other difficulties, for whom we consider invigilation in a smaller room or specific seating arrangements to be an appropriate and reasonable adjustment in light of those difficulties, and for whom evidence over time has been collected and is held by SEN / Pastoral Leader, will be seated accordingly.
 - 10.2.4.** Any student who has an extenuating circumstance that occurs in the lead up to, or during, the exam period that is likely to impact on their usual exam performance, will be considered under the usual “special consideration” arrangements by JCQ. Evidence will be collected and the exam board advised if JCQ criteria are met. In very rare circumstances, seating arrangements may also be varied at the last minute on these occasions and this may involve consultation with the student.
- 10.3.** For 10.2.1 - 10.2.3, decisions will be confirmed by the Easter ahead of the summer examination cycle.
- 10.4.** All cases that do not fall into the categories above will be considered individually and a final decision will be made by the Head of Centre, in conjunction with the SENDCo.

11. Complaints and Appeals

Please see the separate policy Examinations - Complaints & Appeals Policy for information on how to raise a concern, make a complaint, or appeal an access arrangement decision.