



Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Date reviewed	September 2023
Frequency	Annually
Next review date	October 2024
Reviewed by	Academic Standards, SEN and Educational Trips Committee

Ratified:

Signed:.....

Chair of Governors

Dated: 05/10.2023

Signed:.....

Principal

Dated: 05.10.2023

Contents

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process	2
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	3
Access arrangements	3
Reasonable adjustments	3
Purpose of the policy	3
General principles	4
Equalities Policy (Exams).....	4
The assessment process.....	4
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	4
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties	4
Checking and reporting the qualification(s) of the assessor(s).....	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	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval	6
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements.....	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams)	7
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy	8

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Sailesh Roopnarain
SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Will Atkinson
Head of centre	Francis Galbraith
Assessor(s)	Marisa Sedgewick
Exams officer	Jodi Henderson

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 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’.”

[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 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’.”

[¹AA, Definitions]

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Goldington 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, 5.4] This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

This policy is maintained and held by 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](#).

¹This 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, **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.

Goldington Academy's Equalities Policy (Exams) is available on the school website.

The access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail, directly quoting from the above-mentioned handbooks and policies to indicate where Goldington Academy is adhering correctly to procedures.

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](#) 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Goldington Academy have secured the services of Marisa Sedgwick SpLD Assessment Award Practicing Certificate (PATOSS) 500001490-IF5753 Post Graduate Diploma in Adult Dyslexia, Diagnosis and Support, MA, BA, PGCE

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 and reporting the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The SENCo is responsible for ensuring that the qualifications of assessors meet JCQ requirements. The SENCo will take copies of all relevant qualifications assigned to the

assessor at the time of interview for their position or alternatively when they have passed the relevant course and gained certification. The checking of the assessor's qualification(s) must take place before any assessment of candidates take place. Copies of certificates are held by the SENCo and the Exams Officer. After the appointment of the external assessor, their details are entered onto the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP)

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

Potential candidates for access arrangements (AA) may be identified by any member of teaching/support staff. A recommendation for assessment, including evidence and/or observations to support the request, should be submitted in writing/email to the SENCo. Evidence of 'normal way of working' (NWOW) must be submitted e.g. internal assessment or classroom assessments annotated, dated and signed by the teacher indicating what AA have been used previously.

Some students may have received, prior to this a diagnostic assessment for Specific Learning Difficulties (identifying Dyslexia). If this identification has been made the diagnostic test for reading and writing will need to be repeated in Year 9.

The SENCo is responsible for authorising an assessment, obtaining necessary permissions and instructing assessors. Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs, the SENCo will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's NWOW and completing Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

The specialist assessor will conduct the appropriate assessments to identify students requiring AA. The specialist assessor will pass the results of the testing to the SENCo and will recommend AA as appropriate.

Care is taken not to provide support which gives them either an advantage or a disadvantage for the upcoming exams, but instead fair support is provided based on their need and abilities.

The SENCo will then process these through AA online.

Following meetings with teachers and TAs pupils are given appropriate support based on their need for the examinations.

Picture of need / normal way of 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 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)

Background information to support 'normal way of working' as necessary should be included in the candidate's access arrangements file and be used to complete Form 8.

- Classroom support records
- Internal Exams records
- Teacher statements

Subject teachers and LSAs communicate on a regular basis to discuss individual pupils, their needs and support required to allow them to learn in lessons. Knowledge of the best way to support pupils in lessons to allow them to develop is discussed between the SENCo and classroom LSAs.

Goldington Academy follows the advice given by JCQ and maintains a record of the use of AA, particularly in the case of the use of word processors. If an AA is never used, then it is not a candidate's normal way of working and the arrangement should not be awarded for examinations. Mock examinations allow a judgement to be made on support offered and slight alterations can be made to pupil's access arrangements if necessary.

Part 1 of Form 8 is a pen portrait of the candidate's needs. It allows the SENCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working bringing together:

- if known, arrangements made for Key Stage 2 tests
- comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff (i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers)
- intervention strategies (e.g. individual education/learning plans) in place for the candidate
- pupil premium indicators
- screening test results
- use of pupil baseline and tracking data
- information about any differentiation in the classroom
- normal way of working in the classroom (where appropriate)
- arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations

SENCo's and assessors must refer to chapter 7 section 7.6.1, 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.

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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

All evidence is collected by the SENCo prior to the AA online request.

Form 8 is completed prior to AA online request by the SENCo and external assessor.

The JCQ 'candidate personal data consent form' and 'data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo' must be completed prior to AA online request.

The SENCo is responsible for the submission of the AA online.

The candidate AAO file is updated and stored securely in the SEN office.

"The SENCo must keep detailed records, 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 SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA, section 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

All arrangements that do not require an approved AAO application should be authorised by SENCo.

The SENCo will gather the evidence of need and file accordingly.

The SENCo and Exams Officer discuss the appropriateness of arrangements

The SENCo and Exams officer liaise to ensure all arrangements are in place prior to all internal and external exams.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

The SENCo will decide if an exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where it is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Goldington Academy's Word Processing policy is available on the school website.

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology or an injury sustained by the candidate whereby writing is restricted (as part of emergency access arrangements)

Awarding word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way

of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Exceptions might include where a candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- poor handwriting of a standard that would impair marking
- a mental health condition

Allocating word processors

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the published start time. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 2.11 of ICE.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

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 (formerly known as separate invigilation) within the centre will be made by the 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](#) 5.16]

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Alternative rooming arrangements reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, emotional and mental health needs."

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