



The
Thomas Hardy School

Access arrangements policy

2018/19

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name
SENCo	Mel Orchard
SENCOs line manager	Kaye Chittenden
Head of Centre	Mike Foley
Assessors	Mel Orchard & Rachel Munro
Access arrangements facilitators	Various

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What are 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 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’.”

[AA Definitions, page 3]

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 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 a number of 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’.

[AA Definitions, page 3]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Thomas Hardy 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 ‘General regulations for approved centres’ Chapter 5.5]
This document is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the Exams Officer and the SENCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

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](#).

Disability policy (exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Disability 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 can be viewed on The Thomas Hardy School website under Curriculum > Policies.

“The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates; or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect.”

*“A **written** disability policy setting out how the centre seeks to comply with the Equality Act 2010† and fully supporting disabled candidates **must** be available for inspection purposes...”* [\[GR 5\]](#)

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 in JCQ regulations as follows:

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.

“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 per chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments”

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 in accordance with AA 7.3

Evidence of the assessor’s qualifications

- *an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8; and/or*
- *an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments; and/or*
- *a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website, who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.*

and

An access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which must include training in all of the following:

- *the theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals;*
- *the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested;*
- *the objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered;*
- *the appropriate selection and objective use of tests of cognitive skills, **see paragraph 7.5.12, page 86;***
- *the ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional...*

[AA 7.3]

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

Evidence of the assessors’ qualification(s) is held on file in the Exams Office. An annual online refresher course is undertaken by all assessors.

*Where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor **as appointed by the head of centre...***

[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.” and/or the Exams Officer.

[AA 7.3]

Reporting the appointment of the assessor

Evidence of the assessors' qualification(s) is held on file in the Exams Office

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

The following process is for those students who do not have an EHCP. To ensure that the assessment process is administered correctly we firstly collect GL literacy data from the middle schools (Dorchester Middle, St Osmunds and St Mary's). We then conduct a whole school spelling and free writing screening. We will then consider assessments for students who appear to have a need.

Students can self-refer or teachers, Teaching Assistants and/or parents can ask for an assessment where a student is having significant and persistent difficulties in lessons and examinations. Evidence of the candidate's normal way of working is gathered from their teachers and background information is obtained from the SEN Department. The SENCO or in-house assessor will then complete section A of the Form 8 Following consultation with the SEN Manager the arrangement is applied for online. (In accordance with section AA7.5) [\[GR 5.5\]](#)

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e a picture of need has been painted as per Section A of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. AA 7.5.2

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.

The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo.

Make full reference to AA 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 requirement.

Processing access arrangements

Access arrangements online

Access arrangements online is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

“For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Further information on *Access arrangements online* is available from:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online>”

[AA 8.1]

Requests for assessments may be given direct to the assessor, or the SENCo or via the SEN Manager. The SEN Manager processes the applications via the *Access arrangements website*. They are completed by the assessor, in accordance with JCQ deadlines. The Form 8, supporting evidence, signed data protection form and JCQ approval are kept on file securely in the SEN managers office. When applications are successful, the SEN manager sends a letter home confirming details of the arrangements. When applications are unsuccessful, the SEN manager sends a letter home accordingly. When an application requires referral to the awarding bodies, the SEN manager will process this, giving more supporting information from their SEN file.

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 data protection notice for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Make full reference to AA8 Processing applications for access arrangements and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

For arrangements which do not require JCQ approval, such as rest breaks; the SEN manager will record a file note signed by the SENCo or in-house assessor and keep this on file with the appropriate evidence. Small rooms for candidates with no additional need will only be granted where the candidate has a significant need which can be substantiated by a medical letter; senior to a GP or the candidate is known to the senior leadership team for their needs.

Sixth form students

Students in the sixth form may be invited for an assessment appointment at a specific time and date. If they fail to attend this appointment, it is then their responsibility to make another appointment via the EforE office.

JCQ deadlines are absolute. We work within these and cannot assess students for exam arrangements when these have passed. The only exception to this will be

students who require a temporary arrangement e.g for a broken arm.

Word processor policy

There is a separate policy for the use of word processors at the Centre