



1 Introduction

- 1.1 The college recognises its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This includes a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.
- 1.2 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'.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to confirm that the college 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]
- 1.4 This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual electronic folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.
- 1.5 All records relating to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and assessment evidence will be stored and processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the college's data protection policy.

Access to records will be restricted to relevant authorised staff involved in the access arrangements process. Sensitive information, including medical evidence, assessment reports and pastoral records, will be handled confidentially and retained only for as long as required by JCQ regulations and the college's retention procedures.

- 1.6 Relevant staff involved in the access arrangements process, including the SENCo, assessors, examinations staff, invigilators and teaching staff, will receive appropriate training and annual updates regarding current JCQ regulations, access arrangements procedures and the college's internal processes.

The college will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to maintaining the integrity of assessments and supporting candidates appropriately.

- 1.7** 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.

2 General Principles

- 2.1** The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- 2.2** The purpose of an access arrangement 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.
- 2.3** The SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 2.4** Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.
- 2.5** The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.
- 2.6** The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.
- 2.7** Evidence of a candidate's normal way of working will usually be drawn from a range of sources over time, including classroom practice, timed assessments, mock examinations, teacher observations and support records. Decisions regarding access arrangements will not normally be based on a single incident, isolated request or privately commissioned report alone.
- 2.8** The college reserves the right to review, amend or withdraw access arrangements where:
- evidence no longer supports the arrangement;
 - the arrangement is not the candidate's normal way of working;
 - inaccurate, misleading or fraudulent information has been provided;
 - there is evidence of misuse of an arrangement;
 - JCQ regulations or awarding body guidance change.

Suspected malpractice relating to access arrangements will be managed in accordance with the college's malpractice policy and current JCQ regulations.

3 Building a Picture of Need

- 3.1
1. Referrals can be made from students, staff or parents outlining the area of need.
 2. The student may be invited to an initial meeting with a member of the Learning Support Team to further establish the area of need.
 3. Relevant staff may be requested to give their observations of the student.
 4. Medical evidence will be requested if appropriate.
 5. Part 1 of Form 8 will be completed by the SENCo in the case of a learning difference.
 6. Confirmation of normal way of working will be established and held on file once the access arrangement has been approved.

4 Appointment of Assessors

- 4.1 Assessments can only be carried out by assessors appointed by the head of centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in JCQ AA section 7.3.

- 4.2 Qualifications of the current assessors:

Jo Preston – Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A)

- 4.3 At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the college, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in JCQ AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

- 4.4 Checking the qualifications of assessors:

- 4.4.1 As part of the recruitment of an assessor, they will be required to provide evidence of their qualifications.

- 4.4.2 The head of centre will appoint:

1. An access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to level 7 including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment
OR
2. A specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or PATOSS and listed on the SASC website
OR
3. An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

- 4.4.3 Evidence of the assessors' qualifications will be held on file in HR and in the SENCo's records for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo (AA 7:3). This will include evidence of the qualifications used by an assessor in the case of a roll over Form 8 from a previous setting.

5 Assessment process

- 5.1** The assessment process for exam access arrangements will be carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. The term “SENCo” within this policy refers to the member of staff appointed by the Head of Centre to coordinate the access arrangements process. This may include an Access Arrangements Coordinator, Assistant SENCo or Deputy SENCo acting under the direction of the SENCo.
- 5.2** The SENCo will ensure that there is a clear picture of need before any formal assessment for access arrangements takes place. Evidence used to build a picture of need may include:
- teacher observations;
 - normal way of working evidence;
 - previous access arrangements;
 - mock examination arrangements;
 - screening assessments;
 - medical evidence;
 - pastoral information;
 - information from parents/carers or previous settings.
- 5.3** The SENCo and assessor will work collaboratively to ensure a consistent and evidence-based approach to the assessment process. Where an independent assessor is used, the SENCo will provide all relevant background information before any assessment takes place.
- 5.4** The assessor must:
- be appropriately qualified in accordance with current JCQ requirements;
 - personally conduct all assessments;
 - use relevant, current standardised assessments where required;
 - ensure assessments are appropriate to the candidate’s needs and age.
- 5.5** The assessment process will consider whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term difficulty which has an adverse effect on their ability to access examinations and assessments.

The college recognises that:

- no single test score automatically confirms entitlement to an access arrangement;
- decisions must be based on the candidate’s overall profile of need;
- arrangements must be supported by evidence and reflect the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre.

5.6 Where required by JCQ regulations, standardised assessments may include consideration of:

- reading accuracy;
- reading comprehension;
- reading speed;
- spelling accuracy;
- writing speed;
- cognitive processing;
- working memory;
- processing speed.

Assessments used will comply with current JCQ requirements relating to standardisation and validity.

5.7 The SENCo will determine whether an access arrangement is:

- appropriate;
- reasonable;
- required for the candidate to access the assessment;
- reflective of the candidate's normal way of working.

The SENCo is responsible for deciding which arrangement(s) should be applied for and implemented.

5.8 The candidate must have opportunities to practise using the approved arrangement(s) before their first external examination.

5.9 Evidence relating to the assessment process will be securely retained in accordance with JCQ regulations and the college's data protection procedures. Evidence may include:

- completed JCQ forms;
- assessor reports;
- medical evidence;
- teacher observations;
- examples of work;
- confirmation of normal way of working;
- awarding body approvals.

5.10 The college reserves the right to review, amend or withdraw access arrangements where:

- evidence no longer supports the arrangement;
- the arrangement is not the candidate's normal way of working;
- there is evidence of misuse;
- JCQ regulations or awarding body guidance change.

5.11 Relevant staff involved in the access arrangements process will receive appropriate training and annual updates regarding current JCQ requirements and centre procedures.

6 Private assessments

6.1 Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and assessor must work together to ensure a joined up and consistent approach. Part 1 of Form 8 must be completed by a private

assessor before any assessments take place.

The SENCo and assessors 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.

- 6.2** An independent assessor, if used, must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information before an assessment takes place.
All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information as detailed in Part 1 of Form 8.
- 6.3** An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo and the responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.
- 6.4** A privately commissioned report that has not been completed in conjunction with the college, cannot be used as evidence for extra time. The recommendations on a privately commissioned report may be used as a starting point by the SENCo to start exploring possible exam access arrangements and support.
- 6.5** The role of the assessor appointed by college is to assess for exam access arrangements.

7 Processing access arrangements

- 7.1** 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.

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.

- 7.2** AAO applications will be submitted before the deadline dates outlined in JCQ.
- 7.3** AAO applications will be submitted by the SENCo and / or Exam Access Arrangements Co-Ordinator
- 7.4** Prior to application the SENCo will confirm through the completion of Form 8, Form 8RF or Form 9 that all necessary evidence is on file for the individual candidate. Electronic and/or paper files will be used to store the evidence.
- 7.5** Evidence may include a fully completed and signed Form 8 (completed no earlier than Year 9), Form 8RF, Form 9, Medical diagnosis on letter-headed paper from a specialist, EHCP, Teacher observations, confirmation of normal way of working, samples of work (supplementary evidence). This list is not exhaustive and not all evidence may be relevant for the individual candidate.

- 7.6** AAO approval will be filed electronically in each candidate's efile.
- 7.7** AAO for a late diagnosis of a disability or late manifestation of an impairment may be processed as the need arises but evidence of need will still be required. The appropriate evidence will be produced and processed with the application and held on file.
- 7.8** Applications for alternative qualifications such as Applied Science, Medical Science or CeFS will be made by the Examinations Manager. The Examinations Manager will liaise with the SENCo to ensure all applications are made 6 weeks prior to the first examination in the academic year. Outcomes will be communicated to the SENCo.
- 7.9** If an application has been rejected by AAO online, the SENCo will make a referral to the relevant awarding body.
- 7.10** A copy of the relevant evidence will be uploaded via AAO online and a summary written as to the circumstances surrounding the application.
- 7.11** Once notification of the awarding body decision is received this will be communicated to the SENCo.

