



# Exam Access Arrangement Policy

<b>Responsibility:</b>	Yasmine Dhillon
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## **Purpose of the policy**

This policy is to confirm that Lister Community School 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]

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 (September 2021-August 2022)

## **What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments**

### **Reasonable Adjustments**

A reasonable adjustment helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the pupil at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve the following:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements
- Adapting assessment materials
- Providing assistance during assessment
- Re-organising the assessment physical environment
- Changing or adapting the assessment method
- Using assistive technology

Reasonable adjustments must be approved with the relevant awarding body and set in place prior to assessment commencing.

The work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the other students work

Reasonable adjustments could consist of any of the following:

- Allowing extra time
- Using a different assessment location
- Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids
- Use of assistive software Assessment material in large format or Braille
- Readers/scribes
- Practical assistants/transcribers/promoters
- Assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- Use of ICT/responses using electronic devices

“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**

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’.

Access arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by JCQ if the school has been aware of the student’s medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place. For students who require temporary access arrangements due to medical problems for instance broken limbs, the school must have a medical letter before the arrangement can be put into place and the school Exams Officer or SENDCo must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 definition of a disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- Identifying a physical or mental impairment
- Looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial:
- Considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- Judging the impact of long term adverse effects in normal day to day activities

A definition is provided on page 4 of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2020-2021.

### **Evidence Needed**

Appropriate evidence for every student is required. The appropriate evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term affect i.e. history of need/history provision;
- Evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant i.e. assessment results/provision;
- Show evidence of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- Confirm that the student will be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.

For access arrangements awarded on medical grounds the school will also need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made as well as JCQ inspection:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist; or A letter from a hospital consultant; or
- A Letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).
- The school does not accept private assessments by parents/guardians

The school must be made aware of any on-going medical problems as soon as they have been diagnosed. If the school is not made aware of the student's medical history then an access arrangement cannot be put into place for public examinations. In cases when GP's provide medical letters for anxiety or depression, then the evidence must show that the school has been aware of this and has been working with the student to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. If the school is unable to provide this evidence then the Access Arrangement will not be awarded.

Access arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subjects. If this is the case then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects or adapted for those students who require arrangements for all subjects.

Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in all internal and external assessments. An access arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulation. If a student chooses to continually not use their access arrangement then the access arrangement will be removed for public examinations.

### **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties**

Students with an Educational Healthcare Plan are given additional support by the SENCo. Those students who do not have an Educational Healthcare Plan but require extra support are identified by

recommendations from teaching staff. Students will then be tested by a qualified assessor, evidence gathered by the SENCo and put on file.

Changes to JCQ Access Arrangements from September for 25% extra time requires the assessment to confirm the candidate has at least:

1. Below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score( 85-89) which relate to the two different areas or speed of working.
2. Below average standardised score of 84 or less

A letter will be sent to the students parent/carer informing them of any decisions. The student will be given access arrangements

### **Processing access arrangements**

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.

The SENCo will process all applications through AAO once provided with the original completed and signed Form 8 and candidate personal data consent form that has been signed by the candidate. The outcome will be printed and kept on file.

### **Centre-delegated access arrangements**

Centre delegated access arrangements (CDAA) are made in line with JCQ regulations with evidence of normal way of working held on file.

### **Word Processor Policy**

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. Please refer to our Word Processor Policy (Exams) for further guidance.

### **Separate Invigilation Policy**

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

### **Identifying the need for access arrangements**

Roles and responsibilities

#### **Head of Centre**

- Is familiar with the JCQ contents, refers to to directs relevant centre staff
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointment

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Are familiar with the JCQ contents, refers to or directs relevant centre staff
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements provided within the centre

### **Special Educational Needs Coordinator**

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Ensure a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (Access arrangements policy)
- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- 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
- 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
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- 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
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

### **Exams Officer**

- Are familiar with the JCQ contents and is aware of information contained in the JCQ Access Arrangement document where this may be relevant to the Exam Officer role

### **Teaching staff**

- Inform the SENCo of 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/observations to support the SENCo in painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working for a candidate

## **Requesting access arrangements**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)**

- 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

#### **Exams officer**

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role

## **Implements access arrangements and the conduct of exams**

### **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).

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **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

#### **Special educational needs coordinator (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)

#### **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

#### **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

#### **Internal assessments**

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

“Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as ‘NEA.’” [Quote taken from the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments, Foreword]

#### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)**

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

#### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

#### **Internal exams**

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

#### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)**

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

#### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates  
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

## Special Consideration

Special consideration is consideration given following a period of assessment for a pupil who was prepared for and present at an assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances that have arisen at or near to the time of assessment.

