

Access Arrangements for examinations

If a student has an identified learning need or disability that means that he or she is disadvantaged in comparison to other students of similar ability, he or she may qualify for access arrangements for public examinations. There are a number of different types of access arrangement and these are determined by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The main ones are listed at the bottom of this document. The criteria that must be met for an access arrangement changes frequently and JCQ issue guidance booklets every year. You can access these online – www.jcq.org.uk for information.

We will assess all students at the end of year 9 in order to ascertain whether students meet the criteria and subsequently apply for access arrangements to be granted. Any application is only valid for 26 months and it is for this reason that we do not apply earlier.

In order for us to apply we need to provide evidence of an ongoing need and show that the access arrangement we apply for is the student's normal way of working. Therefore, throughout years 7, 8 and 9 we may trial various strategies and conduct a number of different tests and assessments in order to make sure that we are not only meeting the criteria but that we can work out what might be the best provision for your child.

No access arrangement is formalised until the end of year 9 and any arrangement made before that time is essentially part of the assessment process. This can be quite confusing for parents as we are aware that students have sometimes been granted an access arrangement for tests at primary school. Please be aware that these do not carry forward and that the assessment process for GCSE examinations, does not occur until year 9. Please also be aware that a statement of special educational need does not necessarily mean that a student will qualify for access arrangements, even if your child has regular in class support. If you have any queries, please contact Mrs Robinson, Head of Learning Support.

Access arrangements information

Below is a summary of the current JCQ directives regarding access arrangements.

Supervised rest breaks:

- These must always be considered before applying for extra time.
- These will be allowed where it is the candidate's normal way of working.
- These do not need to be registered on *Access Arrangements Online*

Transcript:

- These do not need to be registered on *Access Arrangements Online*.
- The centre can arrange this for exceptional circumstances resulting from an injury where the use of a word processor is not appropriate. A copy (ie writing it out) of the candidate's script can be made after the examination has taken place and without the participation of the candidate.

Prompter

- These do not need to be registered on *Access Arrangements Online*.

- A prompter may be permitted where a candidate has a substantial and long term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating.

25% extra time:

- These must be applied for and registered on *Access Arrangements Online*.
- Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
- Candidates' must have at least one below average standardised score of 84 or less in either;
 - Speed of reading
 - Speed of reading comprehension
 - Speed of writing
 - Cognitive processing measures.

Allocation of a reader:

- These must be applied for and registered on *Access Arrangements Online*.
- Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
- A reader will only be allowed if; language and vocabulary difficulties have a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidates' ability to access written text or there is a substantial and long term visual impairment which means the candidate cannot access Braille or enlarged print independently.
- Where substantial impairment is evidenced the SENCO must be able to demonstrate the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled candidates undertaking the exam.

Allocation of a scribe:

- These must be applied for and registered on *Access Arrangements Online*.
- Applications will be considered based on either a Statement of Special Educational Need or an assessment carried out no earlier than Year 9 by a specialist assessor to confirm a learning difficulty.
- If a word processor is the candidates' normal way of working within school then it should be used within examinations.
- The use of a scribe must reflect the candidates' normal way of working within school.
- A scribe should only be used where a candidate cannot use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check disabled.
- A scribe will only be allowed where; impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the candidates' writing or a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed.