



Access Arrangements Policy 2022/2023

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Olufunke Bamigbele – WASL, SENDCo	
Date of next review	October 2023

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	Olu Bamigbele
SENDCo Line Manager (Senior Leader)	Ruth Clark
Head of centre	Carl Wakefield
Assessor(s)	Karen Girling
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Beverley Chittock, Vanessa Burke, Suzi Archer

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General principles

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 principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (section 4.2). These include:

- The SENDCo, 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.

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' (¹AARA 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'. (¹AARA Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA 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 Plume Academy 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's General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4]. This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo alongside the individual files/electronic folders of each access arrangement candidate. Each file/electronic folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations (¹AARA 4.2.13). 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' (AARA). ¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

In accordance with GR 5.4 The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 (or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect). This includes exploring and providing access to suitable courses, submitting applications for reasonable adjustments and making reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

In order to ensure the assessor has the required level of competence and appropriate qualifications, the SENDCo requests recommendation from Communicate-ed regarding registered and qualified Assessors. This certificate is verified by Communicate-ed, and the HR department under the authority of the Executive Principal of Plume Academy. Proof of qualification is kept on file. The certificate is stored in the Exams testing folder in the SEND office. Copy of DBS check is stored with HR. JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. [GR 5.4]

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is held on file for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCo. [AARA 7.3]

The Centre will adhere to the above in the following way:

- ensure the Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will recruit with integrity with regards to both general and vocational qualifications
- appoint 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

- ensure the SENDCo provides a copy of the qualification certificate to Human Resources for their personnel records and an additional copy to the Examinations Officer
- ensure a copy of the qualification certificate is provided before undertaking any assessments of students/candidates
- liaise with H.R. to ensure newly recruited SENDCo holds a current certificate or receives training to gain the qualification when taking up the post

The Centre will not:

- allow unqualified SEN Departmental staff such as Learning Support Assistants, Higher Level Teaching Assistants to conduct Access Arrangement testing

The Examinations Officer will:

- hold the assessor's/SENDCo's qualification certificate on file to provide on request during JCQ Centre Inspection

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held by the SLT Lead/SENDCo.

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team/SENDCo will:

- ensure the SENDCo provides a copy of the qualification certificate to Human Resources for their personnel records and an additional copy to the Examinations Officer.
- ensure a copy of the qualification certificate is provided before undertaking any assessments of students/candidates.

SENDCos must hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified. This can be drawn, for example, from the following sources:

- copy of current Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by Patoss,
- Dyslexia Guild or British Dyslexia Association;
- copy of Level 7 assessment qualification certificate;
- screenshot of HCPC registration showing the Unique Registration Number;
- screenshot of SASC listing showing the APC code number and expiry date;
- screenshot of listing for PAPAA Graduates showing the certificate number;
- screenshot of listing for CPT3A Certificate Holders showing the certificate number;
- screenshot of listing for ETAAC Certificate Holders showing the certificate number;
- or screenshot of listing for Patoss AAA Certificate Holders showing the certificate number

In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within *Access arrangements online*. The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed within the deadlines section, must be entered into *Access arrangements online* to confirm their status.

PROCESS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF A CANDIDATE'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES BY AN ASSESSOR

To comply with JCQ Regulations the centre will:

- ensure that learners will have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) in an accessible format and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs.

- assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s)
- assess in such a way as to identify where appropriate the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations and assessments.
- recognise the Academy's duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of The Equality Act 2010 to include 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
- ensure where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified assessor as appointed by the Head of Centre. Evidence of the assessor's qualifications will be obtained before he/she assesses candidates
- assist the awarding bodies in the discharge of their duty to make reasonable adjustments by requesting access arrangements, where required, and fully support the SENDCo in effectively implementing those arrangements once approved.
- submit applications for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments by the published deadline ensuring appropriate documentary evidence is held on file to substantiate such an arrangement and is open to inspection.
- ensure that, for GCE and GCSE qualifications, a file is presented by the SENDCo which will contain for each application the downloaded approval for the respective arrangements, supporting evidence of need (where required) and a signed data protection notice. This information will be readily available for inspection at the venue where the candidate is taking the examinations.
- submit requests for modified papers by published deadlines
- ensure the qualified assessor assesses candidates to ensure access arrangements approved allow the candidate to access the assessment but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage. The assessment objectives will take precedence over an access arrangement and will not be waived. The arrangement must not affect the integrity of the assessment.