8 Centre-delegated access arrangements

- 8.1** The implementation of centre-delegated arrangements is based on evidence of genuine need and the candidate's normal way of working within the college. The approval of a centre-delegated arrangement does not automatically indicate that a candidate is disabled under the Equality Act 2010, nor does it automatically entitle a candidate to formal JCQ approval for other access arrangements.

Decisions will be made on an individual basis and will reflect current JCQ guidance and the needs of the candidate.

- 8.2** Definitions:

Alternative Room (s) - An examination room for candidates with exam access arrangements.

Separate Room - An examination room where a candidate is accommodated and invigilated on a one-to-one basis in accordance with JCQ regulations due to a substantial need or temporary impairment or if their exam access arrangement cannot be accommodated within a shared examination room.

- 8.3** A Form 9 will be used to confirm that evidence, such as a medical note, is held on file to support the need for the following exam access arrangements, along with confirmation of normal way of working:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Computer Reader/Reader*

- 25% extra time and/or a scribe*, word processor with grammar/spellcheck and/or predictive text switched on, or speech recognition technology for a condition that is not a learning difference
- More than 25% extra time
- Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes
- Listening to music/white noise due to a substantial impairment
- Remote Invigilation
- Timetable variation on the day of the exam for a candidate with a disability
- Timetable variation requiring overnight supervision for a candidate with a disability

*Students with these arrangements will use Assistive Technology Software such as Claro Read and Dragon NaturallySpeaking whenever appropriate.

8.4 A centre-note will be used to confirm the reason for a candidate's genuine need for the following arrangements:

- Alternative Room
- Modified Papers
- Prompter
- Reader
- Practical Assistant
- Bilingual Dictionary
- Bluetooth device
- Fidget aid
- Word processor
- Main hall observed
- Ear defenders / ear plugs
- Toilet break
- Separate room

8.5 Criteria for awarding specific exam access arrangements can be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Ear defenders / ear plugs
- Appendix 2 – fidget aids
- Appendix 3 Alternative Room
- Appendix 4 – Separate Room

8.6 A centre-note will be used to confirm the reason for a candidate's genuine need for use Separate Invigilation – long term condition.

1. A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.
2. 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 for timed tests and

assessments.

8.7 Separate Invigilation – temporary impairment

1. If a candidate is suffering from a temporary condition/illness prior to the start of an exam, the Examinations Manager, SENCo and / or Medical Welfare Officer will assess whether the student is fit to sit the exam and/or whether they are able to sit the exam in the allocated room.
2. If the candidate is not fit to sit the exam in the allocated room, the Examinations Manager will make arrangements for a separate room. A trained invigilator will supervise the student on a 1:1 basis.
3. The SENCo will assess the student after the exam to decide on the best plan of action for the duration of the exam period. This may mean liaising with the Examinations Manager to move the student into the access arrangements room permanently.
4. If a candidate suffers from a temporary condition/illness during an exam, the Examinations Manager, SENCo and / or Medical Welfare Officer will assess whether the student is fit to continue with the exam. If the candidate is unable to continue in the allocated exam room, the SENCo, in consultation with the Examinations Manager, will make a decision as to whether the exam can continue in a separate room. If this is the case, the Examinations Manager will make arrangements for the exam to continue, including arrangements for invigilation.
5. The SENCo will assess the student after the exam to decide on the best plan of action for the duration of the exam period. This may mean liaising with the Examinations Manager to move the student into the access arrangements room permanently.

8.8 College requires any requests for coloured paper to be supported by specialist evidence such as a dyslexia diagnosis, specialist teacher report Behavioural Optometrist report or other relevant medical evidence.

