

# **Access Arrangements Policy**

Bristol Hospital Education Service

## Access Arrangements Policy

Centre name	Bristol Hospital Education Service
Centre number	50618
Date policy first created	20/09/2023
Current policy approved by	Philippa Scholar
Current policy reviewed by	Ruth Harding
Date of review	14/11/2025
Date of next review	01/12/2026

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of centre	Philippa Scholar
Senior leader(s)	Andrew Langley, Gareth Manson.
Exams officer	Ruth Harding
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Andrew Langley
Other staff (if applicable)	Sian Rees - Exams Access Arrangements Assessor

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Bristol Hospital Education Service is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AARA refer to the JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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

## Introduction

(AARA Definitions)

### 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'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

## 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

## 1. General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and

those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AA 4.2)

The principles for Bristol Hospital Education Service to consider 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 (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2)
- Applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments, where possible, should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year the course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working (AARA 4.2). Applications can be made in the second year of a two-year course if they are new to the provision. If a student already has Access Arrangement from a previous provision, the forms will be requested for evidence.
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AARA 4.2)
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AARA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in:

- Access Arrangements Policy
- Equality Policy (Exams)

## 2. The assessment process

At Bristol Hospital Education Service, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AARA 7.3)

### Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Dr Sian Rees

Advanced Diploma in Special Needs(Education)  
MA (Ed) in Supporting Students with Special Needs  
PhD Teaching and Learning after an ABI

### Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Bristol Hospital Education Service:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified (AARA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

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.

### **Reporting the appointment of assessors**

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AARA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by:

- Sian Rees & Ruth Harding
- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within *Access arrangements online*. (AARA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* document must be entered into *Access arrangements online* to confirm their status (AARA 7.4)

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

Bristol Hospital Education Service confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor **must** carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, **cannot** be used to award access arrangements and **cannot** be used to process an application using *Access arrangements online* (AARA 7.3)
- Relevant staff 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 (AARA 7.3)

Additional information:

Will follow the JCQ Access Arrangements & reasonable adjustments process for Private Candidates

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

Bristol Hospital Education Service confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre **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 centre and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5)

Additional information:

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 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 may be 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 Assessor. Form 8/9/11 is then prepared, once we have the data protection form signed the candidate.

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/her 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 Assessor 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 referred to as 'normal way of working'. All pupils at BHES have medical needs.

## **3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments**

### **Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

*Access arrangements online* (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre **and** the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place

### **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments**

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by:

- Sian Rees

Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by:

- CPOMs

- **The use of a word processor**

The Exams Word Processor Policy details the criteria Bristol Hospital Education Service specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- **Alternative rooming arrangements**

The Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy details the criteria Bristol Hospital Education Service uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation.

Additional information

Separate invigilation will reflect the candidate's medical needs.

## **Modified papers**

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers **must not** be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AARA 6.1)

## **Roles and responsibilities**

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- Sian Rees and Ruth Harding to inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Sian Rees and Ruth Harding to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Sian Rees and Ruth Harding to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, 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 evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
- Sian Rees and Ruth Harding to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Sian Rees and Ruth Harding to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:





## Changes 2025/2026

References to AA changed to AARA

(Added/Removed) Under heading **Roles and responsibilities:**

Added new bullet point to reference the requirement to comply with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Removed reference to a signed candidate personal data consent form and Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form which are no longer required.

This section will therefore need to be edited when reviewing and updating this policy for 2025/2026.

## Centre-specific changes

Alternative rooming policy has been written.

Deleted SIMs for record keeping of normal ways of working

Changed from SENCo to Assessor

Responsibility of modified papers to Ruth Harding & Sian Rees