**Access Arrangements Policy**

2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| Approved/reviewed by | |
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| Date of next review |  |

Key staff involved in the policy

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| **Role** | **Name(s)** |
| ALS lead/SENCo | **Nikki Scott** |
| ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader) | **Nicola Carson** |
| Head of centre | **Kal Hodgson** |
| Assessor(s) | **Nikki Scott** |
| Access arrangement facilitator(s) | **Nikki Scott** |

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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’. ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 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’. ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 1.8). The definitions and procedures in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 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 Cedar Mount 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...

(General Regulations for Approved Centres, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations)

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **mus**t create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate’s e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 4.2)

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.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance)

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) (section 4.2). These include:

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 SENCo, 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.

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.

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| Please see the BFET Single Equality Policy  **The head of centre/senior leadership team will**… recognise its duties towards disabled 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 no**t 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 ([GR](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations) section 5.4) |

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance), section 7.3.

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

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| Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A) |

Painting a ‘holistic picture of need’, confirming normal way of working

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| Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from JCQ, depending on the arrangement required. These include:  • A history of need (clear evidence of a SEN over a period of time, previous EAA from other schools)  • A history of provision (what support has been provided in school)  • A qualifying score from a recognised test carried out by a suitably qualified assessor and completion of form 8.Staff refer a student for assessment using a purpose-built form allowing them to detail need and history of provision. In addition to this, evidence of need and provision can be provided through:  Diagnostic test results  Professional reports  History of intervention / support  Medical evidence  Examples of classwork / past exam scripts Where relevant include any additional information relating to private candidates.  Before the candidate’s assessment, the SENCo **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.  An 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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.  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/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo**.** ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 7.5) |

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments 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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to [AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6(Modified papers).

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 for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

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| The SENCo **must** keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 8.6) |

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate’s needs and not simply because the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate’s normal way of working within the centre.

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| Please see the Word Processor Policy  A centre **must** have a policy on the use of word processors… A member of the centre’s senior leadership team **must** produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 5.8) |

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

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 ([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration) 5.16)

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| Separate invigilation is determined by the SENCO, in conjunction with relevant teaching staff and exam officer personnel. JCQ are clear that the decision to offer separate invigilation to candidates is the responsibility of the SENCO.  We make the decision 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.  • The candidate’s difficulties are established within the centre;  • These difficulties are known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities;  • Separate invigilation reflects the candidate’s normal way of working in internal school tests and pre public examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs;  The following are circumstances where candidates would be eligible for separate invigilation:  • A candidate with depression who has been under Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)  • A candidate with an established medical condition or formally recognised social, emotional and behavioural difficulties  Where a candidate simply panics on the day of an examination or becomes anxious, then he/she should indeed be seated more appropriately within the main examination hall.  Separate invigilation is no different to other access arrangements; such as prompters, supervised rest breaks etc. All staff with pastoral responsibilities will know precisely those students with established and long term health conditions and whether separate invigilation is warranted. Working with the SENCO and exams officer, who may highlight issues such as room availability and the need for additional invigilation, a centre-based decision is made on the need for separate invigilation.  Any separate invigilation/rooming would be discussed with parents/carers and the pupil before the exam series and the pupil would be told which room she/he is likely to take the exam in. Any invigilators which come from the pupil’s mainstream school may be introduced to the pupil before the exam.  The separate invigilation/rooming would continue for as long as the candidate needs it but if they feel able to re-join other candidates in the main examination hall for some or all of the remaining exams then they are able to do so.  For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the candidate’s difficulties are **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.  Separate invigilation reflects the candidate’s normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a **long-term** medical condition or **long-term** social, emotional and mental health needs.([AA](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance) 5.16) |