



Appendix 6: Access Arrangements Policy 2021/22

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Reviewed by	
Jill Rhodes, Exams Officer, September 2021	
Date of next review	September 2022

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Catherine Holden
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Kate Connolly, Head Teacher
Head of centre	Kate Connolly

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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'. ([AA 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'. ([AA 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 Brownhill Learning Community 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, (section 5.4) This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo/Exam Officer 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/Exam Officer 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. See our Exams Policy 2021-2022 - Appendix 3: Equalities Policy (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)

Miss Catherine Holden – PG Cert National Award for SEN Co-ordination
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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)

Assessor qualifications are checked during the recruitment process and validated by our HR Staff and Rochdale Authority's HR Department.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence that the assessor is suitable qualified is kept by the HR Office.

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

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* or *Statement of Special Educational Needs* the SENCo will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working and complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

All candidates will be assessed in light of the picture of need and relevant background information. The assessor will establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which **substantially** affects their performance.

The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores will be used, where published.

For candidates potentially requiring a Language Modifier reading comprehension will be assessed using a recognised test of text or sentence comprehension.

Reading speed will be tested in various ways depending on the individual candidate.

Candidates will be allowed the use of a scribe where they have a substantial impairment:

- a below average standardised spelling accuracy score with unrecognisable spelling attempts; or
- a below average standardised score for writing speed.

Cognitive processing assessments will include a range of assessments as determined appropriate for the candidate by the assessor.

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

The SENCo will work closely with SLT/SMT Staff, Curriculum Leads, subject teachers, teaching assistants and other centre staff to gather information to paint a picture of need for candidates. Statements regarding the candidate's normal way of working in the classroom and in internal assessments will be held on file.

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.

Applications will be processed for both long-term and temporary conditions. The approval will be filed alongside the candidate's EHCP/Statement of Special Educational Needs, the form 8 where appropriate, any statements gathered to evidence the candidate's normal way of working, and the signed and dated **Personal data consent, Privacy Notice (AAO) and Data Protection confirmation**.

For cases that are not approved, the SENCo will consider whether this is because the candidate does not meet the published criteria, whether the reasonable adjustment is not listed, and consider further exploration in relation to the competence being tested.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Centre-delegated arrangements will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

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 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. See Appendix 7 – Word Processor Policy of Exam Policy.

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the 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 5.16)