



**ST ANDREW
THE APOSTLE**

Exam Access Arrangements

Essential Information for Parents/Carers

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Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)

The JCQ represents the seven largest national awarding bodies in UK offering GCSEs, A Levels and vocational qualifications. Applications for exam access arrangements have to be agreed by the JCQ and their regulations are updated annually in the autumn.

Exam Access Arrangements

- Access arrangements are for candidates based on:
- evidence of need and
- normal way of working and
- must reflect the normal practice/support the candidate has had in the centre

Access Arrangements allow access to examinations without changing the demands of the assessment and are available to candidates with physical difficulties, sensory difficulties, learning difficulties and social, mental and emotional needs. They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- Access the assessment
- Show what they can do

The intention of an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of the candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment.

Reasonable Adjustments

Awarding bodies have a duty under Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disability. The process often involves an assessment by a specialist assessor which will provide the Centre with evidence which they can use to decide on the most appropriate EAA.

JCQ Definitions

JCQ access arrangements guidance uses the definition of disability as per the Equality Act 2010; this applies to mental or physical impairment.

A disability needs to be:

- Substantial
- Long term; existed for 12 months +
- Having an adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities

Definition of Special Educational Needs as per the SEND code of practice:

- Candidate who needs special educational provision made for them

Application Requirements

An application must be accompanied by the following teacher evidence:

- Documentary evidence showing the nature and extent of difficulty
- Normal way of working; in class/in support lessons/in mock exams
- Involvement of teaching staff including feedback on regular working practice in classwork and tests/exams, and raising concerns about candidates

Arrangements not requiring an application

There are arrangements for which an application is NOT necessary; the centre can agree the following arrangements, as long as they are already a normal way of working in the classroom and in tests/exams and approved in advance with SENDCo:

- **Supervised rest breaks;** the exam is paused and restarted with no access to the exam paper during the break. This should be considered before an application for extra time. There is an invigilator present at all times. Pupils with behaviour needs, attention/concentration difficulties or chronic fatigue needs may find this helpful.
- **Word processor** (spell checker disabled); this can help candidates who have handwriting issues.
- **Read aloud;** this can help candidates who struggle to understand what they have read but do not qualify for a reader. This should already be a normal way of working.
- **Prompter;** this can help candidates who are easily distracted, as prompters keep candidates focussed.
- **Live speaker for pre-recorded exam components;** this is used for candidates who are unable to follow speech at normal speed and lip reading is necessary. This is used mainly in modern foreign languages listening exams and teachers read aloud the contents of the tape.
- **Amplification equipment;** this can help candidates with hearing impairments.
- **Brillers/low vision aid/magnifier;** this can help candidates with visual impairments.
- **Bilingual dictionaries;** used for candidates whose first language is not English and must be a normal way of working in class.
- **Coloured overlays;** these are transparent plastic overlays in a colour that lessens visual stress symptoms.
- **Separate invigilation** within the centre.
- **Reader Pen** – electronic device reads text into headphones

Arrangements requiring an Application:

Before an application is submitted, the candidate must sign an agreement for their data to be shared with the JCQ online system.

All of the following arrangements must already be the normal way of working for each candidate.

- Extra time; the candidate must have two below average scores in different areas for: speed of reading, reading comprehension, writing speed or have below average processing measure.
- Human Scribe; used in exceptional circumstances:

- The scribe must state: “I am here to write for you in your examination. I must write exactly what you say. I can’t give any help with the answers...”
- This is only allowed in modern foreign languages if every word is spelt out. An approved scribe allows the Centre to grant 25% extra time, but only if the need is evidenced.

- Word processor with spell checker; careful consideration is needed by the candidate as full marks cannot be gained for spelling and grammar with this arrangement. Discussions with individual subject teachers are needed to decide whether more marks could be gained without the use of a word processor. The outcome of these discussions could vary between subjects.

Reader; human; a responsible adult reads the instructions of the paper and the questions to the candidate:

“I am here to read for you in your examination, you must make clear what you want to be read.”

With approved reader and/or scribe, the Centre can award 25% extra time without processing an application for it, but this is not automatic, the need must be evidenced. Where a candidate may only need occasional phrases or words read, the reader can be shared with up to 4 candidates. Candidates raise their hand to request help.

Oral language modifier; this is used where no other arrangement would help – e.g. a deaf candidate would use BSL.

- Practical assistant; this is used where there are physical or visual needs e.g. help given to use equipment.
- Modified papers; specialist modified papers such as Braille require applications by very strict deadlines

For standard modifications such as A4 enlarged to A3, or coloured paper, the Centre is allowed to do these modifications an hour before the start of an exam, but a prior application must have been made to JCQ.

EAA Process

Years 7 and 8

SENDco gathers information of students' needs, from teachers' referrals. Teachers' trial EAA for pupils with specific identified needs.

Year 9 and 10

This is the important year for exam access arrangement assessments. The JCQ make it very clear that assessment scores used by the Centre should be from this year and no earlier. Letters are sent to parents requesting permission to assess candidates. Assessments are usually carried out over several lessons both on an individual and group basis. The scores will be carried right the way through to Year 13 examinations.

