

# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
S. Leach	
Date of next review	Sept 2022

## Key staff involved in the policy

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name(s)</b>
SENCo	<b>Helen MacLeod</b>
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Sarah Leach</b>
Head of centre	<b>Ann Donaghy</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Philippa Wroe</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Natalie Hinchcliffe</b>

## Contents

Key staff involved in the policy.....	2
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	4
Access arrangements.....	4
Reasonable adjustments.....	4
Purpose of the policy.....	4
General principles.....	5
Equalities Policy (Exams).....	5
The assessment process.....	5
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	5
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties.....	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor.....	6
Painting a ‘holistic picture of need’, confirming normal way of working.....	6
Processing access arrangements and adjustments.....	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	6
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams).....	7
Separate Invigilation 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 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 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 Definitions](#))

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA 1.8](#)). The definitions and procedures in [AA](#) 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 Noel-Baker 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](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the 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 **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([AA 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 principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (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.

For Equalities Policy (Exams) see U:\Exams\Exam Policies\Exam Policies 21-22

**The head of centre/senior leadership team 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, 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 not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

<sup>†</sup>or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR](#) 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](#), section 7.3.

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

- BEd (hons) QTS Dip SpLD (dyslexia) AMBDA SpLD APC
- Specialist Literacy Difficulties Teacher and Independent Educational Consultant
- Derby Dyslexia Assessment and Teaching Service

### Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

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](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The head of centre ensures that the Assessor has the relevant qualifications (AMBDA Level) and practising certificate. Copies of these are kept on securely file.

## Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence of the Assessor's qualifications, who is an external assessor that has established a working relationship with the centre, are held securely and up to date by the Access Arrangement Coordinator.

Following guidelines in AA 7.3 and 7.4.

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

Access Arrangement needs are identified by teachers, mentors and learning support staff. They will use the referral system to share concerns. The coordinator then liaises with subject staff to establish a picture of need. Access arrangements are put in place and this becomes the normal way of working for the student. Evidence is collected and the part 1 of the Form 8 is then completed prior to an assessment.

Follow guidelines in AA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

## Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

The AA coordinator then liaises with subject staff to establish a picture of need. Access arrangements are put in place and this becomes the normal way of working for the student. Evidence is collected and the section A of the Form 8 is then completed prior to an assessment. The assessor is provided with all relevant information regarding each student prior to assessment. All section A's are completed in line with the regulations to establish a picture of need. For any private candidates, their previous centre will be contacted to confirm their normal way of working.

Follow guideline in AA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

## 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, 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.

Once AAO applications are submitted they are printed and kept in the student's individual file these files are kept in a locked metal cupboard with a sole key holder. All Data Protection Notices are signed prior to assessment and kept along with student records.

Following guidelines in [AA 8](#) (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

### Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Students that have issues regarding mental health and medical and have EHCP's will have a centre file note and appropriate accompanying evidence for their Access Arrangement.

### 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.

See U:\Exams\Exam Policies\Exam Policies 21-22

#### 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 5.16](#))

Students that have issues regarding mental health and/or medical needs and have EHCP's will have a centre file note and appropriate accompanying evidence. Non EHCP students will have appropriate medical evidence or it will represent their normal way of working within the centre. This will allow them to have separate invigilation with in the centre.