



Access Arrangements Policy

2022/23

Approved/reviewed by	
Philippa Scholar	
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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Andrew Langley
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Philippa Scholar
Head of centre	Philippa Scholar
Assessor(s)	Sian Rees
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Sian Rees/Claire Kitchen

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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'. ([AA 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 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'. ([AA Definitions](#))

*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 Bristol Hospital Education Service 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,

(JCQs 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 ALS lead/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the ALS/SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([AA 4.2](#))

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 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, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **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.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010+, particularly Section 20 (7). This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect ([GR](#) section 5.4)

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 by JCQ regulations in [AA](#), section 7.3.

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

Job title: additional needs assessment & intervention lead

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)

Specialist qualifications are checked by the School HR Department; applicants are required to bring original certificates to interview. Copies of these are kept on file by the HR Department. Members of staff who gain further qualifications whilst in the employ of the School are also required to present their original certificates to the HR department. Copies of these are kept on file. In addition, copies of specialist awards certificates are kept confidentially by the SENCo and the Exams Officer.

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

Learning Support department has a range of assessments which can be used depending on the individual needs/difficulties of the student, e.g. WIAT, TOMAL 2, CTOPP2. If assessment results meet the criteria for access arrangements they are combined with the student's history of need and supporting evidence gathered during their time at the school to show examples of where arrangements are required and used as the student's normal way of working.

Picture of need/normal way of working

In key stage 3, where it is felt that access arrangements may be required in the classroom and for internal tests and examinations, a record of need is built up and recorded on SIMs/CPOMs. During Year 10 or as soon as possible if joining in Year 11, all pupils have a baseline assessment with the specialist assessor to inform teaching. These assessments maybe used with evidence from teaching staff to determine if access arrangements will be needed. The results of the assessment are recorded on an in house form which meets the needs of JCQ. The Form will be signed off by the SENCo.

Access arrangements applications for CIE examinations require completion of the CIE Preparation: Form 1.

Evidence of the student's normal way of working throughout his time at Bristol Hospital Education Service is collected from teaching staff on CPOMs. Teaching staff comment on the needs of individual students at the twice termly classes meetings and during student reviews which happen once a term.

A historical picture of the use of access arrangements for each pupil is collated. The SENCo will bear in mind the "normal way of working" as defined by JCQ:

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre*, e.g.

- in the classroom;
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies
- mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. All pupils at BHES have medical needs as BHES is a medical PRU.

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

The assessor submits the in house form to the exam officer who is then responsible for making the application using AAO. The in house forms and assessment evidence are kept securely in the exams office. Overtyping here any relevant information relating to the centre's processes for using AAO. Once approval is gained the approval is kept with the in house forms.

- Candidate approved application
- Personal Data Consent form
- Assessment top sheet

Are all kept securely electronically on CPOMs.

Candidate **Personal data consent form** and the requirement for completion of the [Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo](#), prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Centre delegated arrangements are recorded on the assessment top sheet which is stored securely with assessment evidence in the exams office. It is also stored electronically on CPOMs.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

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 wants 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 location of the centre's policy in Exams Office which details the criteria BHES uses to award and allocate word processors for exams:

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.

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where the candidate 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.

This may 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

The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor may be considered for a candidate would be

- on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Arrangements for the use of word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the ALS lead/SENCo and the exams officer.

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the ALS lead/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](#))

Separate invigilation will reflect the candidate's medical needs.

