



EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS Unity Schools Partnership

SENDCOs and exam officers, and heads agreed these arrangements	January 2019
To be reviewed	January 2021



Policy for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA), Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Any reference to 'JCQ' or 'Joint Council for Qualifications' within this document should be read as JCQCIC or the Joint Council for QualificationsCIC. (2018 Regulations)

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'. (JCQ 2018)

Academies within Unity Schools Partnership, as approved examination centres, must meet JCQ requirements in both the conducting of examinations and the implementation of the access arrangements process. Each academy's exams officer co-ordinates entries, results, accommodation and invigilation. All invigilators and teaching assistants who provide support for students requiring EAA must receive training. The exams officer of each academy takes responsibility for ordering modified papers and non-interactive electronic papers. Exam Access Arrangements are put into place to compensate for disadvantage – they are not to confer an advantage.

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. (JCQ Regulations 1.4 2018)

Students can only be awarded exam access arrangements if there is evidence of:

- a documented history of need and support
- a medical diagnosis/letter confirming need by a medical consultant (not a GP)
- an EHCP
- assessments carried out by the school's specialist assessor that meet JCQ's criteria

In order to comply with the above, the academy's SENDCO must work with teaching staff, support staff and the exams officer to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations. Where appropriate, the SENDCO will also need to work with specialist advisory teachers and medical professionals.

'Failure to comply with the regulations...have the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result(s).' JCQ Regulations 2018

Access arrangements available

- Supervised rest breaks
- 25% extra time
- Extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time)
- Extra time of over 50%
- Computer reader/reader
- Read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen
- Scribe/Speech recognition technology
- Word processor
- Braille transcript

- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Communication Professional (for candidates using Sign Language)
- Practical assistant
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations
- Bilingual translation dictionaries with 10% extra time

Documenting a history of need

As the needs and circumstances of each learner are different, centres must consider any request for a reasonable adjustment on a case by case basis. Evidence of need will be required. (JCQ Regulations 2018)

During KS3, teaching and support staff will become aware of the students who need support to access and record their learning. During mock/preparation examinations, students should therefore have access to a reader when this reflects their normal way of working. In addition, classroom-based assessments and mock/preparation examinations will provide staff with information about how students perform in tests compared to classwork. Students who are unable to complete exam papers during timed assessments should be given additional time after the exam and asked to change pens and continue in a different colour. Names of those who used readers and who required extra time should be recorded. This evidence will provide an additional history of need which can be used to support an application for formal Exam Access Arrangements for public exams in KS4.

Access arrangements 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. (JCQ 4.2.4)

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. (JCQ 4.2.5)

Identifying students who may need extra time

It is not always the students with known SEND who require extra time. Slower processing does not necessarily indicate a learning difficulty, and students may not be aware themselves. Students who have 'overcome' early literacy difficulties may be vulnerable to stress and overload due to the increased expectations of reading and writing at KS4/5. Staff need to be mindful of students who:

- may have high targets but are not meeting them.
- don't get started on tasks straight away.
- are still reading sections of text after the rest of the class have finished.
- may go off on a tangent after being given verbal instructions.
- don't finish in timed tasks or quality towards the end of the paper deteriorates.
- may produce very little written work, despite demonstrating good understanding in discussion.

Timed or extended tasks are better at showing slower processing than usual classwork or group work

EAA preparation

It is important that students are taught how to use their EAA entitlements. If students qualify for a reader, they must become familiar with any text/voice software or reading pens when completing class work both to aid independence and to enable them to use this for GCSE reading papers where human readers cannot be used. Students requiring a scribe and/or practical assistant must have access to someone scribing longer pieces of writing/supporting practical tasks in lessons so they become familiar with how to use this access arrangement effectively. A practical assistant must only follow a student's instructions – practise is needed to gain confidence in giving appropriate explanations. Students using voice recognition software must practise as the software needs to accommodate to the student's voice.

Students need to be taught how to use extra time profitably. Each subject should include this within their exam preparation support practices.

The process

It is important for teachers to flag up concerns as early as possible to the SENDCO through the academy's referral system - sending observations and written evidence from classwork and tests.

The information from teaching and support staff working with students, will provide the centre's SENDCO/specialist assessor with information to enable a Form 8 for the exam board to be completed and to determine the appropriate assessments to be carried out.

Assessments for EAA must be JCQ approved. Online applications for EAA will only be made by the centre and approved by JCQ if standardised scores are below the accepted threshold. (a standard score on at least one assessment of 84 or below). A data sheet for each student being assessed must be signed by them in order to process an application.

The SENDCO must inform staff who refer students and the Exams Officer of the results of assessments, outlining the appropriate EAA. The SENDCO and the Exams Officer will then complete the online applications to JCQ. Letters should go home to parents informing them of the arrangements which have been made.

A file providing evidence of need must be made available for inspection.

The application process

STEP 1

Gather **evidence*** of a **history of need** and **normal way of working**. Without these, an application cannot be made.



STEP 2

Present the evidence to the SENDCO who will then complete a **formal assessment**. If the assessment results meet the required threshold (a SS of 84 or below.) an application can be made. Student completes a data sheet giving permission for assessment results to be shared.



STEP 3

Online application made to exam boards. Teachers, students and parents informed of successful applications.

***Evidence**

1. Fully completed and detailed '**Normal Way of Working**' form from the teacher of each subject to which the concession applies.
2. Further pieces of evidence, such as an **exam card** kept by Exams Officer showing student has used extra time/reader in school exams; **a piece of work** or **prep exam script** demonstrating how extra time has been used (work completed in extra time done in different colour pen); **photocopies of work** exemplifying the pupil's difficulties; **notes** from teachers or support staff explaining the nature of the issue and how this has been overcome; **EHCP** documentation; **Health professionals'** reports (not GP).

Unless a clear picture of need is presented and backed up with several pieces of evidence, plus qualifying assessment scores, the JCQ_{cic} will not award a concession.

If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is not his/her normal way of working. The SENDCO may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage. (The SENDCO would have monitored the use of the arrangement in internal school tests and mock examinations.) (JCQ 4.2.8)

The full JCQ Regulations can be found online at:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>