

Equalities Policy (Exams)

Policy Control Page

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| Responsible Person | Sylvan Dewing - Head of Centre |
| Approved By | Education Leadership Team (ELT) |
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| March 2019 | V1 | Salena Hutton | Policy Created |
| October 2020 | V2 | Salena Hutton | Review and update policy to meet JCQ requirements |
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| October | V6 | Megan Pease | Review and Update policy meet JCQ requirements |

Purpose of the policy

This policy is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how the centre will:

- *recognise its duties towards disabled 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; for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect*

[Quote taken directly from the JCQ publication General Regulations for Approved Centres]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as "GR".

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

and should be read in conjunction with the Access Arrangements policy, shown at Appendix 1.

It should be noted that the Academy does not accept private candidates.

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 2024-25*.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as "AA".

Identifying the need for access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

- 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 as per Chapter 7 of AA
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage
- 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 is considered on a subject by subject basis

Teaching staff

- Inform the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate, providing information to evidence their normal way of working
- Ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis

Support staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs in *painting a holistic picture of need* confirming *normal way of working* for a candidate

Exams officer

- Collates details and maintains records of the required access arrangements for each candidate, on behalf of the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

Requesting access arrangements

Roles and responsibilities

Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

- Overall responsibility for the requests for access arrangements process

Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA
- On behalf of the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs:
 - 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 Section 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 full supporting evidence is in place before an application is processed and is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) JCQ forms, centre based evidence including concise file note(s) on centre headed paper, signed and dated, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre

- 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)

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 Instruction for Conducting Exams (ICE).

Head of centre

- Supports the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs, 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

Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

- 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)

Teaching Staff

- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination

Exams officer

- 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
- Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in ICE
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early so the facilitator (Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Communication Professional **only**) may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published starting time for the exam in order to prepare
- Ensures where the candidate's own subject teacher will be used (in exceptional circumstances) as a facilitator, an invigilator will be present at all times
- Ensures where a facilitator is allocated to support a candidate under exam conditions that they will not be a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate

- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter will not normally be the candidate's own subject teacher and must not be a relative, friend or peer of the candidate (understanding that a private tutor cannot act as a prompter for the candidate)
- 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
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators

Manager of Communication Support Workers

- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional)
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

These may include:

- Staff responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
- Estates/site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

Internal Assessments

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

Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

- Overall responsibility for the implementation of appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Exams Officer in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination

Exams officer

- Liaises with teaching staff and Communication Support Worker Manager 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

Manager of Communication Support Workers

- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

Internal exams

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

Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs

- Overall responsibility for the implementation of appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Teaching staff

- Support the Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Exams Officer in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Ensures a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination

Exams officer

- Liaises with teaching staff and Communication Support Worker Manager to implement 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

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 |
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| A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre | Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks | <p><i>Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by Assistant Principal with delegated responsibility for Special Educational Needs; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online through CAP</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p> |
| Significant difficulty in concentrating | Prompter | <p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>AAO application for approval processed</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>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)</i></p> |
| A wheelchair user | Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant | <p><i>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</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> |

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|--|--|--|
| | | <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p> |
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