

BRANNEL SCHOOL

EXCELLENCE | CREATIVITY | COMMUNITY



Access Arrangements Policy

2025-26

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements 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 itself. 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.

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 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.' Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that CELT Schools have 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.

This policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo 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.

The policy is reviewed annually to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

General principles

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a 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.

The SENDCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9.

Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

This document should be considered in line with the exams policy for CELT Schools; however, the Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the head of centre.

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 AA under 7.3. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

A copy will be held on file electronically for inspection purposes.

The names of all assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by Access Arrangements are entered into Access Arrangements Online to confirm their status including any professionals working outside the centre.

Painting a picture of need and evidence of normal way of working

Profile of Learning Difficulties.

Where a student is referred to or recognised by the SENDCo on the Record of Need the SENDCo needs to consider if a form 8 needs to be completed. Where an ECHP or relevant diagnosis is in place the SENDCo must substantiate the documentation with a picture of need and Form 8 or 9 is required. In other cases, part 1 of form 8 should be completed prior to deciding whether there is sufficient evidence to refer for specialist Access Arrangement.

Evidence will be drawn from a range of sources (but not exclusively) showing normal way of working in the classroom such as

- Comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff
- Internal Test and Mock Papers
- Intervention Strategies
- Screening test results
- Assessment Data
- Pupil Premium Data
- Student Support Plans

Any private non-centre appointed testing provided can be considered as evidence but does not replace the centre approved and appointed assessment.

Parents/Carers and the Student will be informed in writing that the decision to test for Access Arrangements has been made. The student is informed where applicable that the applications will be processed online adhering to UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

The Assessor will then be asked to test for the appropriate arrangement being considered as normal way of working to show an impairment which substantially affects their performance using current editions of nationally standardised tests and scores.

Results will be given as standardised scores and part 2 of form 8 will be completed by the Assessor and provided to the centre for processing.

Processing Access Arrangements

Applications will be made to the exam boards only when there is sufficient evidence to justify. The process will start from the end of year 9 and many arrangements will be put in place from this point into year 10. The internal cut-off date for referrals is one calendar month before the start of the exam series including PPEs. This will allow the Exam Officer adequate time to arrange seating of the exam and ensure that normal way of working can be facilitated. Where a cut-off date is set by the exam board, and this is more than one month the board date takes precedent.

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers.

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to AQA's awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Evidence will be kept and processed by the Identification and Access Specialist and available for inspection.

Evidence will consist of items such as

Internal Test of PPE Papers

Teacher evidence of need and normal way of working

Medical evidence from professionals

Professional judgements from the SENDCO

Any other relevant evidence to support specific cases

Records will be kept of all referrals, regardless of approval, referral, or refusal.

Centre Delegated Access Arrangements

Some access arrangements can be "Centre-delegated" which means that an online application to JCQ is not required.

Examples of such arrangements include (but not exclusively):

- Alternative rooming arrangements - sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates
- Bilingual dictionary
- Blank Paper for doodling where a candidate has persistent and significant concentration difficulties (This must be included with the candidate's completed answer booklet)
- Braille transcript
- Brailers
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Communication Professional (for candidates using Sign Language)
- Examination on coloured/enlarged paper
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components

- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Non-electronic headphones
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners
- Prompter
- Read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen)
- Squared paper for visual spatial difficulties
- Supervised rest breaks (From 8/9 must be completed but does not need to be processed online)
- Timer on a candidate's desk – a small countdown clock, a small analogue or digital clock, digital timer, sand timer, stopwatch (The candidate must have an established difficulty and control the device

themselves).

- Word processor. 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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g., computer, laptop, or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise.

The SENDCo must be satisfied that there is a genuine need for the arrangement(s) to be put in place. In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established within the school and thus known to a form tutor,

Senior Leader, the SENDCo and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Evidence will be obtained and held on file to confirm the SENDCo decision along with a SENDCo file note and be in line with the Word Processor Policy.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place because of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3 of JCQ AA).

Alternative Rooming within the centre/Alternative site

A decision where a candidate may be approved for alternative rooming within the centre will be made by the 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

Alternative rooming is determined by the SENDCo, in conjunction with relevant teaching staff and exam team personnel.

The SENDCo will 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.

This would include alternative rooming during PPE examinations, internal school tests and / or GCSEs.

Arrangements to do exams in a smaller exam venue, or with other specific seating arrangement, will be decided based on the following guidelines:

1. Students with an anxiety and/or mental health issue for which they have specialist support or intervention from CAMHS, an NHS Psychiatrist, etc. (not just a letter from a GP or parent) can be considered for specific seating arrangements, including a room rather than the Hall, if required and requested. This should also have been their "normal way of working" over time leading up to the examination period for example working in Learning Centre or student services.
2. Students whose "normal way of working" involves specific seating arrangements across the board in lessons and / or does not attend hall events e.g., assembly, may qualify to have a similar provision for exams (SENDCo / Hoy will hold the paperwork and evidence of this)
3. A student with an established medical condition or formally recognised social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties.
4. Students with other difficulties, for whom we consider invigilation in a smaller room or specific seating arrangements to be an appropriate and reasonable adjustment considering those difficulties and for whom, evidence over time has been collected and is held by SENDCo / HOY, will be seated accordingly.
5. Any student who has an extenuating circumstance that occurs in the lead up to, or during, the exam period that is likely to impact on their usual exam performance, will be considered under the usual "special consideration." Evidence will be collected, and the exam board advised if JCQ criteria is met. Seating arrangements may also be varied at the last minute on these occasions and in consultation with the student.

Where a candidate becomes extremely anxious on the day of an examination, then he / she should indeed be seated more appropriately within the **main** examination venue. The alternative 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 venue for some or all the remaining exams then they are able to do so.

Where all options to accommodate the candidate have been exhausted Alternative Site Arrangements will be considered in line with the Access Arrangements Regulations and with agreement with the SENCO and Senior Leadership.

Informing Access Arrangements Outcomes

Parents and students will be informed of their Access Arrangements result in writing.

Student Support Plans and Curate and Narrate will be updated to include the arrangements which are the normal way of working in class and available to teaching staff.

Approved Access Arrangements will also be held on student information spreadsheet available to access for relevant staff including the Exams Officer for rooming and exam arrangements.