

Access arrangements policy

2019/20

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Mrs Norris-Wright	
Date of next review	March 2021

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mrs Lucy Culshaw
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Mrs Hillman
Head of centre	Mrs Norris-Wright
Assessor(s)	Mrs Ward, Mrs Deeprise, Miss Culshaw
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Ms Holdworth, Mrs Phillips

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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

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 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'. [\[AA Definitions, page 3\]](#)

Reasonable adjustments

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. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of 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.

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'. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. [\[AA Definitions, page 3\]](#)

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Bexhill Academy 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...

[\[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5\]](#)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files/[e-folders](#) of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/[e-folder](#) contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

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*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Disability Policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The paper copy of the Disability Policy is in the file marked 'Policies' above the EO's desk, a soft copy is also available on the Academy Website.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates;

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect [\[GR 5.4\]](#)

The Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by assessors appointed by the head of centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

All of our assessors hold a Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A) – Equivalent to Level 7

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

A copy of the Assessors Certificates are held by the EO and will be available for the Inspector during his visit.

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in [GR](#) and [AA](#) including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per **Chapter 7** of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... [\[GR 5.4\]](#)

The head of centre **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained **at the point of engagement/employment** and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) **must** be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. [\[AA 7.3\]](#)

Make full reference to [AA](#) 7.3 *Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties* and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence of the assessor's/assessors' qualification(s) held by the SENCo.

Make full reference to [AA](#) 7.4 *Reporting the appointment of assessors* and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

All assessments and forms are stored securely in Year files in the AEN department. Each file contains a combination of the following documentation to support the application as appropriate:

- The completed and analysed assessments,
- JCQ Form 8 (required for each application),
- Appendix 1 Evidence of Need form (provides supplementary information to the Form 8),
- Signed data protection notice (required for each application),
- Teachers Referrals,

- Academic Reports,
- Samples of work,
- Letters from parents,
- Reports/letter from other professionals,
- Medical evidence.
- Evidence of email correspondence between teachers and colleagues in the AEN department.

Finally, the students are advised of the outcome of the assessments and which EAA they are entitled to, if at all. They are advised that the arrangements will be in place in the first instance, for twenty-six months and they should become part of their normal way of working (in class, key assessments, mock exams and external examinations). They are also made aware that if they do not use the arrangement then it will be withdrawn. A student does not have to make use of an arrangement that has been approved although if they choose not to, then they need to sign a form acknowledging this and which confirms that the arrangement is being withdrawn. Parents/carers are advised.

Make full reference to [AA 1.5](#) *Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor* and [1.6](#) *Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties* and record your process that reflects the requirements

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...*

[\[GR 5.4\]](#)

Note

... SENCOs 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.

[\[AA 7.3\]](#)

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

The AEN department will: establish the level of need of any student raised as a concern and collate evidence where necessary. They should show that over a period of time a student has established a normal way of working which includes access arrangements being requested of the examining body. The forms 8 are held by the AEN department. The school has appointed specialist assessors to administer the appropriate tests and write a report which can be submitted as an online application (Form 8). Teachers must highlight students they are concerned about in good time and not as they do exam entry submissions. They must also gather evidence of need (see table below for examples) and put into place recommendations from the AEN department so that a normal way of working is established – for example where the student is regularly given extra time to complete tasks. Subject teachers need to provide evidence of their concerns in the way of copies of class work and/or assessments to support their request for Examination Access Arrangements. Once Examination Access Arrangements have been approved, subject teachers must ensure that students have access to concessions that have been granted to them for Key Assessments, Controlled Assessments etc. (if additional support is required from the AEN department, a minimum of two weeks' notice is required). Agreed Access Arrangements should be a student's normal way of working.

Teachers who are concerned about a student's performance in tests and assessments must approach either Lucy Culshaw (SENCO), Zoe Ward (Deputy SENCO) or Julie Holdsworth

(Access Arrangements Co-ordinator) and complete an evidence of need form (appendix 1) They must provide evidence to support their concerns. There is always a requirement to establish a long term pattern of need. What is most important is that what happens in exams reflects a normal way of working in the classroom – not something different just for exams. Students needing exam concessions do not need them only in exams. If a student needs more time to complete an exam then he/she will need more time to complete classwork. When submitting evidence teachers can mark on the paper the time the student had to do the work, how they feel the student performed and how extra time may have benefitted them. If a student struggles with writing, encourage the use of a laptop, teachers can then also comment on how much better the students has done, or not as the case may be. It may be that students with very weak spelling and illegible handwriting will require a scribe application for some subjects. Evidence needs to be collected over a period of time (it should not be a one off concern) and should show a similar pattern of need. In general the extra time given is 25%. In exceptional circumstances additional time over 25% can be awarded, but in these cases, approval has to be sought from the Awarding Body. Teachers are given clear guidance on the body of evidence that is required. Where relevant include any additional information relating to **private candidates**.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per **Part 1 of Form 8**. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process...

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

All candidates must be assessed in 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 with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo... [AA 7.5](#)

Make full reference to [AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor](#) and [7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties](#) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

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 listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The SENCo/specialist teacher will:

- determine 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
- follow guidance in [AA](#) Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE qualifications
- have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site in order to gain access to *Access arrangements online*² (AAO)
- apply for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

- ensure appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO; including:
 - painting a picture of need on section A of JCQ form 8
 - a completed specialist assessment to substantiate the picture of need recorded on section C of form 8
 - a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- confirm by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted
- make 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)
- ensure that arrangements, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- maintain 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
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
 - in addition, for GCSE 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)
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

Julie Holdsworth:

- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for GCSE qualifications, through AAO by the deadline date for the summer exam series
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Progression, ELC and Functional Skills qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form 7 – Application for modified papers* to the awarding body at least 10 weeks before the date of the assessment
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for vocational qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form VQ/EA - Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications* to the awarding body no later than 10 weeks before the date of the assessment

order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for any other qualifications, by identifying and The SENCo **must** keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed **candidate personal data consent form** for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. [AA 8.6]

Make full reference to [AA](#) § *Processing applications for access arrangements* and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Centre delegated access arrangements are those arrangements which may be granted by the centre with appropriate evidence held on file and/or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded).

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word processor policy (exams)

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.

The paper copy of the policy is in the file marked 'Policies' above the EO's desk, the soft copy is available of the Academy website.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) **with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled** to a candidate **where it is their normal way of working within the centre**, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. **For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.** [ICE 14.20]

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. For example, a candidate with illegible handwriting.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. [AA 5.8]

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

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** [AA 5.16]

Bexhill Academy appreciates that students with high level medical or psychological needs may require separate invigilation arrangements within the centre. We require a letter from an appropriate external professional to support this arrangement. Evidence is kept securely with other access arrangements documentation and is available for inspection if requested.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs. [AA 5.16]