



Castle Donington College

Access Arrangements Policy (Exams Specific) (including Assessor qualifications)

Date agreed

January 2023

Date for review

January 2024

Policies are reviewed annually using the Exams Office model policies to ensure compliance with current regulations; changes may need to be made after the adoption of this policy and prior to the review date

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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 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'.

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 several 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'.

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AA](#) 1.8). The definitions and procedures in [AA](#) relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Castle Donington College 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, (section 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](#)

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 them 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.

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 their 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.

Castle Donington College's centre-wide Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy is available on the College website and for staff in the staff shared area on the College network.

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 appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#), section 7.3.

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

Mrs Dawn Wood, Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy

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 of the assessor

The Head of Centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate. This is to ensure that the assessor has the required level of competence and training.

A copy of the assessor's qualification are held on file for inspection purposes and to be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor

Evidence of the assessor's qualifications are included in this policy as Appendix 1

The SENCo will hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor is suitably qualified.

The name of the assessor will be entered into *Access Arrangements Online* to confirm their status

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

The SENCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor.

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 the 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.

The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance. Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.

The candidate's chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age. Results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. (These are standard scores.) Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores must be converted into standard scores.

Form 8 must be used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements. The candidate's name must be recorded on every page of Form 8 and the form must be stapled together.

Part 3 of Form 8 must be completed by the SENCo once the assessor has completed their testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

Part 3 of Form 8 must make recommendations for access arrangements taking into account:

- the information from the assessment (Part 2 of Form 8);
- the requirements of the specifications; and
- the candidate's normal way of working in the centre (Part 1 of Form 8)

Reference is made 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](#)

The centre is confirming that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...*

[[GR 5.4](#)]

Note

... SENCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.

[[AA 7.3](#)]

The SENCo undertakes the necessary and appropriate steps to gather a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a private candidate such as a home educated student. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process. The candidate must be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor. In some instances, depending on their needs, the candidate may have to be assessed away from the centre, for example at home. The centre must comply with the obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

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 coherent process.

As a minimum, a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 must be completed prior to the assessment by the SENCo detailing the candidate's background and history of support. This provides a pen portrait of the candidate's needs and 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, School Action, support plans) in place for the candidate; pupil premium indicators;
- screening test results;
- use of baseline data;
- information about any differentiation in the classroom;
- normal way of working in the classroom (where appropriate);
- arrangements made for end of year mock examinations

Staff complete NWW forms either electronically or in paper format and upload these into the Staff Shared/Exams/Access Arrangements folder for the SENCo. These are then placed in the candidate's individual file to build a picture of need and demonstrate 'normal way of working'.

The Examination Officer will include evidence for internal/mock exams where support was provided and include this in the candidate's file.

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 with the SENCo.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

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))

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

Candidates will complete a candidate personal data consent form **prior** to any assessment taking place. Following the assessment, and prior to processing the online application, the SENCo or Examinations Officer are required to complete the Data protection confirmation. This must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Applications are then printed and saved in the candidate's individual file for Inspection purposes. These files are located in the administration office in a locked filing cabinet.

Letters are sent to parents/carers from the SENCo to confirm approved Access Arrangements for candidates.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Candidates may be awarded centre-delegated arrangements following evidence received by members of staff to demonstrate NWW.

Individual folders are produced to collate this evidence and are stored in the Administration office in a locked filing cabinet (No.5) and the key is secured in the key safe cabinet.

Parents/carers are sent letters from the SENCo to confirm approved centre-delegated Access Arrangements for students and which subjects/exams these will be applied to.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because the candidate now want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

The centre's policy which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams is located in the Exams Policy and the Word Processor Policy.

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 within the centre (which may include sitting the examination outside of the Gym e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates or one-to-one invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

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

Appendix 1

Evidence of the assessor's qualification

