

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2022/23

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
LCalver Exams Officer	
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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'. (1AA, 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'. (1AA, Definitions)

*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 Ancora House School 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**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as **GR**

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/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 ALS lead/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. (1AA, section 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**'.

¹This 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 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.

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](#), section 7.3.

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

In the event that Ancora House School make the application for access arrangements, all historic evidence of the young persons need and evidence that it is the young person's normal way of working at Ancora House School will be documented. A consultant's letter will be obtained and used as evidence where appropriate.

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)

In the event an assessor is appointed by the school to carry out assessments in conjunction to exams access arrangements, at point of employment all qualifications will be checked and verified to ensure that individual has the relevant skills and qualifications to complete the assessments. As an additional measure of best practice, the school will endeavour to find assessors that are recommended to and have been used by other local schools' exams teams.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

All qualifications and certificates will be copied and held in the exams file by the exams officer, and be available for inspection purposes

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

Ancora House School is a short stay, medical provision, the average length of stay for a student is 8 weeks, therefore it is rare that we would require assess a candidate for learning difficulties during their

time with us. In the even an assessor was appointed by the school to carry out assessments, these would be conducted in line with JCQ requirements and all paperwork (Form 8) would be completed by said assessor. The results of any assessments will be retained in the exams file for inspection and submitted as evidence for the implementation of access arrangements.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Ancora House School will confirm that the access arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working within the school as a direct consequence of their disability (history of need/provision/intervention strategies/staff and exam officer observations). Ancora House School will ensure that access arrangements are allocated on a subject-by-subject basis as required due to the differing demands of each subject. In addition we will provide supporting evidence in the form of a signed letter from a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist to detail the young person's current need, as well as observations from staff, detailing the observations/ evidence that have established the candidates picture of need.

Ancora House School understands that failing to implement an access arrangement, implementing an access arrangement without approval and implementing an access arrangement without evidence will be viewed as malpractice. In the event a candidate has a pre-existing access arrangement, the school will check it is still the candidate's normal way of working before implementing the access arrangement.

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 [AA](#), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) 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 exams officer will submit applications for access arrangements for entered students via AAO, after obtaining a signed (AAO) Candidate Personal data consent from as well as relevant evidence from the SENDco to support the application. All of the documentation including the outcome of the application, evidence to support the application and the qualifications of the assessor will all be retained in the exams file for inspection purposes. In addition, for transferred candidates, all paperwork surrounding access arrangement applications will be requested from the entering centre and retained in the exams file, ready for inspection. In the event that Ancora House School make the application for access arrangements, all historic evidence of the young persons need and evidence that it is the young person's normal way of working at Ancora House School will be documented. A consultant's letter will be obtained and used as evidence where appropriate.

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. The schools criteria for allocating word processors is detailed in the schools Word Processor Policy.

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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)

As the school is a medical provision, the exam rooms are smaller than in a mainstream school and hold a smaller number of candidates. In the event a student has an access arrangement that may cause a distraction to other candidates, they will be accommodated in a separate room. In addition if the candidate is usually accommodated separately as their normal way of working, this will be reflected in their exams and they will be accommodated separately.

