



1 Introduction

- 1.1** The college recognises its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This includes a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.
- 1.2** Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. 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. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the 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'.
- 1.3** The purpose of this policy is to confirm that the college has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its *...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...*
[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)]
- 1.4** This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual electronic folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.
- 1.5** The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ AA).

2 General Principles

- 2.1** The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (section 4.2). These include:
- 2.2** The purpose of an access arrangement 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.

- 2.3 The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 2.4 Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.
- 2.5 The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.
- 2.6 The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination.

3 **Building a Picture of Need**

- 3.1
 - 1. Referrals can be made from students, staff or parents outlining the area of need.
 - 2. The student will be invited to an initial meeting with a member of the Learning Support Team to further establish the area of need.
 - 3. Relevant staff may be requested to give their observations of the student.
 - 4. Medical evidence will be requested if appropriate.
 - 5. Part 1 of Form 8 will be completed by the SENCo in the case of a learning difference.
 - 6. Confirmation of normal way of working will be established and held on file once the access arrangement has been approved.

4 **Appointment of Assessors**

- 4.1 Assessments can only be carried out by assessors appointed by the head of centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in JCQ AA section 7.3.
- 4.2 Qualifications of the current assessors:

Jo Preston – Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A)
- 4.3 At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the college, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in JCQ AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.
- 4.4 Checking the qualifications of assessors:
 - 4.4.1 As part of the recruitment of an assessor, they will be required to provide evidence of their qualifications.
 - 4.4.2 The head of centre will appoint:
 - 1. An access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to level 7 including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessmentOR

2. A specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or PATOSS and listed on the SASC website
OR
3. An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

4.4.3 Evidence of the assessors' qualifications will be held on file in HR and in the SENCo's records for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo (AA 7:3). This will include evidence of the qualifications used by an assessor in the case of a roll over Form 8 from a previous setting.

5 Assessment process

The assessment of candidate's must be fully in line with Chapter 7.5 of current JCQ regulations:

7.5.1 The SENCo will arrange for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor if there is a clear and broad picture of need

7.5.2 Before the candidate's assessment, the assessor will gain background information, i.e. a picture of need as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The assessor will complete at least a skeleton Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

7.5.3 If an independent assessor is to be used, the SENCo must provide relevant background information so that the independent assessor can complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to any assessments taking place. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate. All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo.

7.5.4 The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

7.5.5 Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.

7.5.6 The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.

7.5.7 Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores must be used, where published.

7.5.8 The candidate's chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age.

7.5.9 Results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. (These are standard scores.) Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores must be converted into standard scores.

7.5.10 Reading skills

Reading comprehension: for candidates potentially requiring a Language Modifier (see section 5.11) reading comprehension must be assessed using a recognised test of text or sentence comprehension.

Reading speed: a candidate with a history of reading difficulties, whose reading accuracy (at single word level), or reading comprehension, is within normal limits for his/her age, may read slowly because he/she:

- takes longer than expected to decode the words, leading to slow reading (slow reading speed);
- needs to re-read text many times to absorb its meaning (slow reading comprehension speed).

There are various ways of assessing text level reading speed:

- a test which assesses speed at text level (known as reading rate or reading speed);
- a test which combines text level speed and accuracy (sometimes known as reading fluency);
- a test that assesses the time taken to both read the text and to answer questions on what has been read. The test must provide a score for reading comprehension speed, not just for reading comprehension.

Where a candidate reads independently, text level assessments of reading speed may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time. The results will be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 under 'Reading Speed'. Tests which measure single word reading speed and efficiency are not appropriate in this context. However, they may contribute to cognitive processing measures for extra time, as recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 under cognitive processing or in 'Other relevant information'.

7.5.11 Writing skills

A scribe, a word processor with the spell check enabled, or speech recognition technology will be allowed in certain subjects when a candidate's impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect.

For examination purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as the candidate having:

- a below average standardised spelling accuracy score (a standardised score of 84 or less) with unrecognisable spelling attempts; or
- a below average standardised score for writing speed (a standardised score of 84 or less).

In some cases, the candidate's writing is illegible or grammatically incomprehensible but improves significantly when a scribe is used. If these difficulties are not evidenced by a below average standardised spelling accuracy score, or a below average standardised score for writing speed, Access arrangements online will not approve the application. The SENCo may then decide to refer the application to the awarding body/bodies. Where the candidate writes by hand, an assessment of writing speed may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time. The result will be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 under 'Writing Speed'.

7.5.12 Cognitive processing

Different areas of cognitive processing assessments would include:

- short-term/working verbal memory
- short-term/working visual memory (short-term/working verbal and visual memory may be combined within a composite score)
- phonological awareness
- phonological memory
- phonological processing speed/rapid naming
- visual processing speed
- visual/motor processing
- other measures as determined appropriate for the candidate by an assessor, for example, word reading fluency/sight word efficiency, decoding fluency/non- word reading efficiency, association / oral fluency, orthographic / spelling fluency
- mathematical processing*.

