

**Equalities Policy (Exams)**

2024-2025

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| --- | --- |
| **Approved/reviewed by** | |
| Jamie Rockman | |
| **Date of next review** | September 2025 |

**Key staff involved in the policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name(s)** |
| SENDCo | **Carol Goodridge** |
| Deputy SENDCo | **Siân Rann** |
| Exams Officer | **Teresa Brothers** |
| Assessor(s) | **Nicholas Haymonds** |

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**Purpose of the policy**

Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

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Under this heading, consider roles and responsibilitiesin pre-planning and conducting exams and assessments

* Consider where there may be different roles and responsibilities for external assessments, internal assessments and internal exams
* Consider how
* Ensuring exam information (JCQ notices, exam timetables etc.) are provided in an accessible format
* Allocating staff as facilitators and ensuring they are trained

ADD additional roles as may be involved in your centre’s processes

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, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service 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 (section 5.4)*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations).

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 publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 2023-2024 (*Definitions* section).

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA 2024-2025.

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 publications including [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations) and [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)
* Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
* Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre

**Senior leaders**

* Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations) and [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)
* Support the SENDCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
* 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 reflect a candidate’s *normal way of working* within the centre

**Special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo)**

* Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)
* Ensures a appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
* Ensures evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates
* Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)
* Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre’s compliance with relevant legislation is in place
* Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
* Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
* 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
* Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body
* Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor’s qualification
* If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
* Together with the Specialist Assessor, produces and reviews 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

**Teaching staff**

* Inform the SENDCo of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate
* Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
* Provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate

**Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties**

* Has detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)
* Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
* Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Use of word processors

Please see Word Processor Policy (Exams) 2024-2025

Requesting access arrangements

**Roles and responsibilities**

**SENDCo**

* 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
* Follows guidance in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration) 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 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, Form BD25, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc
* 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 file 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 GCSE and GCE qualifications (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)

**Exams officer**

* Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations) and is aware of information contained in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)RA where this may be relevant to the EO role
* Will sometimes apply for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online*(AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
* Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector
* Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
* Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure AAO approval is in place for early opening of papers where this may be required 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, orders published modified papers, by the awarding body’s deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate
* If the SENDCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

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*](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations) (ICE).

**Head of centre**

* Supports the SENDCo, 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
* Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)

**SENDCo**

* Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations) 2024-2025
* 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)
* Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
* 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
* Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
* Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
* 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

**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](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations) 2024-2025
* 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
* Liaises with the SENDCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
* Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure 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
* Liaises with the SENDCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates and the rooming of access arrangement candidates
* Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
* Ensures where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate’s own subject teacher but where the candidate’s own subject teacher has to be used, ensures 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.
* 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 Communication 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
* the 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
* Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans and invigilators are made aware of the arrangements awarded and invigilators informed of those candidates with access arrangements and made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded
* 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 particular arrangements
* 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, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
* Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams
* Liaises with the SENDCo 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

**Other relevant centre staff (SLT)**

* Support the SENDCo 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
* 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
* Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room

**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’.

**SENDCo**

* Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for 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

**Teaching staff**

* Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
* Provide the SENDCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
* Liaise with the SENDCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
* Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination

**Internal exams / assessments**

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

**SENDCo**

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

**Teaching staff**

* Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
* Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

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 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 rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set 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*  *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*  *AAO application for approval processed Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo form kept on file* |
| Significant difficulty in concentrating | Prompter  Alternative rooming arrangements | *Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment*  *AAO application for approval processed Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo 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 | *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, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo 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* |