



# Policy Document

## Access Arrangement Policy

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### **Definition and purpose**

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 as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories:

- Arrangements which are delegated to centres
- Arrangements which require prior JCQ awarding body approval

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following guidance, information and policies:

- The Equality and Diversity Policy

### **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 undertaking an assessment.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

### **Special Educational Needs**

A candidate has “special educational needs” as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years, if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mobility impairment mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer.

### **Available Access Arrangements include:**

#### **Supervised rest breaks**

#### **Computer reader/reader**

**Extra time of up to 50% Word processor**

**Scribe/Speech recognition technology**

**Oral Language Modifier**

**25% extra time**

**Practical assistant**

**Sign Language Interpreter**

**Modified Papers**

**Bilingual translation dictionaries**

**Coloured/Enlarged Papers**

**Braille Papers**

**Fundamental Principles**

- Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for Access Arrangements are therefore considered on a subject-by subject basis.

- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre:

- in the classroom; or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy intervention strategies;
- and/or in internal college tests and mock examinations.

- This is commonly referred to as '**normal way of working**'.

- The key principle is that the Access Arrangement Assessor working within the centre can show a history of support and provision. The arrangement is not suddenly being granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations.

- The candidate must have appropriate opportunities to practise using the Access Arrangement(s) before his/her examination.

- If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is **not** his/her normal way of working. In these specific circumstances, the arrangement may be rescinded at our discretion.

**Deadlines for submitting applications for Access Arrangements**

Applications for Access Arrangements must be processed by the published deadline. This will allow centres to make provision for Access Arrangements from the perspective of timetabling

logistics, accommodation and staffing. If a referral to an awarding body becomes necessary, there may not be sufficient time to process the application if it is made after the respective deadline.

### **Core and Supplementary Evidence**

***All OCR centres will be inspected by a member of the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.***

***Inspectors will expect to see appropriate documentation to substantiate the use of an Access Arrangement processed electronically.***

Core evidence for candidates with a **Learning Difficulty**

In order to award extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the college **must** assess the needs of the candidate based on one of the following documents:

- a statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability; or
- an assessment carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9 by a specialist assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

### **Assessment**

We will arrange for re-assessment of all students with existing access arrangements to check that the arrangement is still appropriate to their needs and to provide core evidence to corroborate an application for Access

### **Literacy Difficulty Referrals**

The college must provide evidence of how a literacy difficulty significantly and persistently impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom. Information is gathered from the student, those who work with the student (teachers and/or support staff), progress grades and screening assessment results. Those students who require extra support will be referred for mentoring with a senior tutor which focuses on literacy and academic skills. If a picture of need has been established, the student will be referred for assessment to ascertain if there is a need for Access Arrangements in future examinations.

Core Evidence for a candidate with a **Medical/Health condition**

*1 Certificates of External Assessors are held on file along with written approval from the Head of Centre.*

*2 Access Arrangements Assessors have successfully completed a postgraduate course at or equivalent to Level7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment and attend annual CPD*

*(communicated JCQ Examination Access Arrangement - Update/Refresher).*

**In addition to the supplementary evidence collated by the college, the file note is supported**

**with, for example:**

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist;

**or**

- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; **or**
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); **or**
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care plan **which confirms the candidate's disability.**

**Please note that a letter from a G.P. is acceptable for supervised rest breaks or request for a small room, though all other Access Arrangements (including extra time) require an up to date letter from one of the above.**

**Supplementary evidence for all Access Arrangements**

In all cases, in addition to the core evidence, the college must paint a picture of the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. So as not to give an unfair advantage, the Assessor working within the centre must have available evidence which clearly shows

that an Access Arrangement is (still) needed for Diploma examinations:

- confirm that the candidate continues to have persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- include evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they **substantially** impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- confirm that without the application of extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the candidate would **continue to be at a substantial disadvantage** when taking Level 3 examinations compared to other non-disabled candidates;
- confirm that extra time/reader/scribe, etc. **continues** to be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre **as a direct consequence of their disability.**

**Special Consideration**

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination or assessment. This will be processed by the examinations office.

**Temporary Injury**

Access Arrangement Online (AAO) is used for a candidate with a temporary injury or impairment, such as a broken arm during the examination period. These arrangements are processed as the need arises. Medical evidence is retained within the department, together with a file note detailing the circumstances, a signed data protection form and a copy of the AAO Approval

### **Reviewing the Policy**

In light of JCQ regulation updates, this policy is reviewed annually.

### **Contacts**

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