



The  
Thomas Hardy School

# Access arrangements policy

2017/18

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

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### 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 Killoch
Access arrangements facilitators	Various

## What are access arrangements?

*“Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with 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 disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.*

*A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.*

*How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.*

*There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.”* [[AA](#) Definitions, page 3]

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Thomas Hardy School fulfils *“its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.”*

[JCQ ‘General regulations for approved centres’ Chapter 5.5]

This document is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements 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 policy 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.

*“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:

- 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]

## How the assessment process is administered

To ensure that the assessment process is administered correctly we firstly collect GL literacy data from the middle schools (Dorchester Middle, St Osmonds 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.

[GR 5.5]

## Recording evidence of need

The documentation used for recording evidence is the JCQ form 8 to record assessment details and supporting information. This is completed by the assessor. This might include the use of centre-devised forms, awarding body forms, JCQ [forms](#) used to record assessment and application information and an indication of who has to complete these etc.

## Gathering evidence of normal way of working

Centre-devised supporting evidence form for teachers/TAs to complete detailing the way the candidate works and is supported in lessons.

*This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Section A of Form 8.*

*SENCoS and assessors must refer to section 7.6.1, page 87, for information on how to confirm 'normal way of working'.*

*†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3, page 89)."* [AA 4.2.5]

## Processing applications for 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.

## 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 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; 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.