

JCoSS Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment Policy 2016 -2017

This document is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance: '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>

What are Access Arrangements?

These are arrangements (for instance extra time, reader or scribe) that are put in place to make sure that all students have a 'level playing field' when sitting examinations. They are only available to students with substantial, long-term difficulties that are known to have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities **in school**.

According to JCQ guidance, "the Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body (examination board i.e. AQA, OCR, EDEXCEL) to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, **who is disabled as defined in 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."

"The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment."

JCoSS is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. This means ensuring that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in examinations. The school abides by the strict regulations set out by the JCQ.

How do we know who needs Access Arrangements?

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.

Students with a history of the following needs may need access arrangements. **Please note that a diagnosis alone cannot entitle students to access arrangements unless there is supporting evidence from school. This is a requirement of the JCQ.**

- Cognition and Learning Needs (e.g. General and/or specific learning difficulties).
- Communication and Interaction Needs (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)
- Sensory and Physical Needs (e.g. Hearing Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Physical Disability, Vision Impairment)
- Social, Mental and Emotional Needs (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Conditions)

- English as an Additional Language

Access arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by the JCQ if the school has been aware of the student's medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place. For students who require temporary access arrangements due to medical problems such as broken limbs, the school must have a medical letter before the arrangement can be put into place and the school Exams Officer must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible. Medical letters relating to anxiety or depression which the school was not made aware of **before the deadline** for access arrangements will not be considered. The deadline for the current academic year is **21st February 2017**.

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.

What do we need to evidence access arrangements?

JCQ inspections require all schools to have the required evidence for every student that has been awarded access arrangements. Schools are subject to at least two unannounced inspections from the JCQ every year. If the school fails to provide sufficient evidence, in line with JCQ regulations, then the student in question **could have marks deducted due to their unfair advantage and our status as an approved examination centre could be jeopardised**.

The required evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a **substantial and long term** effect i.e. history of need/history of provision.
- Evidence that the difficulties are **persistent and significant** (this will be ascertained from progress data)
- Show evidence from school staff of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has **had long term impact** on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Confirm that the student will be at a **substantial disadvantage** when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment.

For access arrangements awarded on medical grounds the school will also need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist; or
- A letter from a hospital consultant; or
- A Letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

A letter from a GP is not sufficient.

The school must be made aware of any on-going medical problems as soon as they have been diagnosed. If the school is not made aware of the student's medical history then an access arrangement cannot be put into place for public examinations.

Access arrangements may vary between subjects due to their different demands. If this is the case then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects e.g. a laptop may be required for longer written exams such as History but not for a Maths exam. Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in all planned assessments. An access arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulations. **If a student chooses to continually not use their access arrangement in class or in internal tests or assessments then the access arrangement will be removed for public examinations.**

When are Access arrangements awarded?

With the exception of students with recognised complex needs, including those with an EHCP, students in Years 7 and 8 are not typically provided with any access arrangements, even if these were put in place 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. Students in Years 7 and 8 who are permitted to use laptops at JCoSS may use a word processor in exams and planned assessments. The decision that a student is eligible to use a laptop depends on the outcome of the JCoSS Laptop Screening Process detailed in Appendix 1.

In Year 9, students with a school history of persistent and significant difficulties impacting on their learning may be screened in school for eligibility for access arrangements in line with current JCQ regulations. After this screening, parents will be informed by letter from the SENCo only if an access arrangement is going to be offered in preparation for Key Stage 4.

Given the requirement for there to be evidence of a long history of need, it is unlikely that any new access arrangements will be awarded beyond Year 10.

Access arrangements awarded for GCSEs will not automatically roll forward for GCE. The JCQ requires evidence from school to demonstrate there is still a need for access arrangements. Sixth form students who are new to the school will complete an application form and interview, which will ask about SEN and any access arrangements awarded during their GCSE examinations. This information will be passed onto the Access Arrangements Coordinator. Students are responsible for providing the JCQ '**Form 8**' and a **copy of the JCQ approval document** from their previous school. Once this is received, the JCoSS Access Arrangements Co-ordinator may request further information and evidence.

Who can assess and how are decisions made?

Decisions regarding access arrangements are determined by the outcome of the JCoSS Access Arrangement Screening Process, described in Appendix 2. The Head of Centre is ultimately responsible for appointing an appropriately qualified Access Arrangement Assessor with the required level of competence. **Schools are not obliged to accept private reports** and will only work with assessors where there is an established relationship; the practicing certificates of these professionals must be kept on file in preparation for JCQ inspection. Assessors must contact school and ask for evidence of the student's normal way of working and relevant background information prior to undertaking any assessment. Access arrangement assessments cannot be completed without JCQ's Form 8, section A and B **first** being completed by the school. This will only be done if in the school's opinion there is a sufficient history of need; this must be supported with school data and evidence. If there is insufficient school evidence, the school will reject the assessor's recommendations and notify parents in writing of this decision. **Final decisions regarding access arrangements are made by the school.**

Assistive technologies

Where possible students should work towards greater independence; scribes should only be considered when a student does not have sufficient word processing skills to use a laptop, and readers should only be considered after the possibility of using Read Write Gold has been explored. Access arrangements must reflect normal way of working and therefore it is unlikely that students not identified as SEN Support would be offered a scribe or 1:1 reader.

