

Access Arrangements Policy

2023/2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Claudio Gissendorf
Senior leader(s)	Charlotte Dunn
Exams officer	Sophie Wale
SENCO	Lorna Coates-Metheringham
Date for next review	April 2025

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Lorna Coates-Metheringham
Deputy Principal Data	Charlotte Dunn
Head of Centre	Claudio Gissendorf
Assessor(s)	Lorna Coates-Metheringham, Magdalena Pazola

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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.’”

(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 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’.

(AA Definitions, page 3)

Available Access Arrangements include:

Supervised rest breaks

Extra time of up to 50%

Scribe/speech recognition technology

25% extra time

Sign Language interpreter

Bilingual translation dictionaries

Braille Papers

Computer reader/reader

Word processor

Oral Language Modifier

Practical Assistant

Modified Papers

Coloured/Enlarged Papers

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Skegness 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, (section 5.4)] 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.

Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically they will create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

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.

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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.

The full Equalities Policy can be found on the school's file management system. Additionally, a paper version of this policy will be kept with: The Exams Officer, The Senior Assistant Principal in charge of examinations, the Head of Centre and the SENCo.

The Access Arrangements 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 is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

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

The current assessor is Lorna Coates-Metheringham, who possesses the following qualifications:
- Certificate of psychometric testing. Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A)

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)

Upon the first meeting with the centre's SENCo, the assessor has her qualifications verified and a photocopy is made and stored in the access arrangements file. This is in accordance with AA guideline 7.4.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The centre's SENCo maintains the evidence of the assessor(s)'s qualifications in the Access Arrangements folder and is therefore available upon request to JCQ inspectors.

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

The assessment procedure is led by the SENCO.

- All students are assessed via testing and staff feedback and those identified as having a potential need will be further assessed by the SENCO
- Upon completion of part 1 of the Form 8/Form 9, to evidence a candidate's normal way of working within the centre and paint a clear picture of need, specialist assessors will assess the candidate using JCQ approved testing.
- The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement application.
- The original tests, supporting evidence, form 8's and form 9's, processed application forms and signed data protection forms are stored in the candidate's file in the access arrangements folder

In doing so Skegness Academy ensures that the correct procedures are followed *as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Where a candidate has a substantial impairment, a SENCO file note documents the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning. Their normal way of working within the centre is evidenced and supporting documentation from an appropriately qualified professional, supports the file note and confirms that the Candidate has persistent/significant difficulties and is disabled within the definition of the Equality Act 2010, e.g. a letter from:

- CAMHS
- a HCPC registered psychologist
- a medical consultant
- a psychiatrist
- a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT)
- Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health
- a **current** Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, **which confirms the candidate's disability**

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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, (chapter 8) **Processing applications for access arrangements** and (chapter 6) **Modified papers**)

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

The procedure for applying for access arrangements via AAO is as follows:

- The SENCo will have identified candidates who would benefit from access arrangements and have compiled evidence of need and evidence of normal way of working in the access arrangements folder.
- Upon completion of a candidate's access arrangement portfolio, the SENCo will meet with the exams

officer, who will complete the application via AAO under supervision. The SENCo will provide answers to necessary questions as part of the application process.

- The results of completed applications are printed and kept in the candidate's access arrangement portfolio along with the appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed data protection notice
- The access arrangements folder is stored in the exams officer's office and is available for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Centre-delegated access arrangements refer to those which are granted by the centre.

The centre offers a smaller, quieter examinations venue for candidates who may benefit from it, but do not have needs that require access arrangements with awarding body approval

Candidates may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Having an identified SEND need that would be better served in the quiet venue
- Recent physical injuries or sickness
- Bereavement or other such upsetting that would impact a candidate's performance in the exam
- Behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the candidate, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

The SENCo keeps a record of all centre delegated access arrangements and evidence of need on file.

A record of arrangements are maintained and held electronically by the Access Arrangements Facilitator.

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 full Word Processor Policy can be found on the school's staff file management system, and in the relevant section of the Academy's website.

Additionally, a paper version of this policy will be kept with: The Exams Officer, The Assistant Principal in charge of examinations, the Head of Centre and the SENCo.

Separate Invigilation Policy

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

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

The SENCo will gather evidence and compile a portfolio for any candidate who may require separate invigilation, and then liaise with the exams officer to determine an appropriate venue within the centre, likely to be an empty classroom. The exams officer is then responsible for ensuring that the venue is appropriately prepared for separate invigilation, in accordance with JCQ regulations on the matter.

The SENCo and the exams officer will liaise to appoint an appropriately qualified member of the SEND team or an invigilator for the separate invigilation. Both the SENCo and the exams officer will train the invigilator both to usual invigilation standard and to the individualized needs of the candidate, with the details recorded in the invigilator training log.