*The time taken to process mathematical concepts, sometimes known as mathematical fluency. A timed assessment of mathematical computation or attainment is not acceptable. An assessment of mathematical processing may **only** be used as **one** of the two required measures for 25% extra time in Mathematics examinations. The mathematical processing score **must** be below average. An assessment of mathematical processing cannot contribute to the evidence for 25% extra time in examinations other than Mathematics.

Where a candidate has cognitive processing difficulties which have a substantial and long-term adverse impact on their speed of working 25% extra time may be awarded. (See Chapter 5, paragraph 5.2.2.) These difficulties will be demonstrated by tests which result in:

- two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
- one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89)

which relate to two different areas of speed of working. This may include two different areas of cognitive processing.

7.5.13 Other cognitive ability measures

In most cases there is not a requirement to carry out tests of general cognitive abilities. However, in rare and exceptional circumstances the SENCo may need to refer a candidate to an alternative professional, such as a HCPC registered psychologist or a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, where further investigation is warranted which may include tests of general cognitive ability. The initial assessment may have indicated specific/global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns

6 Private assessments

- 6.1** Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and assessor must work together to ensure a joined up and consistent approach. Part 1 of Form 8 must be completed by a private assessor before any assessments take place.

The SENCo and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.

- 6.2** An independent assessor, if used, must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information before an assessment takes place.
All candidate's must be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information as detailed in Part 1 of Form 8.
- 6.3** An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo and the responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.
- 6.4** A privately commissioned report that has not been completed in conjunction with the college, cannot be used as evidence for extra time. The recommendations on a privately commissioned report may be used as a starting point by the SENCo to start exploring possible exam access arrangements and support.
- 6.5** The role of the assessor appointed by college is to assess for exam access arrangements.

7 Processing access arrangements

- 7.1** Access arrangements online (AAO) 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.

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

- 7.2** AAO applications will be submitted before the deadline dates outlined in JCQ.
- 7.3** AAO applications will be submitted by the SENCo and / or Exam Access Arrangements Co-Ordinator
- 7.4** Prior to application the SENCo will confirm through the completion of a centre- headed file note, Form 8, Form 8RF or Form 9 that all necessary evidence is on file for the individual candidate. Electronic and/or paper files will be used to store the evidence.

- 7.5** Evidence may include a fully completed and signed Form 8 (completed no earlier than Year 9), Form 8RF, Form 9, Medical diagnosis on letter-headed paper from a specialist and/or GP, EHCP, personal data consent form, Teacher observations, confirmation of normal way of working, samples of work (supplementary evidence). This list is not exhaustive and not all evidence may be relevant for the individual candidate.
- 7.6** AAO approval will be filed electronically in each candidate's efile and printed and stored in each candidate's paper file which is kept in a locked cabinet in the Learning Support Offices.
- 7.7** AAO for a late diagnosis of a disability or late manifestation of an impairment may be processed as the need arises but evidence of need will still be required. The appropriate evidence will be produced and processed with the application and held on file.
- 7.8** Applications for CeFS qualifications (through LIBF) will be made by the Exams Officer. The Exams Officer will liaise with the SENCo to ensure all applications are made 6 weeks prior to the first examination in the academic year. Outcomes will be communicated to the SENCo.
- 7.9** If an application has been rejected by AAO online, the SENCo/or Exams Officer will make a referral to the relevant awarding body.
- 7.10** A copy of the relevant evidence will be uploaded via AAO online and a summary written as to the circumstances surrounding the application.
- 7.11** Once notification of the awarding body decision is received, this will be communicated to the SENCo or Exam Access Arrangements Co-Ordinator, depending on who submitted the application.

8 Centre-delegated access arrangements

- 8.1** A Form 9 will be used to confirm that evidence, such as medical notes, is held on file to support the need for the following exam access arrangements ~~supervised rest breaks~~, along with confirmation of normal way of working:
- Supervised rest breaks
 - 25% extra time and / or scribe for a condition that is not a learning difference
 - More than 25% extra time
 - Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes
 - Remote Invigilation
 - Timetable variation for a candidate with a disability
- 8.2** A centre-note will be used to confirm the reason for a candidate's genuine need for the following arrangements:
- Alternative Room
 - Modified Papers
 - Prompter
 - Reader
 - Practical Assistant
 - Bilingual Dictionary
 - Bluetooth device

Fidget aid
Word processor
Main hall observed
Ear defenders / ear plugs
Toilet break

8.3 Criteria for awarding specific exam access arrangements can be found in the following appendices:

Appendix 1 – Ear defenders / ear plugs

Appendix 2 – fidget aids

Appendix 3 Alternative Room

Appendix 4 – Separate Room

8.4 A centre-note will be used to confirm the reason for a candidate's genuine need for use Separate Invigilation – long term condition.

