



Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Ribblesdale School

2024-2025

Contents

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?	3
Access arrangements.....	3
Reasonable adjustments.....	3
Purpose of the policy.....	3
General principles	3
Equalities Policy (Exams)	4
The assessment process.....	4
Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)	4
Appointment of assessors	4
Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor	5
Picture of need/normal way of working	5
Processing access arrangements and adjustments	5
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval	5
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	6
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments.....	6
Word Processor.....	6
Alternative Rooming Arrangements.....	6

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'. (AARA¹, 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA¹, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA 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 Ribblesdale School 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**, 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

Individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate are maintained and held by SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments or candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 them 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 SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.

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 their 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.

This 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 AARA 7.3.

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

- Sara Graham
- SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by Patoss

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Ribblesdale School, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. 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/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 document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. (GR 5.4)

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. (AARA 7.4)

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Ribblesdale School:

- evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- this process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)

- a photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AARA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

A current copy of the assessor's Assessment Practising Certificate (APC) issued by Patoss is held by the SENDCo/Assistant SENDCo with the access arrangement files and with the Exams Officer. This will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector upon request.

In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the name of these individuals within *Access arrangements online (AAO)*. (AARA 7.4)

The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AARA must be entered into AAO to confirm their status. (AARA 7.4)

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

Ribblesdale School confirms:

- guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD – Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- the assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements (AARA 7.3)
- relevant staff 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 (AARA 7.3)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Ribblesdale School confirms:

- before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5)

The process is informed by the guidelines in AARA 7.5 and 7.6.

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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers)).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8 Summary)

Applications are submitted by the Assistant SENDCo and the Exams Officer with due regard for chapter 8 or AARA. Completed applications are printed and stored in the pupil's file in the SEND department along with appropriate evidence of need (where required).

Applications which are not approved will be discussed with the relevant awarding body and a written record of such discussions will be kept. (AARA 8.4)

The SENDCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes:

- a signed candidate personal data consent form;
- a completed *Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENDCo* form;
- a copy of the candidate's approved application;
- appropriate evidence of need (where required);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

For pupils requiring modified papers:

Orders must be made for each examination series.

Modified papers must be ordered by component code for each subject.

The SENDCo must work with teaching staff to identify the most appropriate published format of modified papers so the candidate(s) can access their examinations (AARA 6.8)

Orders for modified papers for the June 2025 exam series must be submitted by 31st January 2025 as awarding bodies cannot guarantee delivery of late orders.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

A Form 9 is completed for pupils requiring supervised rest breaks and held on file.

For all other centre-delegated arrangements the process is informed by Chapter 5 of AARA with the arrangements then recorded on Synergy and evidence collected and held on file where required.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor

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.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENDCo (or equivalent role).

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 (AARA 5.16)

Candidates with access arrangements in place (e.g. extra time) will usually be seated in the Dance Studio.

Those candidates requiring a scribe or live reader (for more than the occasional word or phrase) will be seated in their own separate rooms. Any variation to these arrangements will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)