Where assessment is in the form of an electronic test set and marked by computer, then it will be more appropriate to offer the pupil an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

A special consideration cannot give the pupil an unfair advantage but it can be regarded as when a performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the pupil, e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment or alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate or part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the pupil.

In order to apply for special consideration evidence must be supplied by the student. Evidence such as personal arrangements, staff shortages, lack of resources, building work or industrial disputes are not grounds for special considerations.

The following examples are not designed to be an exhaustive list but to give an example of the weight of circumstances that will be considered:

- Terminal illness of the pupil - Terminal illness of a parent
- Recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family
- Serious and disruptive domestic crisis leading to acute anxiety about the family
- Incapacitating illness of the pupil
- Severe car accident
- Recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative
- Flare-up of severe congenital conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack
- Recent domestic crisis
- Recent physical assault trauma
- Broken limb on the mend.

Unlike reasonable adjustment, there are no circumstances whereby Lister Community School, as a centre can apply its own special consideration. Applications must be made to the relevant awarding body.

All applications for special consideration will only be made on a case-by-case basis and therefore separate applications will be made for any pupil. The only exception to this is where a group of pupils have been affected by a similar circumstance such as a fire alarm during an assessment; in this case a group application will be made with a list of affected pupils attached to the application.

If such a request is to be made then the evidence required by the School to support the application will need to be a medical certificate, a doctor's letter or a statement from the invigilator.

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
<p>A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre</p>	<p>Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Head of House/Pastoral Managers gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</li> <li>● Pastoral provides written statement for file to confirm the need</li> <li>● Approval confirmed by SENCo; and SLT</li> <li>● AAO approval for both arrangements not required</li> <li>● Head of House/Pastoral Manager discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</li> <li>● EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'</li> <li>● EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</li> <li>● Pastoral Manager confirms with candidate the information is understood</li> <li>● Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</li> <li>● EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</li> <li>● 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</li> </ul>

		<p>time given for exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 Manager if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</li> <li>• EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence Pastoral Manager informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</li> </ul>
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Separate invigilation within the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</li> <li>• Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</li> <li>• Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting</li> </ul>
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Allocates exam room on near adapted bathroom facilities</li> <li>• Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</li> <li>• Seats candidate near exam room door</li> <li>• Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</li> <li>• Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be</li> </ul>

		completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment
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## Appendix

### **Examples** – evidence for inspection purposes

The evidence may be stored by the SENCo electronically or in hard copy paper format.

A GCSE candidate with severe autism, which has **a substantial and long-term adverse effect**, is awarded a reader and a scribe. The SENCo presents for inspection:

- centre-based evidence which is supplemented by a written statement from a Speech and Language Therapist; (The signed and dated centre-based evidence, written by the SENCo, is produced in line with these regulations.)
- the approval sheet from AAO;
- a signed candidate personal data consent form.

A GCE candidate with specific learning difficulties is awarded 25% extra time. She has two low average standardised scores (85-89) relating to two different areas of speed of working. The SENCo presents for inspection:

- Form 8, with an electronic signature and dated, with Parts 1, 2 and 3 completed and evidence of the assessor's post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7;
- an IEP; (The SENCo is required to paint a detailed picture of need **in addition to** Form 8.)
- approval from the awarding bodies;
- a signed candidate personal data consent form.

A GCSE candidate with specific learning difficulties is awarded a computer reader on account of his persistent reading difficulties. The SENCo presents for inspection:

- centre-based evidence as detailed in paragraph 5.5.5;
- the approval sheet from AAO;
- a signed candidate personal data consent form.





