



# Disability policy (exams)

2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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## Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how the centre

*“recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.*

*†for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect”*

[Quote taken directly from chapter 5.4 of the current JCQ publication [General regulations for approved centres](#)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as ‘access arrangements’)
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

## The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the current 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](#).

## Identifying the need for access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

#### Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AA](#)

#### Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)
- Conducts appropriate assessments (or arranges for assessments to take place) to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor’s qualification
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate’s *normal way of working* within the centre

- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

### Teaching staff

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate

### Exams Officer

- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Supports the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication [AA](#)

## Requesting access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

#### Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8, where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:
  - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
  - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
  - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
  - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Following the appropriate process(AAO for GCE and GCSE; *JCQ Form 7* or *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

## Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AA](#) where this may be relevant to the EO role
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- Applies for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO
- Makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)

## Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

### Roles and responsibilities

#### External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE).

#### Head of centre

- Supports the SENCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

#### Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
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#### Exams officer

- Is familiar with and follows the *Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations* provided in the current [ICE](#) (page 44 – attached to this policy)
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)

- Prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and GCE qualifications and ensures these are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Liaises with the SENCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Liaise with Maintenance Staff to ensure that arrangements are in place for emergency evacuation from an exam for a student with a permanent or temporary disability.

### **Maintenance staff**

- Support the SENCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams

### **Internal assessments**

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

*“Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as ‘NEA’.”*

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments – Foreword, page 3](#)]

### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- Liaises with the exams officer to ensure facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

### **Exams Officer**

- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Liaise with the SENCo and the exams officer regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

## **Internal exams**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

### **Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)**

- Liaises with the exams officer and teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

## **Facilitating access - examples**

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

<b>Example of candidate need(s)</b>	<b>Arrangements explored</b>	<b>Centre actions</b>
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks	<i>SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i> <i>Head of School/SENCo provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i> <i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i> <i>Head of School/SENCo discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i> <i>EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'</i> <i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i> <i>Head of School/SENCo agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i> <i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i> <i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i> <i>Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i> <i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i> <i>EO discusses with SENCo if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i>

		<p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence</i></p> <p><i>Head of School/SENCo informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p>
<p>Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text</p>	<p>Reader/computer reader</p> <p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p>	<p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>Form 8, signed and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice</i></p>
<p>Significant difficulty in concentrating</p>	<p>Prompter</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p>	<p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room)</i></p>
<p>A wheelchair user</p>	<p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>	<p><i>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed</i></p> <p><i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p> <p><i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i></p> <p><i>Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment</i></p>



## Appendix

### Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations

The following checklist, which is not an exhaustive one, has been produced as a good practice guide for centres.

<b>A Training invigilators</b>	
1	Ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues.
2	As part of the training process make sure that invigilators are aware of policies and procedures relating to emergency evacuation and medication, especially where they relate to candidates with a disability.
3	Ensure that invigilators are aware of alternative means of communication, especially in the exam room when conveying information to disabled candidates.
<b>B Information for candidates</b>	
1	Ensure that information supplied to candidates with a disability, such as JCQ <i>Information for candidates</i> , are suitably sized and adapted.
<b>C Seating arrangements</b>	
1	Make sure that there are chairs available outside the examination rooms to enable those with a disability or those candidates who experience extreme stress or anxiety, to sit and rest before they enter the examination.
2	Ensure that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a candidate (or an invigilator) who uses a wheelchair to enter and leave the room without difficulty.
3	If you know that a candidate may become unwell during the examination due to the nature of their disability, try to ensure that you seat them close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and to limit any disruption to others within the examination room.
4	Ensure that the seating is both appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects sitting and posture.
<b>D Candidates requiring access arrangements</b>	
1	Where a candidate has been granted the use of an Oral Language Modifier, a reader or a scribe, ensure that those individuals who will be acting as an Oral Language Modifier, a reader or a scribe are introduced to the candidate prior to the examination(s) taking place. This is particularly important for those candidates with autism, who will find it difficult to relate to someone who is a stranger.
2	Where a candidate has been granted supervised rest breaks, try to ensure that the rest areas are suitably comfortable as well as maintaining the security of the examination. Supervised rest breaks will apply to those candidates who suffer from fatigue, hyperactivity, obsessive compulsive disorders or long term health conditions.
3	Where a candidate has been granted the use of a prompter, it is important that the person appointed to act as a prompter is aware of disability etiquette, particularly when touching the candidate's desk as a means of a prompt, or tapping the candidate's arm or shoulder. This will apply to those candidates with autism who may have difficulty with time.
4	For on-screen tests, ensure that hardware and software have been adapted for those candidates with a sensory or multi-sensory impairment.
<b>E Emergency evacuation procedures</b>	
1	Invigilators and all other centre staff involved in conducting examinations <b>must</b> be aware of the emergency evacuation procedures in place for those candidates with a disability who may need assistance in leaving the building.
2	When evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to candidates, attention should be given to those candidates with a disability, for whom such procedures may be different.