



Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Date reviewed	January 2021
Frequency	Annually
Next review date	October 2021
Reviewed by	Academic Standards, SEN and Educational Trips Committee

Ratified:

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Dated: 11.02.2021

Signed:

Principal

Dated: 11.02.2021

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
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	TBD

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Goldington Academy Equalities Policy (Exams)* and the *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments handbook*

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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 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 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’.”

[AA Definitions, page 3]

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 General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5]

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](#).

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (section 4.2). These include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement 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 does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 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) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements 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 Disability 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 the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The SENCo is responsible for ensuring that the qualifications of assessors meet JCQ requirements. Goldington Academy's HR/Admin department 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. Copies of certificates are held by the SENCo and the Exams Officer.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Copies of certificates are held on file 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. A referral form is available. Evidence of 'normal way of working' (NWOW) must be submitted e.g. PPE's 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.

Painting a 'holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working

Statements of need, observations from staff and assessment documentation including part 1 of JCQ Form 8 should be used and kept in candidates access arrangements file held by the SENCo

Only Form 8 is acceptable. Spreadsheets, e-mail messages, centre devised equivalents of Form 8, educational psychologists' reports and other reports are not acceptable for inspection purposes" [AA 7.6]

"A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online.

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a centre, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer.

[AA 7.3]

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 TAs meet on a weekly 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 TAs.

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.

Bear in mind *normal way of working* (NWOW) as defined by JCQ:

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre †, for example:

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *literacy intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *mock examinations.*

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within part 1 of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

SENCo's and assessors must refer to chapter 7 section 7.6.1, page 82, 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 ”

[\[AA 4.2\]](#)

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements 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 (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.

The SENCo and Exams Officer work jointly to submit AA Online.

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.

Candidate Signature sheet is 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 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 8.6]

Centre-delegated access arrangements

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.

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.

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.

Statement produced by: **F Galbraith, Head of Centre**

Statement date: **6/2/2018**

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved 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 separate invigilation, 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.

Separate invigilation 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, mental or emotional needs."

[\[AA 5.16\]](#)

