



Alcester Academy

TO BE THE BEST THAT WE CAN BE

Access Arrangements Policy

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This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Contents

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments	3
Access arrangements	3
Reasonable adjustments	3
Purpose of the policy	3
General principles	4
Equalities Policy (Exams)	4
The assessment process	4
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)	4
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties	4
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor	5
Picture of need/normal way of working	5
Processing access arrangements and adjustments	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval	6
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments	6
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments	6
Word Processor Policy (Exams)	6
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy	7

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 particular 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’.”* [AARA 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 a number of 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’.”

[AARA Definitions]

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA¹, 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

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Alcester 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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

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

Where the SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate’s e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AARA 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](#)

General Principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them 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, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 their first examination.

Equality policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Equality policy (exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

Located on staff shared/policies/Equality Policy (exams) and a copy is in the master exams file in the EO's office
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This 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 is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AARA](#) 7.3.

Appointment of assessors

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)

The SENCo will ensure that the assessor is suitably qualified in line with [AA 7.3.3 + 7.3.4](#), this will be evidenced by the production of their current qualification certificate.

The SENCo will establish during the interview that the assessor.

- has a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*
- is familiar with the Equality Act 2010 as a means to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate
- that evidence of their qualification is kept on file for inspection services and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo

“The head of centre/senior leadership team will...have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...” [\[GR 5.4\]](#)

“The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.” [\[AARA 7.3\]](#)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence of the assessor’s qualification is held in the master copy of the Exams File in the EO’s office and at the front of the year 11 access arrangements evidence folder in the locked filing cabinet in the SENCO’s office

Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor

- ▶ Teachers/support staff/SENCo identify potential candidates who require access arrangements through transition information, outside agency reports, class work/assessments and inform SENCo

The SENCo

- ▶ gathers **evidence** to support the need for access arrangements for a candidate and fills in Part 1 of Form 8 before the candidate is assessed
- ▶ liaises with teaching staff to gather evidence of **normal way of working** of an affected candidate
- ▶ provides the assessor with background information and then works with the assessor to identify access arrangements requirements and relevant tests required e.g. reading accuracy, reading comprehension and reading speed, writing accuracy, legibility and/or speed, cognitive processing
- ▶ ensures that the assessor uses current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores and adheres to all sections of [AARA 7.5](#)
- ▶ determines candidate eligibility for arrangements or adjustments that are centre-delegated
- ▶ gathers signed **data protection notices** from candidates where required
- ▶ ensures that Form 8 is completed as per [AARA 7.6](#)
- ▶ liaises with the EO to apply for **approval** through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), where required or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.
- ▶ keeps relevant paperwork and evidence on file for JCQ inspection purposes
- ▶ employs good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010
- ▶ liaises with the EO regarding exam time arrangements for access arrangement candidates
- ▶ ensures staff appointed to facilitate access arrangements for candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular arrangement(s) and keeps a record of the training provided to facilitators for the required period

Picture of need/normal way of working

Teachers/support staff record evidence which reflects support candidate receives in the centre on a day to day basis e.g.

- *baseline data*
- *differentiation in the classroom*
- *normal way of working in the classroom*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing*
- *literacy support lessons*
- *intervention strategies*
- *internal school tests/examinations*
- *mock examinations*

This is used to populate Part 1 of Form 8, which is used by the SENCo and the assessor to identify which access arrangements to test for and to confirm normal way of working.

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 listed in [AARA8](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

Applications are submitted by the EO, once the candidate's file has been collated and the current candidate personal data consent form signed. The SENCo must complete the Data protection confirmation, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved. A record of every application whether it is approved or declined is kept in a master file. A spreadsheet is set up for each year group detailing the access arrangements qualified for and distributed to all staff.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are also recorded on the year group spreadsheet.

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.

Located in staff shared/policies Word Processor policy and a copy kept in the master exams file in the EO's office

Alternative Rooming Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements within the centre will be made by the SENCo **and** the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA5.16)

[[AARA](#) 5.16]

Alternative rooming arrangements (which includes sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates or one-to-one invigilation) is a decision made by the SENCo in liaison with teaching and pastoral staff, tutors and the EO and based on the following criteria:

- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre during internal school tests and mock examinations, as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.
- a temporary illness, injury or other temporary disposition which is clearly evidenced

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)

Signed: _____

Chair of Governors
Mr Mike Dean

Signed: _____

Headteacher
Mrs S Mellors

Date: _____

(ratified by FGB on 24th March 2026)