Our objective:

By end of Year 10, all identified pupils with EAA will have:

- the reason for assessment and the process explained to pupil
- a specialist assessment
- confirmation of exam access arrangements from JCQ

If specialist assessor's results substantiate need and normal way of working, then all information relating to a candidate will be collated to complete a Form 8. A Form 8 is the JCQ exam access record keeping form. The application process is done online and applications will be processed. Exam Access arrangements are valid for 26 months from processing date.

A student with an EHCP does not require a form 8.

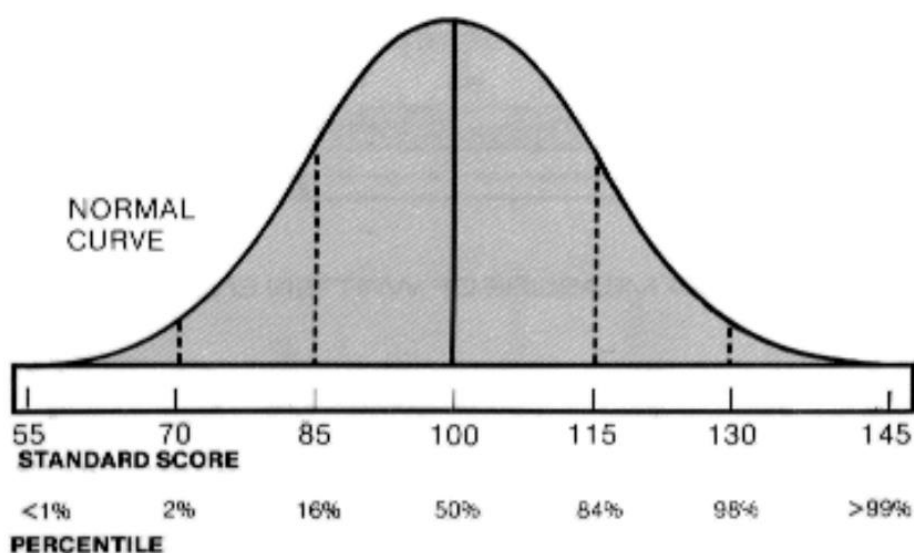
Assessments Candidates are assessed on their:

- Reading accuracy
- Spelling accuracy
- Speed of reading/writing/processing
- Processing ability e.g. working memory

Up to date tests are used.

Standard scores

Standard scores



Most educational and psychological test results are reported in standard scores. Standard scores (SS) enable us to make comparisons with the scores of others, both of the same age and different ages. They allow us to identify if the score is within the average range. A standard score in the range 85- 115 is seen as being in the average range; 68% of students fall in this range. In most cases, for an application for an access arrangement, two scores must be used, one that is below 85 and one below 90.

Feedback to Pupil

Students will be invited to workshops to explain and practicing using their extra time.

Feedback to Parent/Carer

A letter will be sent to parents/carers detailing the outcome of the assessment regarding Exam Access Arrangements.

It should be noted that in some cases an EAA will be unnecessary.

Medical Grounds

All applications on medical grounds are made by the Examinations Officer.

A Level

Students do not need to be formally re-assessed, however, a reapplication must be made to JCQ.

The Centre must establish:

- Continuing need
- Evidence

A 'brief summary note' detailing the above must be added to the Year 9 information.

Controlled assessments and extra time

Students begin their controlled assessment with their peers in the class context. If their teacher advises the use of their extra time access arrangement, this is often accommodated in Learning Support during the next lesson of this subject.

What are access arrangements?

- Access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as special educational needs and disabilities to access an exam.
- They allow students to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the exam.

How will the process start?

- Parents and carers should let the SENCo know as soon as possible if their child has additional needs. Good and open communication is important.
- Students in Further Education should record their additional needs on the college's enrolment form.
- The SENCo will work with teachers and the student to identify possible arrangements.
- Various access arrangements are available. For example, support for students who have difficulties with reading, writing, speed of working and concentration.
- Not all students with additional needs will require access arrangements. It depends on whether their difficulty affects their access to exams. Additional needs alone do not entitle a student to access arrangements.

Who will make the assessment?

- If a student has learning difficulties, the school or college's appointed assessor must conduct the assessment to determine the need for access arrangements such as 25% extra time.
- If an external assessor diagnoses a learning difficulty (for example, dyslexia, dyscalculia), the assessment can only be used as evidence for access arrangements if the assessor has liaised with the school or college in advance and received the necessary access arrangements paperwork.
- Specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis. They are not responsible for decisions about access arrangements.
- The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams.
- Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

What else needs to be done?

- The school or college will have to apply for some arrangements.
- If a student has complex needs, a school or college can discuss their needs with the exam board.

Finally

Schools and colleges must follow the rules. They are inspected and if they are found to be breaking the rules, this will be malpractice.

If you have any questions about access arrangements, please speak to the school / college / SENCo.