The SENDCo will:

- ensure that applications are processed on time, no later than the published deadline.
- ensure that the full supporting evidence is in place prior to making an online application
- review the evidence before an online application is processed ensuring the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement.
- hold all supporting evidence and present such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request
- ensure that the agreed access arrangement has been put in place before the candidate's first examination e.g., internal school tests and mock examinations.

The assessor/SENDCo will:

- record the results of any tests indicating that the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidate's performance
- work only within their area of expertise and in an ethical fashion
- use current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate
- report the results of their assessment within Section C of Form 8
- provide the centre with evidence of their qualifications before assessing any candidate

External Candidates

The centre will:

- undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate the normal way of working for a private candidate. This includes distance learners and home educated students.
- the centre, where required, will lead on the assessment process
- the candidate will be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor

- where necessary and depending on need the candidate will be assessed away from the centre for example at home
- the centre will comply with the obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

In order to paint a picture of need and to demonstrate evidence of normal way of working the centre will:

- ensure that learners will have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) in an accessible format and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs.
- assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s)
- use current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate
- report the results of their assessment within Section C of Form 8
- undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate the normal way of working for a private candidate. This includes distance learners and home educated students.
- hold all supporting evidence and present such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo provides the assessor with background information, i.e., a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENDCo and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

Where an independent assessor supports with the process, the independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENDCo. [[AARA 7.5](#)]

PROCESSING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Arrangements 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 listed on page 2 of [AARA](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74. 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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The SENDCo will make all applications using AAO. Applications are submitted once all evidence of need is gathered, the candidates have been tested and by no later than the Awarding Bodies deadline for applications. Copies of evidence of need, along with Form 8 and other documentation, which includes the candidates signed personal data consent form, are held on file by the SENDCo (files are held in the Exams Officer's office). These files are available for inspection by the JCQ Inspection Service.

Should an approval be refused the SENDCo will inform all the relevant parties and carry out further tests in order to reapply if required. [AARA 8 Processing applications for access arrangements](#)

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Candidates will receive centre delegated access arrangements if they demonstrate a need, such as use of laptop, supervised rest breaks:

- Laptops - the centre has a full laptop policy available on the Academy's website.
- Supervised Rest Breaks - some candidates with, for example, medical issues (back injuries, bladder issues) will be given supervised rest breaks.
- Extra Time - if a candidate can demonstrate at least 2 below average scores for speed of working that could include processing or handwriting or reading, or if the student has medical or physical difficulties around speed of working.
- Modified papers - if a candidate can demonstrate significant learning difficulties around comprehension or understanding of language, or if there is a medical condition that requires a modified paper to be provided.
- Coloured overlays - if there is medical/professional evidence to suggest that this is required
- Prompt - if a student can evidence significant difficulty maintaining focus and concentration; this may include students with diagnosis of conditions such as ADHD and ASD.
- Others - separate invigilation if a student can evidence significant difficulties or medical conditions that would require a separate room.

CENTRE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA FOR PARTICULAR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Word processor policy (exams)

An exam candidate may be approved for the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

The Centre's Word Processor Policy is available in the Exams Officer's office.

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the Head of Centre or SENDCo.

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**
- Candidates may be given a separate room by the SENDCo if the candidate has an access arrangement, such as a reader or scribe, and will disturb other candidates should the candidate be in the main examination room.

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.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include 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. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

Refer to Plume's Equality Policy (Exams), SEND policy and procedure guidance for Special Educational Needs and Disability Provision on the H drive.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- The SLT Lead/SENDCo will report on the Policy to the Joint Head of Academy as appropriate.
- SLT Lead/SENDCo will review the Policy every year.