## Supplementary evidence – the detailed picture of need

The amount of supplementary evidence, the detailed picture of need, will vary according to the candidate's standardised scores on tests of speed:

<p><b>Standardised scores</b></p> <p>At least two scores of 84 or less relating to two different areas of speed of working; <b>or</b></p> <p>one score of 84 or less <b>and</b> one score between 85-89 relating to two different areas of speed of working.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p><b>Detailed picture of need</b></p> <p>Evidence of normal way of working within the centre (i.e. Part 1 of Form 8) <b>and one piece of supplementary evidence</b> drawn from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a sample of internal school tests/ mock exam papers showing the application of extra time; <b>or</b></li><li>• an IEP/ILP referring to the need for extra time; <b>or</b></li><li>• comments and observations from teaching staff as to why the candidate needs extra time and how he/she uses the extra time awarded.</li></ul>	<p><b>Standardised scores</b></p> <p>Two or more scores between 85-89 relating to two different areas of speed of working.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p><b>Detailed picture of need</b></p> <p>Evidence of normal way of working within the centre (i.e. Part 1 of Form 8) <b>and two pieces of supplementary evidence</b> drawn from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a sample of internal school tests/ mock exam papers showing the application of extra time; <b>and/or</b></li><li>• an IEP/ILP referring to the need for extra time; <b>and/or</b></li><li>• comments and observations from teaching staff as to why the candidate needs extra time and how he/she uses the extra time awarded.</li></ul>	<p><b>Standardised scores</b></p> <p>A cluster of standardised scores (at least three) relating to three different areas of speed of working just within the average range, 90 to 94.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p><b>Detailed picture of need</b></p> <p>Evidence of normal way of working within the centre showing an extensive history of need and a clear, measurable and substantial long-term adverse effect on performance and speed of working (i.e. Part 1 of Form 8); <b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a diagnostic assessment report, <b>from no earlier than Year 9</b>, confirming a significant learning difficulty or disability; (This <b>must</b> have been undertaken by a HCPC registered psychologist or specialist assessor.) <b>and</b></li><li>• a sample of internal school tests/ mock exam papers showing the application of extra time; <b>and</b></li><li>• an IEP/ILP referring to the need for extra time; <b>and</b></li><li>• comments and observations from teaching staff as to why the candidate needs extra time and how he/she uses the extra time awarded.</li></ul> <p>As these cases are rare and very exceptional, centres may find the definition of disability within the Equality Act 2010 helpful.</p> <p>HCPC registered psychologists and specialist diagnostic assessors are advised to consider in extreme and unusual cases, particularly where the candidate has complex learning needs, whether paragraph 5.2.3 might apply.</p>
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## Chapter 4 Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres

### 4.1 Managing the needs of candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties

Some candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties are likely to have several needs as set out in paragraphs 4.1.1–4.1.4. They may require a range of adjustments. The examples given are therefore not exhaustive and are illustrative only.

(See Chapters 5 and 6 for details of these arrangements.)

#### 4.1.1 Cognition and learning needs†

E.g. Learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties (such as Dyscalculia and Dyslexia)

Candidates with cognition and learning needs may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a prompter
- a practical assistant
- coloured overlays
- coloured/enlarged papers
- modified language papers.

#### 4.1.2 Communication and interaction needs†

E.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Candidates with communication and interaction difficulties may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- modified language papers.

†The candidate **must** have an impairment in their first language which has a **substantial and long-term adverse effect**. A candidate **does not** have a learning difficulty simply because their first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.

#### 4.1.3 Sensory and physical needs

E.g. Hearing Impairment (HI), Vision Impairment (VI), Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Disability (PD)

Candidates with sensory and physical needs may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a Language Modifier
- a live speaker
- a Communication Professional
- a practical assistant
- Braille papers, modified enlarged and/or modified language papers.

#### 4.1.4 Social, emotional and mental health needs†

E.g. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Mental Health Conditions

Candidates with social, emotional and mental health needs may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a prompter
- alternative site arrangement
- separate invigilation within the centre.

†The candidate **must** have an impairment in their first language which has a **substantial and long-term adverse effect**. A candidate **does not** have a learning difficulty simply because their first language is not English, Irish or Welsh.