

Examination Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments at JCoSS

This document is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document, 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' which can be found via the link below.

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments-2014-2015>

What are examination access arrangements?

Examination access arrangements are actions taken to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve their potential in learning and exams. The JCQ recommends a range of examination access arrangements to meet the needs of students in line with current government legislation regarding equal opportunities. The JCQ regulations are updated annually.

Who is eligible for examination access arrangements?

Students who have been formally identified as having a condition which adversely affects their ability to learn or take tests and examinations may be eligible for examination access arrangements. The criteria by which individuals are identified are set out every year by the JCQ. Students may have a range of diagnosed conditions or disabilities requiring 'reasonable adjustments' to be made for them.

According to the JCQ, students who are awarded examination access arrangements must fulfil the following criteria:

- Have a long term diagnosed condition which has persisted for at least 12 months;
- Evidence that they experience persistent and significant difficulty in learning, tests and exams;
- The examination access arrangement must be their normal way of working in class, test and exams.

How do we identify students for examination access arrangements at JCoSS?

Prior to entry to JCoSS, all Year 7 students are screened for cognitive ability, reading comprehension and spelling levels. It is important that parents alert the school to any pre-existing conditions on entry to JCoSS, and ensure that any documentary evidence is transferred from the primary school in order to build up a picture of the student's needs. Such documents may include evidence of access arrangements for SATS, school reports, personal plans/pen portraits/Individual Education Plans (IEPs), reports written by professional such as psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and speech and language therapists. Students will be monitored once at JCoSS to consider whether examination access arrangements may be needed.

Concerns about a student's ability to access assessments should in the first instance be raised with the form tutor or Year Learning Coordinator (YLC) who will investigate whether concerns persist across the curriculum or are specific to a particular subject. Depending on this, concerns may then be raised with the Learning Support Department.

With the exception of students with complex learning needs, including for example those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), students in Years 7 and 8 are not provided with examination access arrangements, even if these were put in place for them at primary school. This is for a number of reasons: firstly, their needs may have changed; secondly, we need to collate evidence over time of what their specific needs are.

In Year 9, students with a history of persistent and significant difficulties may be screened in school using relevant standardised assessments for eligibility for examination access arrangements in line with JCQ regulations, which are updated annually. We write to parents of students who are eligible for examination access arrangements after this screening to confirm approval by the JCQ. In accordance with these regulations, any granted arrangements will expire 26 months after application. Subsequently, on entry to Key Stage 5, examination access arrangements may be reviewed in order to demonstrate a continued need for the arrangements previously in place. A new application to the JCQ may then be required.

It is important that the student makes full use of any examination access arrangement granted to them so that it becomes their normal way of working. Failure to do so will mean that the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations and will be removed as it will not be considered to be their normal way of working. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put into place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

Private assessments

Parents may commission a private assessment for SEN by an appropriately, qualified professional such as an Educational Psychologist. However, they must ensure that the assessor contacts the school prior to carrying out the assessment as the school has a duty to provide a history of need to the assessor. Without this, the assessor's recommendations may be rejected by the JCQ. JCoSS will not be able to provide a history of need without evidence to support this.

Students transferring from other schools

For students transferring from other schools during the course of their secondary schooling, relevant documentation regarding existing conditions and examination access arrangements must be provided. This can be sent on by the previous school or provided by parents.

The following documents will be required if the access arrangements are to continue at JCoSS:

- Form 8 (a JCQ form held by the previous school) and any report which was used as evidence;
- Application Approved (a JCQ form held by the previous school);
- Supporting documents such as medical letters and professional reports, if necessary;
- Anecdotal evidence from teachers regarding the need for examination access arrangements;
- Pieces of work showing the use of extra time by means of a different coloured pen.

Evidence to support an application for examination access arrangements

All examination access arrangements awarded have to be supported by documentary evidence kept on file. JCQ inspections take place every year and a school must have such evidence available or a student's exam result may be affected. Evidence includes letters and reports from medical

professionals, educational psychologists and other professionals. Evidence might also include Statements and EHCPs. Teachers also provide evidence of need by their involvement in the identification of students who need access arrangements and monitoring the use of access arrangements. Teachers will ensure that the arrangement is the student's normal way of working in class tests and exams. It is very important that a student uses the examination access arrangements they have been granted. Teachers will record and monitor if students are using their access arrangements appropriately and effectively. Failure to use access arrangements might result in the arrangement being withdrawn in the future.

Data Protection

Students will have to sign a Data Protection Notice giving the school permission to make an application online to the JCQ. Failure to do so will mean that an application cannot be made and examination access arrangements cannot be granted.

Some examples of examination access arrangements

Extra time of 25%	For the student who has slower than average speed of processing information or handwriting speed.
Reader	For the student who has below average reading skills assessed by means of tests of single word reading, reading comprehension and reading comprehension speed. Students may be offered a shared reader.
Scribe	The student who has below average spelling and illegible handwriting, below average handwriting speed or a medical condition.
Laptop	For the student who has a handwriting difficulty, processing difficulty or medical condition. Spelling and grammar checks are disabled. Access to the internet is prohibited.
Supervised Rest Breaks	For the student who is unable to concentrate for long periods of time due to a medical condition or social and emotional difficulties.
Prompter	For the student who loses concentration/focus and is not aware of time often caused by a medical condition such as ADHD
Separate Room	For students who have a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't appropriate for them to sit in the main hall. Students who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room.

Personnel

Reader	A reader is a trained adult who reads the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of a GCSE English Language Exam) for the student. The student writes the answers themselves.
Scribe	A scribe is a trained adult who writes for the student. The student dictates their answers. The scribe writes exactly what the student says. The student forfeits marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.