No evidence is required for coloured overlays or tinted glasses.

9 Appeals

9.1 Candidates and parents/carers who wish to query or appeal a decision relating to access arrangements should refer to the college's Appeals Policy.

9.2 College will always ensure students' needs are met in-line with JCQ regulations. We appreciate that, at times, disagreements may arise and AI generated responses which do not quote JCQ regulations or other policies accurately will not be sufficient when dealing with complaints.

10 Equality Impact

The College's equality, diversity and inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date	Comments
March 2026	May 2026	N/A	N/A	November 2026	

Appendix 1

Ear defenders / ear plugs in exams.

- This should become a student's normal way of working in class tests. JCQ regulations state that earphones / earbuds ARE FORBIDDEN in the exam room.
- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- Students will be provided with ear defenders or disposable foam earplugs by the exam team for each formal exam – students may not bring their own ear defenders / earplugs into a formal exam. Students should provide their own ear defenders / earplugs for class tests unless a prior agreement has been made with the SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator for the student to borrow college ear defenders for class tests in order to get used to them.

Any one of the following pieces of evidence is required for the approval of ear defenders / earplugs in exams:

1. Diagnosis (eg ASC, ADHD, Misophonia, Hyperacusis, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who works with the student
2. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who works with the student
3. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
4. Anecdotal evidence from student - supported by staff (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. GP letter – case by case basis

Appendix 2

Fidget aid in exams

- Students who have been approved the use of fidget aids in exams will only be allowed fidget aids that do not make a noise and do not distract other students. This should become a student's normal way of working in class tests.
- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- Students must provide their own fidget aid both for class tests and formal exams. College do not provide any fidget aids.
- Some students will choose to wear a bracelet, necklace, elastic band on wrist etc to act as a fidget aid – these do not need approval. Only additional objects that students will have on their desk will need approval eg stress ball – links – tangles

Any one of the following pieces of evidence is required for the approval of fidget aids in exams:

1. Diagnosis (eg ASC, ADHD, Misophonia, Hyperacusis, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who works with the student
2. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who work with the student
3. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
4. Anecdotal evidence from student - supported by staff (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. GP letter – case by case basis

Appendix 3

Alternative Room in exams

- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- We must be able to build a picture of need here at college.

Examples of evidence which may contribute to establishing need:

1. On waiting list for assessment (eg ASC, ADHD, SEMH) in addition to support from staff who work with the student
2. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
3. Substantial Anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
4. GP letter outlining their anxiety which goes beyond specific exam anxiety – case by case basis AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. Evidence of medication for anxiety AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
6. The student's EAA cannot be accommodated in the main exam hall eg laptop, rest breaks, toilet breaks, prompt
7. Medical evidence eg Misophonia – OCD in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS or Pastoral Log)
8. Student receives additional support eg counselling AND Some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
9. Temporary SEMH need eg bereavement – decision will be led under guidance by Head of Student Support / Safeguarding Officer

Appendix 4

Separate Room in exams

- The SENCo and/or EAA Co-Ordinator give final approval and inform LS Administrator.
- We must be able to build a picture of need here at college over a period of time.

Examples of evidence which may contribute to establishing need:

1. The student's EAA cannot be accommodated in exam rooms where there are other students eg reader, scribe, read aloud, students with diabetes who need their phone on their desk (separate invigilation).
2. Historic, evidenced normal way of working at school (eg sensory need) – trial rolled over into college and re-evaluated by SENCo or EAA Co-Ordinator with support from staff who work with the student
3. Substantial Anecdotal evidence eg SEMH needs (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
4. Medical evidence eg verbal tics, SEMH, HI (requiring a signer in aural exams) - in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)
5. GP or Specialist letter outlining medical need and why a separate room is essential - in addition to support from staff who work with the student or some anecdotal evidence (collated on CPOMS, Pastoral Log or attendance log)