



Access Arrangements Policy

Policy/Procedure creator: Rebecca Clarke
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Centre Name	Maiden Erlegh School in Reading
Centre Number	51210
Date plan first created	December 2019
Current plan approved by	Rebecca Clarke
Current plan reviewed by	Rebecca Clarke
Date of next review	By December 2024

Key staff involved in the plan

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Rebecca Clarke
SENCo Line Manager	Dan Hood
Head of centre	Will Graham
Assessor(s)	Rebecca Clarke Hannah Reilly
Access Arrangement Facilitator(s)	Teaching Assistants Invigilators

This plan is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that checking assessors' qualifications at Maiden Erlegh School in Reading is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

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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 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'.
[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 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'.

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AA](#) 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 Maiden Erlegh School in Reading 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, 5.5]

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 documentation electronically he/she **must** 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 principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (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 him/her 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 within a FE college, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

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 his/her 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.

Equalities Policy (Exams) can be found here [MER 15. Equalities Policy \(Exams\) 2023-2024 \(1\).docx](#)

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(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3.

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

SENCo	Mrs Becky (Rebecca) Clarke
BA (First Class Hons)	University of Reading July 1990 certificate.pdf
PGCE	University of Bristol July 1991 certificate.pdf
National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination	University of Reading 08 Dec 2017 SENCO Post Grad Certificate Rebecca Clarke.pdf

Certificate of Psychometric Testing (CPT3A)	Real Training 30 Jan 2018 (Reg No: 840929P) real training certificate CPT3A Rebecca Clarke.pdf
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Access Arrangements Assessor	Mrs Hannah Reilly
BA Hons 2:1()	University of Lancaster July 2004 Hannah Reilly Degree certificate.pdf
PGCE	University of Oxford July 2006 PGCE and QTS Hannah Reilly.pdf
Certificate of Psychometric Testing (CPT3A)	Real Training 2018 (Certificate Number: N08686) Hannah Reilly CPT3A.pdf

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)

Part of the requirement for the post SENCo is that the post-holder should have the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination. The post-holder is required to submit appropriate certificates as evidence. Further evidence of qualifications (CPT3A) should be submitted and held on file.

The Exams Officer will maintain a file, which contains evidence of the assessors' qualifications.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

See above for links to qualifications held by Mrs Rebecca Clarke (hard copies in Exams Officer Policies folder). Mrs Rebecca Clarke's details are entered into Access Arrangements Online to confirm her status as the centre's assessor.

Mrs Clarke ensures that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, in particular section 7.4*

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

Mrs Clarke, as SENCO, has a general overview of candidates' learning difficulties. Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan*, as SENCo, Mrs Clarke, in line with 7.5 *Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor* and 7.6 *Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties* is painting a picture of need and demonstrating the candidate's normal way of working and detailing the

candidate's history of need prior to the candidate being assessed. Reference will be made to the following relevant details:

if known, arrangements made for Key Stage 2 tests.

- comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers);
- intervention strategies (e.g. individual education/learning plans, School Action, support plans) in place for the candidate; pupil premium indicators.
- screening test results.
- use of baseline data.
- information about any differentiation in the classroom.
- normal way of working in the classroom (where appropriate);
- arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations.

Other information used to paint a picture of need within Part 1 of Form 8, may include, for example.

screening test results;

- the candidate's self-reported difficulties;
- comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers) who have noted the candidate's difficulties;
- comments in school reports and/or pupil tracking data;

Mrs Clarke 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

Mrs Clarke, SENCO, liaises with teaching and support staff to create a *picture of need* and gather evidence to demonstrate a candidate's *normal way of working* within the Centre. In line with <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance> 7.5 *Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor* and 7.6 *Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties* and in the light of the picture of need and background information, Mrs Clarke is able to detail support offered to the candidate in classroom, tests and exams. This information is available ahead of the assessment process which takes place to determine a Candidate's eligibility for Access Arrangements.

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 listed on page 2 of [AA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

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

In line with the JCQ Guidelines for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, Section 8 *Processing applications for access arrangements*, once assessment has been carried out, and the Form 8 completed in full to include test results, the SENCO then uses AAO (Access Arrangements Online) online service to apply for Access Arrangements ahead of the deadline of 21 February each year. The SENCO is responsible for ensuring that the candidate's approved application is printed and kept on secure file along with the Form 8 and the candidate's assessment evidence. In addition, a signed candidate personal data consent form is kept on file, completed prior to the processing of the online application, and retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved. All this documentation is available for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

What happens with modified papers?

In line with section 6 of JCQ Guidelines for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, the exams officer orders modified papers in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned. Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, the Exams officer provides the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

In addition to applying online for Access Arrangements, in line with JCQ Guidelines for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, the SENCO, Mrs Clarke, keeps evidence on file for centre delegated arrangements in line with JCQ Guidelines for <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance> section 5.16.

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 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has 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 other candidates.

Needs might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- a medical condition

- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
- poor handwriting

Arrangements for the use of word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors (laptops) will be provided by the IT department to the Exams Officer before the start of the exam season and allocated to candidates on the day of each exam by the EO.

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 (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

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, [section 5.16](#))

Alternative rooming arrangements (which may include sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or one-to-one invigilation) or alternatively include as an appendix at the end of this document.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

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

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)