



# Disability policy (exams) 2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
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## Purpose of the policy

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

*“recognise 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 section 5.4 of the JCQ publication [General regulations for approved centres 2019-2020](#)]

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
- ▶ good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

## The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2019-2020](#)

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](#)
- ▶ Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- ▶

#### Senior leaders

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

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

- ▶ Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- ▶ Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates are clearly defined and documented
- ▶ Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- ▶ Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)
- ▶ Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of [AA](#)
- ▶ Ensure a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams
- ▶ Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- ▶ Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (*Access arrangements policy*)
- ▶ If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- ▶ Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- ▶ Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- ▶ Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- ▶ Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate
- ▶ Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- ▶ Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- ▶ Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates are clearly defined and documented

### **Support staff** (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)

- ▶ (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in *painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working* for a candidate
- ▶ Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements
- ▶ If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

### **Examinations Officer**

- ▶ Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication [AA](#)
- ▶ Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- ▶ Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments

### **Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties**

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

### **Use of word processors**

*“Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the*

*curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.”*

See separate policy

## **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
- ▶ Follows guidance in [AA](#) Section 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2/92 of [AA](#)
- ▶ Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (*Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties*), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre
- ▶ Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed (an electronic signature is permissible) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version)
- ▶ 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)
- ▶ Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline
- ▶ Maintains a (hard copy or electronic) file/e-folder 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 those qualifications listed on page 2/92 of [AA](#) (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/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised

- ▶ Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates

### **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
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2/92 of [AA](#), are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre
- ▶ Confirms by ticking the '*Confirmation*' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the '*malpractice consequence statement*' has been read and accepted
- ▶ 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)
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- ▶ Following the appropriate process (AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of [AA](#); *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

## **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)
- ▶ Is familiar with the instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](#) 2018-2019
- ▶ Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time
- ▶ 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 prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- ▶ Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- ▶ Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage
- ▶ Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional)
- ▶ Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ▶ Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later



- ▶ 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
- ▶ Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- ▶ Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- ▶ Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments
- ▶ Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ▶ Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- ▶ 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**

- ▶ Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](#) 2019-2020
- ▶ Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo to ensure 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
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- ▶ Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- ▶ Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- ▶ Ensures candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans
- ▶ 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 either accesses

a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam

- ▶ Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early so the facilitator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Communication Professional **only**) may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published starting time for the exam in order to prepare
- ▶ Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
  - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for those qualifications listed on page 2/92 of [AA](#)
- ▶ Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

### **Other relevant centre staff**

- ▶ Business Manager/ Premises 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
- ▶ IT to support SENCo and exams officer in providing specialist equipment that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- ▶ Premises staff responsible for rooms and non-specialist equipment (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- ▶ Senior staff responsible for the centre's emergency evacuation procedures and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated

### **Internal assessments**

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

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

- ▶ Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

### **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 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 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

### **Exams Officer**

- ▶ Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

### **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