EQUALITIES POLICY (Exams)

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Directors	
Date of next review	November 2026

This template is provided for members of **The Exams Office** only and must not be shared beyond use in your centre

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo (or equivalent role)	**Jemini Lakhman**
Senior leader(s)	**Paul Connolly** **Robert Crossland** **Mark Rome**
Head of centre	**Pritam Vekaria**
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Alexandre Silva**

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Purpose of the policy

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

- recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses to submit applications for reasonable adjustments through the access arrangements process and to make reasonable adjustments to the services the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid

  †or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect

(JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

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

A definition is provided in the JCQ document (Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments** 2025-2026 (*Definitions* section).

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

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

Senior leader(s)

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ documents including GR and AARA
- 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 arrangementsLeads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
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Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) or equivalent role

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ document AARA
- 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 **all** candidates are clearly defined and documented
- 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
-

Teaching staff

- (where appropriate) Inform the SENCo (or equivalent role) of any concerns, observations or feedback about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate

Support staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments and observations to support the SENCo (or equivalent role) to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working for a candidate
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
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Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

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

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication AARA

Use of word processors

Overtype here the location of the centre's specific policy (which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AARA, section 5.8)

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

SENCo or equivalent role

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre delegated
- To comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensures relevant candidates **are** informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*
- Follows guidance in AARA (chapter 8) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included
- 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 that were approval is required the application is processed on time and no later than the awarding body's published deadline
- Reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of relevant JCQ forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc.
- Ensures where JCQ forms are required to be completed, forms are signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version)
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO are entered into AAO to confirm their status
- Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will be in hard copy within the candidate's file/each of the required documents held electronically within the candidate's e-folder) 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 covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval;

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Exams officer (EO)

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AARA where this may be relevant to the EO role
- Follows guidance in AARA (chapter 8) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included
- Ensures that the agreed adjustment has been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal tests and mock examinations
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of relevant JCQ forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc.
- 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)
- Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will be in hard copy within the candidate's file/each of the required documents held electronically within the candidate's e-folder) 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 covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval;
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper (or to download a PDF copy of the standard question paper or to open a question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the awarding body's 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)

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

ALS lead/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 instructions for 'Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements' and 'Access arrangements' in ICE 2025-2026

- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for them 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
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Professional)
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
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Exams officer

- Understands and follows instructions for Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and Access arrangements in ICE 2025-2026
- Is familiar with the instructions for 'Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements' and 'Access arrangements' in ICE 2025-2026
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- 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
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Professional)
- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant. Where the candidate's own subject teacher, Learning Support Assistant or teaching assistant has to be used, a separate invigilator is always present
- Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator
- 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 awarding body's published start time of the exam
- Understands that where permitted/approved, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
    - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare

- the Sign Language Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
- a Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening examination 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
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Internal assessments

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

However, 'NEA' is not limited to internal assessment as externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are also classified as 'NEA'.

SENCo or equivalent role

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
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Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking their first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

Internal exams/assessments

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

SENCo or equivalent role

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

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide 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	*SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home and for SRB* *Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need* *Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required* *Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements which should be put in place* *EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online using CAP* *An on-line submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations in the following qualifications…* *EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates* *Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood* *Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam* *EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials* *Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log* *Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam* *Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition* *EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)* *EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)* *Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested*

Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader 25% Extra time Alternative rooming arrangements	*Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010* *Papers checked for those testing reading* *Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded* *Candidate informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online* *AAO application for approval processed* *Supporting evidence and AAO approval~~, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form~~ kept on file*
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Alternative rooming arrangements	*Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment* *Candidate informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online* *AAO application for approval processed* *Supporting evidence and AAO approval~~, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form~~ kept on file* *Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted* *Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for alternative room)*
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	*Candidate informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online* *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* *Supporting evidence and AAO approval~~, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form~~ kept on file Provides height adjustable desk in exam room* *Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities* *Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access* *Seats candidate near exam room door* *Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room* *Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment*