

Access Arrangements Policy

2025/2026



Approved by: Julia Bray

Date: Oct 25

Signed by:

A blue ink signature of the name 'Julia Bray'.

Position: Head of Education Services

Last reviewed:

October 2025

Next review due:

October 2026

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Head of Centre to ensure compliance with current regulations.

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Key staff involved in the plan

Inclusion School

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Matthew Atkinson
Senior leader(s)	Matthew Atkinson, Ele Murphy, Yvonne Haynes, Paula Ball
Exams officer	Paula Ball
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Ele Murphy

Inclusion College

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Chris McShane
Senior leader(s)	Chris McShane, Anna Moores, Michael Collins, Nery's Nabbs, Sharon Moores
Exams officer	Sharon Moores, Sarah Piercey
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Anna Moores

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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. (AARA¹, 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. (AARA¹, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate 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 Inclusion Education 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's **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 SENCo (or equivalent role) 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 (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. 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 JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

¹This 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, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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, or an equivalent member of staff, **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.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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.

All exam policies can be found on the Inclusion school/college website and the School Secure Shared drive

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

The assessment process

All learners at Inclusion Education have been awarded an ECHP and therefore an assessment by an external assessor is unnecessary for those sitting Functional Skill examinations. External assessment will take place for those learners sitting GCSE qualifications as appropriate.

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.

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 7.3.

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

If a candidate will be assessed, the SENCo is painting a picture of need and demonstrating the candidate's normal way of working and completing Part of Form 8, prior to the candidate being assessed.

As a centre we ensure full regard to the Access Arrangements (AARA) document sections 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidates learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.7 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment (General regulations, section 5.4).

Note: The SENCo and assessor's 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, section 7.3)

Note: SENCo/SLT Lead for Exams will refer to the General Regulations (GR) section 5.4 for a private candidate such as a distance or a home educated learner

Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENCo (or equivalent role) will provide evidence that shows that there is clear demonstration of need and that this is the candidates normal way of working. This evidence may, for example include lesson plans, annotation of work, pictorial evidence and individual folder/e- folder along with anything more that assists with the holistic picture of need.

In the event of an assessor being required, 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... (AA, section 7.5)

The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with ALS Lead/SENCd"
(AARA section 7.5.3)

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 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 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 for approval 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)

All exam policies are on the Inclusion school/college website and the School Secure Shared Internal Drive.

The SENCo (or equivalent role) and the Exams Officer will oversee the process and timescales for ensuring the AAO or any other awarding organisation approval for examinations is completed fully.

The signed date protection application are located in the Learners secure file, Inclusion Education will, as far as is possible, ensure that data protection forms are counter signed by a parent/guardian. The completed Data Protection forms are retained for 26 months from date of the online application being approved.

"The ALS lead/SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This included a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the Examinations Officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidates approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA, section 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

A record is kept of all centres delegated arrangements/adjustments with evidence of need and evidence that this is the normal way of working.

Awarding organisations are notified of the use of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments in line with their requirements

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.

A candidate maybe awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where they have a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to the candidates/s.

All exam policies are in the Inclusion school/college website and the school secure shared internal drive

"Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) with 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 brailleur or a tablet (ICE 14.20)

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 (or equivalent role).

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)

Separate invigilation reflects the candidates normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long-term social, emotional and mental health needs which is known about within the education setting

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** 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)