



## Access Arrangements

**Reviewed:** September 2023

**Next review date:** September 2024

This document outlines the school's guidance on Exam Access Arrangements. These are the arrangements put in place to ensure that all students are given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in examinations, without being disadvantaged by any learning, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience.

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.

### Examples of Access Arrangements:

Access Arrangements	Description
Reader	A trained adult reads the question and any relevant text for the student (but not where the skill of reading is being assessed e.g. the reading section of the English papers)
Scribe	A trained adult writes for the student. The student dictates their answers. The scribe writes exactly as the student dictates. In MFL, the student must dictate spellings letter by letter in the relevant language.
Prompter	A trained adult can prompt the student with a few permitted phrases to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• refocus</li><li>• indicate how much time is left</li></ul>
Read Aloud or use of an Exam Reading Pen	When a student is reading difficult text he/she may work more effectively if he/she can hear him/herself read
Smaller Room within the centre	The student takes the examination in a smaller room from the main exam room depending on numbers
Modified Papers	Specially prepared papers, e.g. enlarged to a specific font size
Rest Breaks	Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time taken is added to the finish time. Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks. Rest breaks cannot be taken in the first or last 20 minutes of an exam.
Extra Time	Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% Extra time between 26 and 50% may be granted in extraordinary circumstances. In very exceptional circumstances, a student may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.

Live Speaker	A student with a hearing impairment may need a live speaker for pre-recorded examination components, e.g. MFL listening examinations The live speaker will speak or read aloud the contents of the CD or tape in a Listening examination
Language Modifier	An adult who has successfully completed accredited training may clarify the carrier language used in the examination paper when requested to do so by a student The Language Modifier must not explain technical or subject specific terms
Bilingual translation dictionaries (with up to a maximum of 10% extra time in some cases)	For students who have English, Irish or Welsh as an additional language The bilingual dictionary must be held in the centre to ensure no unauthorised information e.g. notes/revision is enclosed or written inside
Alternative Site	The student will be sitting his/her examination(s) at a residential address or at a hospital which is a non-registered centre due to, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a medical condition which prevents the student from taking examinations in the centre; or</li> <li>• Social, Mental and Emotional Needs Practical</li> </ul>
Practical Assistant	Help with practical tasks such as turning the pages in music or holding a ruler in maths. A Practical Assistant is not a Reader or a Scribe. The same person may act as a practical assistant, a reader and/or a scribe if permission has been given for these arrangements
Laptop/Word Processor	Access to a laptop for an exam so the student could word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks to be disabled unless they qualify for a Scribe

## Timeline for Awarding Access Arrangements

### Years 7-11

1. Year 6 - A student's primary school or parent informs the SENDCo of any history of need or Access Arrangements implemented in KS2 examinations.
2. KS3 – Teachers monitor students closely and gather any evidence of need for Access Arrangements, passing it to the SENDCo. Access Arrangements trialled in tests/exams.
3. Year 9 summer term – Part 1 of Form 8 is completed (for students with learning difficulties) based on evidence supplied by teachers. A qualified Access Arrangements Assessor will then assess the student using standardised tests. The Examinations Officer applies online for indicated Access Arrangements and informs parents.
4. Evidence for the Form 9 (for students with a substantial impairment such as a physical disability, sensory impairment, medical condition, and/or an EHCP) is gathered.
5. KS4 – Access Arrangements in place and being used as normal way of working for the student.
6. January of Year 11 – Final deadline for teachers to submit evidence and requests for Access Arrangements. Mock examinations provide last opportunity to trial Access Arrangements.

7. Summer of Year 11 – Examinations completed with Access Arrangements in place.

### **Years 12-13**

1. Students to declare any Access Arrangements they had at KS4 when they apply to sixth form or within the first half term.

2. For new students, the Assessments Officer will request evidence from either the student, parent or feeder school for evidence of Access Arrangements at KS4.

3. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENDCo.

4. In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Assessments Officer carries out any testing necessary during the autumn and spring terms and the SENDCo or the Examinations Officer applies/reapplies for Access Arrangements. Forms to be used are either Form 8 (first application), Form 8RF (reapplication when candidate moves from GCSE to GCE).

5. Trial Access Arrangements are put in place for the mock examinations of Year 12. Teachers give feedback from the mocks to the SENDCo (did students use them? Were they effective?). The mock examinations also provide a final chance to recognise any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.

6. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENDCo and Assessments Officer by July of Year 12. Occasionally students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to GCE. However, Year 12 exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

### **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 school. Likewise, private assessments or reports from Educational Psychologists will only be accepted as evidence for an access arrangement if supported by school evidence, which must be sent to the assessor 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 school and by our Assessments Officer. In this case, a written rationale for rejecting the report will be held on file and made available. Students with significant SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) needs can only be offered Rest breaks as a reasonable adjustment, providing evidence is provided.

### **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 school 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 SENDCo and Assessments Officer 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 are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually during the summer examination season. The school is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the school 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