



**ANSFORD ACADEMY**

LEARNING TOGETHER TO LEAD OUR LIVES

## **Access Arrangements Policy**

<b>Status:</b>	<b>Recommended</b>
<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>January 2025</b>
<b>Renewal period:</b>	<b>Annually (to ensure compliance with current regulations)</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>January 2026</b>

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Exam Contingency Plan
- Exam Policy including Procedures
- Internal Appeals Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Non-Examination Assessment Policy
- Special Consideration Policy
- Word Processor Policy
- Equality Act 2010 – Ansford Statement

## Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
SENCo	<b>Rebecca Wood</b>
SLT	<b>*Karl Musson*, Duncan Powell, Rebecca Comyns, Rob Mitchell, Frances Hirst, Thomas Cue, Rebecca Wood</b>
Head of centre	<b>Karl Musson</b>
Exams Officer	<b>Jo Dyal</b>
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Rebecca Wood, Jo Dyal</b>

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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 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'. (<sup>1</sup>[AARA](#), Definitions)

### 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 several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (<sup>1</sup>[AARA](#), Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Alternative rooming arrangements legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA](#) 1.8). The definitions and procedures in [AARA](#) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Ansford Academy Trust 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*, 5.4]

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

This policy is maintained and held by the Exams Officer. The SENCo holds individual files/e-folders of each student who has an access arrangement. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically, they must create an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([AARA 4.2](#))

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ documentation 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'.

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

## General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AARA](#) (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them 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.

The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

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

This Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is/are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AARA](#) section 7.3.

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

Our current assessor has been awarded an SpLD Assessment Practicing Certificate (APC) by the British Dyslexia Association with the APC 24/APC01001.

### Appointment of assessors

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 [AARA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### Checking the qualification(s), and reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

*“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 in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document 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. (AARA 7.3)*

Original certificates for qualifications held by our assessors are seen by both the SENCO and Exams Office. Copies are taken and retained in centre by the Exams Office with the assessors consent for the purposes of verification with JCQ Centre Inspections in line with requirements in [AA](#) 7.4. The originals are retained by the assessor.

The SENCO will ensure that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 in AA; consideration will be given as to whether the proposed access arrangement is effective and suitable for the candidates particular difficulty; the SENCO will ensure the assessor will conduct the assessment in line with the guidelines in [AA](#) 7.5; and Form 8 used to record this information.

## Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence that the assessor is suitably qualified is held by the SENCo in the current 'Access Arrangements' file and by the Exams Officer in the Access Arrangements file; copy of Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by the British Dyslexia Association.

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

We collaborate with teachers through a 'Referral Form' to ascertain when additional assessment is needed for students. This recognises a persistent need for additional support and normal ways of working. Following this Part 1 of Form 8 (JCQ form) is completed by the SENCO. Assessments and tests take place in centre to verify this additional need i.e. WRAT testing, dyslexia screening, and formal assessment in line with [AARA 7.5](#) takes place by our external assessor. This assessment is managed and overseen by the SENCO. This will involve further assessments and tests being conducted. Following the outcomes of tests and the conclusion of the completion of Part 2 of Form 8, Part 3 is completed (in line with [AARA 7.6](#)) and where appropriate action is taken to request the access arrangement for exams. Consideration is taken during this process, of the subjects where the arrangement may be required.

**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 ([AARA 7.3](#))

As a result we confirm....that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*...

([GR 5.4](#))

## Picture of need/normal way of working

Painting a holistic picture of need and evidence for normal way of working is gathered by the SENCO in collaboration with school staff using centre devised normal way of working forms. We also utilise evidence from internal tests, education psychology reports, SELT reports and other outside agency tests i.e. medical practitioner letters, external assessor tests. All evidence is recorded on the Form 8 application. All evidence is held by the SENCO.

Examples of normal ways of working in our centre can include support given to the candidate in

- in the classroom (where appropriate);
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- in internal school tests/examinations;

- trial examinations.

Candidates are assessed in light of the picture of need and background information detailed in Part 1 of Form 8.

*“Before the candidate’s assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in 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 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... “*

[AARA 7.5]

## Processing access arrangements and adjustments

### Arrangements/adjustments 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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to [AARA](#), (chapter 8) Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and (chapter 6) Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

A member of the exams team will process all applications through AAO in line with [AARA](#) Chapter 8, once provided with the original completed and signed Form 8, candidate personal data consent form that has been signed by the candidate and the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo. Once processed, the outcome will be printed and passed to the SENCO to retain in their records. The full original file containing the application outcome, Form 8, evidence of need (where required), assessments, signed candidate personal data consent and the data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo are held by the SENCO. The exams team will record for the candidate any arrangements granted against their digital record and make arrangements for this arrangement to be supported for all external exams in the named subjects. A copy of all these records will be held by the Exams Office. The SENCO will update the appropriate records and advise appropriate staff of the arrangement.



If an application is refused the exams office will pursue with guidance from the SENCO to obtain approval if appropriate. If refusal agreed then appropriate stakeholders will be notified of the outcome by the SENCO.

Reference [AARA 8](#) (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), process reflects the requirements.

Applications for modified papers are also submitted through AAO, once provided with confirmation of the requirement through the normal way of working form.

Reference [AARA 6](#) (Modified papers).

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The SENCO will obtain appropriate evidence to support a centre-delegated access arrangement and supply the exams office with written documentation on centre headed paper supporting the arrangement which will enable the arrangement to be added to the candidate's record, and appropriate arrangements to be put in place for all examinations in the named subjects.

### Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

#### 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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. Please refer to our Word Processor Policy (Exams) for further guidance.

#### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCO. Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre may include sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or one-to-one invigilation.

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 [\[AARA 5.16\]](#)

This arrangement is considered in centre, based upon evidence to support this arrangement, this could be a known medical condition, or social, mental or emotional need, supported by a letter from a medical practitioner and/or evidence of normal ways of working.

*In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre. It is known to a Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. This would be, for example, a long-term medical condition or social, mental or emotional need which has a substantial and adverse effect.*

*Alternative rooming arrangements reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations. Nervousness, low-level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for alternative rooming arrangements within the centre.*

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room.

[[AARA 5.16](#)]