



**BEDFORD**  
FREE SCHOOL

# **Equalities Policy (Exams)**

## **2023/2024**

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved by: E Forster Date: Feb 2024

Last reviewed on: February 2024

Next review due by: February 2025

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Assistant SENCo	Janet Lewis
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Jane Herron
Head of centre	Jane Herron
Assessor	Janet Lewis
Assistant SENCo	Piera Hutton
Exams Officer	Elaine Forster

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## Purpose of the policy

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

- recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>, particularly Section 20 (7). *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.* 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; †or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect.”

(JCQ’s **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

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 of the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2023-2024 (Definitions section).

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) and Assistant SENCo

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AA](#)

#### Teaching staff

- (where appropriate) Inform the SENCo of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate

**Support staff** (for example, Learning Mentors).

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in *painting a holistic picture of need* confirming *normal way of working* for a candidate

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

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

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

- Helps to advise on the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of [AA](#)
- Supports the SENCo/Assistant 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
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body
- The appropriately qualified assessor, supports and works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process

### **Use of word processors**

**The Word Processor policy will be kept on file with all policies on the shared Idrive and be available on the school website.**

Access to a computer for an exam must be available (if appropriate but not usually for subjects such as maths and modern foreign languages) so the student may word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks will be disabled other than in exceptional circumstances where the student has 'scribe' provision (see above).

The use of a word processor will reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

### **Requesting access arrangements**

Roles and responsibilities **SENCo/SEN Team**

- 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

### **Exams officer (EO)**

- 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

### **The SEN Team (overseen by the SENCo)**

- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented within the Access Arrangement policy.
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates

- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking
- 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 is 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
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate
- 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 Chapter 8](#) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)• Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of relevant JCQ forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, Form BD25, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc.
- - 
  - Ensures where JCQ forms are required to be completed, forms are signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version)
  - Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of [AA](#), are entered into AAO to confirm their status
  - 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)
  - Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will be in in hard copy within the candidate's file **or** all in electronic format within the candidate's e-folder) 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 of [AA](#) (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
    - (where applicable) 'Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo' acknowledged before an application is processed online

- Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised (In the event of an IT failure at the time of an inspection is able to access the required documentation in an alternative format, e.g. a memory stick or hard copy)
- Presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates 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**

- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place.
- 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
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is processed at the start of the course and at the latest by the awarding body deadline
- If the SEN Team is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates 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
- Liaises with the SEN Team to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper from CCEA, OCR and WJEC (or to download a PDF copy of the standard question paper where provided by AQA and Pearson) or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the awarding body's 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 (using AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of AA; using 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
- Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in ICE 2023-2024
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the 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 SEN Team, 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

#### **The SEN Team (overseen by the 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 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 the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Monitors, 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 the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- 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

### **Exams officer**

- Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE 2023-2024](#)
- 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
- 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, 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
- Ensures invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the SEN Team 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 SEN Team to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidate's documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it



- Liaises with the SEN Team regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SEN Team regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SEN Team to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- 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, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
  - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
  - the Communication Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time for the exam in order to prepare
  - the Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the Listening examination 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start 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 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 SEN Team 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**

- Support the SEN Team and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- That are responsible for IT or other specialist equipment, may need to provide or adapt equipment for a candidate

- That are responsible for rooms and non-specialist equipment (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) may need to adapt them appropriately 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/standardised by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

### **The SEN Team (overseen by the SENCo)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- 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
- 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
- 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 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
- Provide the SEN Team with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SEN Team in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates
- Liaise with the SEN Team 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.

### **The SEN Team (overseen by the SENCo)**

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

### **Exams officer**

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

### **Teaching staff**

- Support the SEN Team 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.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations  Supervised rest breaks	<p>SEN Team <i>gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i></p> <p><i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online through CAP</i></p> <p><i>An on-line submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations.</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms full time given for exam</i></p>

		<p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>EO discusses with Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (Evidence retained until after the publication of results)</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral Lead or Assistant SENCo informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p>
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	<p>Reader/computer reader</p> <p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Alternative rooming arrangements</p>	<p><i>The Assessor confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers are checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>SENCo produces a statement, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre and completes appropriate form/documentation for evidence of need</i></p> <p><i>AAO application for approval processed</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval and signed candidate personal data consent and completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form kept on file</i></p>
Significant difficulty in concentrating	<p>Prompter</p> <p>Alternative rooming arrangements</p>	<p><i>The SEN team gather evidence to support substantial and long-term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>The SEN team confirm with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> <p><i>The Exam Officer 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>
A wheelchair user	<p>Desk</p> <p>Rooms</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Seating arrangements</p> <p>Practical assistant</p>	<p><i>The SEN Team apply 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>The Facilities Team provide height adjustable desk in exam room</i></p> <p><i>The EO allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i></p>

		<p><i>The Facilities team Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i></p> <p><i>The EO seats candidate near exam room door</i></p> <p><i>The EO 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>
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