



Exam Access Arrangements

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

Access arrangements are special concessions in external examinations, which can be applied for by the school. They enable a level playing field for students who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage. They should closely reflect the normal support provided in class or during interventions.

The access arrangement application process is rigorous and must follow a set procedure, which is outlined in the JCQ (Joint Council of Qualifications) Regulations. Evidence of need must be collated by the setting before an application can be made, which is obtained from the candidate's teachers, internal exams, and specialist services involved, and, where necessary, a specialist assessment.

MOVING FROM Y11 TO Y12

When a student moves from Y11 to Y12 we are required to re-apply for access arrangements based upon new evidence of current need.

If your child changes setting, there may be a requirement for reassessment. There is no automatic entitlement to access arrangements in the 6th Form; new evidence must be obtained.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

There are a number of access arrangements which can be applied for according to the needs of the student. Here are some difficulties to be aware of, which might indicate a need for access arrangements in exams:

- Rarely finishes exams in the time allowed
- Reads far more slowly than peers
- Struggles to remember information when reading
- Struggles to read with accuracy and may have difficulty decoding unknown words
- Slow, illegible or incomprehensible handwriting
- Requires support to maintain concentration and stay on task
- Appears forgetful with weak short-term memory
- Experiences language difficulties which are not associated with EAL
- Struggles with coordination which impacts upon using a ruler and interpreting graphs and charts
- Needs regular breaks to maintain concentration or due to fatigue
- May become extremely anxious under exam-conditions



WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

There are a wide range of access arrangements which must reflect the student’s normal way of working in class. The main types of arrangements are:

- Extra time: for slow rate of working, reading or writing
- Separate invigilation or small group room: for candidates with diagnosed poor concentration, who are easily distracted or have high anxiety
- Word processor: for illegible or slow handwriting, where typing is proficient
- Reader: for significantly slower than average reading accuracy and decoding skills
- Rest break: for candidates with significant concentration difficulties or extreme stress
- Prompt: for candidates who struggle to stay on task or with poor time concepts
- Reader or a reading pen: for candidates with weak reading comprehension
- Coloured overlay or colour modified papers to reduce visual stress
- Scribe: Only for students who are significantly disadvantaged by both illegible handwriting and slow typing skills

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Does an EHC Plan automatically qualify for access arrangements?
No. The access arrangement must be outlined in the EHCP and evidence of need must be collated before an application online is made.
Do all candidates require a specialist assessment?
No, only those with specific learning needs require an assessment. Where there is a medical or physical condition, there is a requirement to obtain evidence from the appropriately qualified professional involved.
When is the best time for the application to be made?
The specialist assessment must occur within two years of the GCSE examinations.
Can I have my child independently assessed?



The JCQ rules do not allow us to accept independent assessments and reports as evidence for access arrangements. Only specialist assessors who are either employed, or work closely with the setting are allowed to conduct the specialist assessments.

Does a diagnosis automatically qualify for access arrangements?

No. There must always be evidence of need and normal way of working. There is often a requirement for a specialist assessment, or the professional opinion of specialist agencies; equally, a diagnosis is not necessary.