

Access Arrangements Policy

The College's Policy for Access Arrangements is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' booklet, applicable from 1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024. These are the regulations with which the college must comply, and this policy will outline how we do this. Access Arrangements are the principal way in which Awarding Bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act (2010) to make 'Reasonable Adjustments'. This requires that an Awarding Body makes reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment

Rationale for Access Arrangements

- Access Arrangements are intended to facilitate students with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment due to a difficulty or disability, to access the exam without changing the demands of the assessment.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled (within the definition of the Equality Act 2010) would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.
- Access Arrangements are intended to increase access to assessments, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- Access Arrangements are not intended to give an unfair advantage, but rather are to remove a disadvantage.
- Access Arrangements may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- Access Arrangements should reflect a student's normal way of working, unless such arrangements would compromise the integrity of the assessment.

Access Arrangements encompass a wide range of provisions which may include: being allowed to sit examinations in an alternative venue, supervised rest breaks, use of colour overlays, prompter, extra time, reader, scribe, use of a word processor, practical assistant, etc. An Access Arrangement may be unique to an individual and therefore not appear in a standard list.

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

1. Students new to college declare any Access Arrangements they had in their previous school when they apply for a place, during enrolment or within the first half term. They either provide the relevant evidence (Form 8), or request it from their previous school or their school sends it directly to the ALS /SENCo. Alternatively, the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator will write

to the previous school for evidence of Access Arrangements. It is the duty of SENCo to check any previous evidence for completeness and that it conforms with JCQ regulations.

2. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator.
3. In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Access Arrangements Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the autumn and spring terms and the SENCO applies/reapplies for Access Arrangements.
4. Trial Access Arrangements are put in place for the mock examinations in November/January of Year 12. Teachers give feedback from the mocks to the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator. The mock examinations also provide an opportunity to recognise any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.
5. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator or Access Arrangements Assessor by July of Year 12. Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, Year 12 exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.
6. Where formal Access Arrangements are awarded, the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that they continue to be normal working practice for the student. This means that appropriate Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments. If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change, or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

Medical Letters and Private Assessments

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but any request for an access arrangement also needs to be supported by evidence from within the college. Likewise, private assessments or reports from Educational Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement if supported by college evidence, which must be sent to the assessor or Educational Psychologist in advance of the assessment. We may choose not to accept a private assessment report as evidence for an access arrangement if it conflicts with evidence gathered at college and by our Access Arrangements Assessor.

Temporary Arrangements

Temporary arrangements may be required by students suffering from injury or illness. Normally, students with leg injuries can be accommodated in the main rooms near the doors for easy access and exit. Students with an illness or injury that has a direct impact on their ability to access the examination should obtain a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional giving a brief outline of their condition and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. For example, a right-handed student whose right arm is broken may need a scribe and some extra time, as it is not their normal way of

working and dictating to a scribe may be difficult for them. A student with acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks in order to stand and move around.

In all cases where an access arrangement or a reasonable adjustment is needed, the college is entitled to expect reasonable notice to carry out its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements has been identified before an examination session, the SENCo/Access Arrangements Coordinator and Examinations Officer should be provided with medical evidence in reasonable time. Temporary arrangements last for one examination session. If the condition persists another letter may be required for the next session.

Evidence Held and Malpractice

Schools and Colleges are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The college is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the college will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, letters from outside agencies, record of Access Arrangements used and any Statement of Special Needs or EHCP, together with a data protection notice signed by the student.

The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification of the student from one or more examinations. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted Access Arrangements which are not their normal way of working
- Access Arrangements being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- Access Arrangements being granted without sufficient evidence