1. A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.
2. The decision will be based on:
 - Whether the candidate has a substantial and long- term impairment which has an adverse effect AND
 - The candidate's normal way of working within the centre for timed tests and assessments.

8.5 Separate Invigilation – temporary impairment

1. If a candidate is suffering from a temporary condition/illness prior to the start of an exam, the SENCo will be called and an assessment made as to whether the student is fit to sit the exam and/or whether they are able to sit the exam in the allocated room.
2. If the candidate is not fit to sit the exam in the allocated room, the Exams Officer will make arrangements for a separate room. A trained invigilator will supervise the student on a 1:1 basis.
3. The SENCo will assess the student after the exam to decide on the best plan of action for the duration of the exam period. This may mean liaising with the Exams Officer to move the student into the access arrangements room permanently.
4. If a candidate suffers from a temporary condition/illness during an exam, the SENCo will be called in the first instance, who will decide on the best person from Student Support to assist. If the candidate is unable to continue in the allocated exam room, the SENCo, in consultation with the Exams Officer, will make a decision as to whether the exam can continue in a separate room. If this is the case, the Exams Officer will make arrangements for the exam to continue. The SENCo will decide who will invigilate the candidate, depending on the student and their circumstances.
5. The SENCo will assess the student after the exam to decide on the best plan of action for the duration of the exam period. This may mean liaising with the Exams Officer to move the student into the access arrangements room permanently.

8.6 College requires any requests for coloured paper to be supported by specialist evidence such as a dyslexia diagnosis, specialist teacher report or Behavioural optometrist report.

No evidence is required for coloured overlays or tinted glasses.

9 Equality Impact

The College's equality, diversity and inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date	Comments
April 2024	April 2024	N/A	N/A	April 2025	Updated Nov 2024

Ear defenders / ear plugs in exams.

- This should become a student's normal way of working in class tests. JCQ regulations state that earphones / earbuds ARE FORBIDDEN in the exam room.
- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- Students will be provided with ear defenders or disposable foam earplugs by the exam team for each formal exam – students may not bring their own ear defenders / earplugs into a formal exam. Students should provide their own ear defenders / earplugs for class tests unless a prior agreement has been made with the SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator for the student to borrow college ear defenders for class tests in order to get used to them.

Any one of the following pieces of evidence is required for the approval of ear defenders / earplugs in exams:

1. Diagnosis (eg ASC, ADHD, Misophonia, Hyperacusis, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who works with the student
2. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who works with the student
3. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
4. Anecdotal evidence from student - supported by staff (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. GP letter – case by case basis

Fidget aid in exams

- Students who have been approved the use of fidget aids in exams will only be allowed fidget aids that do not make a noise and do not distract other students. This should become a student's normal way of working in class tests.
- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- Students must provide their own fidget aid both for class tests and formal exams. College do not provide any fidget aids.
- Some students will choose to wear a bracelet, necklace, elastic band on wrist etc to act as a fidget aid – these do not need approval. Only additional objects that students will have on their desk will need approval eg stress ball – links – tangles

Any one of the following pieces of evidence is required for the approval of fidget aids in exams:

1. Diagnosis (eg ASC, ADHD, Misophonia, Hyperacusis, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who work with the student
2. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who work with the student
3. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
4. Anecdotal evidence from student - supported by staff (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. GP letter – case by case basis

Alternative Room in exams

- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- We must be able to build a picture of need here at college.

Any one of the following is required for the approval of the Alternative Room in exams:

1. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who work with the student
2. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
3. Substantial Anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
4. GP letter outlining their anxiety which goes beyond specific exam anxiety – case by case basis AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. Evidence of medication for anxiety AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
6. The student's EAA cannot be accommodated in the main exam hall eg laptop, rest breaks, toilet breaks, prompt
7. Medical evidence eg Misophonia – OCD in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS or Pastoral Log)
8. Student receives additional support eg counselling AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
9. Temporary SEMH need eg bereavement – decision will be led under guidance by Head of Student Support / Safeguarding Officer

Separate Room in exams

- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- We must be able to build a picture of need here at college over a period of time.

Any one of the following is required for the approval of the Separate Room in exams:

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| 1. The student's EAA cannot be accommodated in exam rooms where there are other students eg reader, scribe, read aloud, students with diabetes who need their phone on their desk (separate invigilation). |
| 2. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student |
| 3. Substantial Anecdotal evidence eg SEMH needs (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log) |
| 4. Medical evidence eg verbal tics, SEMH, HI (requiring a signer in aural exams) - in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log) |
| 5. GP or Specialist letter outlining medical need and why a separate room is essential - in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log) |