

Ormiston Latimer Academy

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2022-2023

Approved by the Principal: October 2022

Date of next review: October 2023

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Key staff involved in the policy

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|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| SENDCO | Wendy Fagan |
| Deputy SENDCO | Rebecca Vassallo |
| Head of Centre | Everol Halliburton |
| Curriculum Learning Deputy | Nasrin Islam |
| Assessor | Rebecca Vassallo |
| Access arrangement facilitators | |

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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'. (1AA, 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'. (1AA, 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 Ormiston Latimer 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.

(JCQ's 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 ALS lead/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 ALS lead/SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she must create an efolder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (1AA, 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

The Equality and Diversity policy can be found on the Ormiston Latimer Academy website under policies.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], 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...

[†]for 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)

BA Hons degree
Post Graduate Certificate in Education.
Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination
Post Graduate Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements
Post Graduate Certificate in Competence of Educational Testing

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)

Bear in mind all relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AA including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR, section 5.4)

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA, section 7.3)

Make full reference to AA, section 7.3 (Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Signpost to the location of the evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified held by the ALS lead/SENCo.

Make full reference to AA, section 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

The SENCO/ assessor works with teaching, support-staff, parents and carers to identify when assessment is necessary. The supporting evidence is reviewed- this evidence will consist of the candidate's normal way of working and any relevant background information. The assessor uses current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate. The results of the assessment are recorded within part 2 of the form 8. The assessor must evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. The centre has evidence of the assessor's level 7 qualifications before assessment of the candidate has occurred.

Make full reference to AA sections 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.

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR, section 5.4)

Note

...SENCOs and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AA, section 7.3)

Also detail any process (where relevant) for a private candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student (refer to the requirement in GR, section 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

At OLA we identify the needs of pupils through assessment, teacher and parent/carer feedback. Staff have an awareness of the respective arrangements for the identified pupils. These arrangements are recorded on the pupil's one-page profiles and on their SIMS record. Teachers and support staff are encouraged to give regular feedback on the effectiveness of the arrangements confirming that these are the usual way of working.

Where relevant include any additional information relating to private candidates.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCO and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

All candidates **must** be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor **must** discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA, section 7.5)

Make full reference to AA, section 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.

Applications are made using the JCQ Centre Admin Portal by the exams assessor. All evidence: signed data protection consent forms, SENCO file notes, Form 8s, confirmation of exams access arrangements are kept in online folders. Cases that do not gain approval, awarding body referrals are similarly kept in online folders

Note the change to the (AAO) Candidate Personal data consent form and the requirement for completion of the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA, section 8.6)

Make full reference to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Where a pupil is eligible for a centre delegated arrangement, the SENCO will have evidenced that the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and the arrangement/adjustment is their

normal way of working. The SENCO will produce a confirmatory short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the need for the arrangement.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Laptop Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a laptop 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 laptop must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

The Laptop Policy (Exams) can be found on the Ormiston Latimer Academy website under exams information. A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a laptop policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate laptops for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AA, section 5.8)

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, section 5.16)

Separate invigilation within the centre may include examination outside of the main examination hall/room e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates or one-to one invigilation.

In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Separate invigilation must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)