Supervised Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks **must** always be considered **before** making an application for extra time. To qualify for rest breaks medical evidence must be on file before the deadline **21st February 2017**. Rest breaks are the appropriate provision for a range of difficulties including:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs
- A medical condition
- Sensory and physical needs
- Social, mental and emotional needs

English as an Additional Language

Up to 10% extra time may be awarded for students who have lived in the UK for less than three years, providing they arrived in the UK with no prior knowledge of English and English is not the spoken language at home; the extra time is for the use of a bilingual dictionary. Due to the nature of set assessment objectives this provision will not be awarded in GCSE: English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, and Religious Studies. Furthermore, extra time is not awarded for GCE.

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.

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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 is not 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.

Appendix 1. Laptop Eligibility Screening Process for Classroom Purposes

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwriting concerns raised by parents and/or staff • School to seek medical evidence if applicable (e.g. GP letter, OT report) • Move to stage 2
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Arrangements Coordinator to gather class work samples to establish level of need. • If there is no evidence of need, no further action. Parents/staff to be informed of outcome. • If there is evidence of need, move to stage 3
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Support staff to assess handwriting and typing speed using free writing test. • If handwriting legibility and/or speed is insufficient <u>but</u> typing speed is sufficient, Access Arrangements Coordinator will consult with parents to discuss possibility of using a laptop in school (e.g. does the student have a laptop at home then can use?). If parents are in agreement, move to stage 4 • If handwriting legibility and/or speed <u>and</u> typing speed is insufficient, Access Arrangements Coordinator will consult with parents to request that the student develops touch typing skills at home. Parents to inform Access Arrangements Coordinator once the student's typing skills improve. If no further contact is made, process will end. • Once parents inform the Access Arrangements Coordinator that the student is typing at a sufficient speed, Learning Support staff to rescreen typing speed. If typing speed remains insufficient, further touch typing practice will be advised. If typing speed is sufficient, move to stage 4.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to collect a laptop permission form from the Access Arrangements Coordinator. Student must complete this form to gain consent from teaching staff. Once completed, the student must return the form to the Access Arrangements Coordinator. This form must be fully completed and signed by relevant staff, parents and student in order for a laptop to be used in school. The student is responsible for completing this form and submitting it to the Access Arrangements Coordinator. • Student to use his/her personal laptop in all lessons for trial period (approx. 6 weeks) • Move to stage 5 after trial period
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Arrangements Coordinator to seek teacher feedback on student's use of laptop over the trial period. • If the majority of teacher feedback is positive, the laptop will become a permanent arrangement for the student (including exams/planned assessments). • If the majority of teacher feedback is negative, laptop arrangement will be removed. Access Arrangements Coordinator to inform parents of outcome.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor student's use of laptop in exams/planned assessments through the school's monitoring system. Findings will determine whether laptop will remain in place or be removed.

Appendix 2. Access Arrangements Screening Process

Stage	Comments and Next Steps
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the student at SEN support on the Student Support Register, or • does the student have a statement/EHCP, or • have concerns been raised by teaching staff (for handwriting concerns only, follow screening process for laptop use), or • are there concerns about a student's mental health and there has been involvement from outside agencies? • If yes, move to Stage 2 • If no, consult recent data information to assess if there is a history of underachievement in English and/or Maths. If yes, move to Stage 2. If no, end.
2	<p>Access Arrangements Coordinator to seek information from all teachers to establish normal way of working in lessons, with a focus on the student's needs (eg. does this student need someone to read for them in lessons? Does this student need extra time to complete work in lessons?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If several concerns are raised, move to stage 3. • If there are no or very few concerns from staff, the process will end.
3	<p>Student is screened by a specialist assessor in school using specified standardised tests in order to establish any below average standard scores as outlined by the JCQ.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If below average standard score(s) are identified, move to stage 4 • If there are no below average standard scores, the process will end.
4	<p>All evidence will be collated and appropriate EAA will be discussed and decided.</p>
5	<p>The Exams Officer and Access Arrangement Coordinator will apply to JCQ for specific EAA in preparation for GCSE and GCE assessments (N.B. Any EAA will expire 26 months from application to the JCQ). Teachers will be informed of the EAA. Parents will be informed of approved EAA by letter.</p>
6	<p>Teaching and Support staff, the Exams Officer, Invigilating team and Access Arrangements Coordinator will monitor effective use of EAA after each planned assessment. Findings from this will determine whether any EAA will remain in place or be removed by the SENCo as advised by the JCQ. If an EAA is removed, the Access Arrangements Coordinator will inform the students and the SENCo will inform parents in writing.</p>