



Staffordshire University Academy		Academy Policy Document			
Approved by:	LAC	Issue date:	Sept 2023	Review date:	Aug 2024
Policy Owner:	Business and Facilities Manager	Page: 1 of 10			
Audience:	Staff	LAC	Volunteers		

Access Arrangements Policy

2023-2024

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
L. Sinclair	
Date of next review	September '24



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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
SENCo	Mrs L Sinclair
SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Mrs R Hillier
Head of centre	Mrs R Hillier
Assessor(s)	Emma Buckley- Bridgett
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Mrs D Bate, Mr T Holdway



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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’. (¹[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’. (¹[AA](#) Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Staffordshire University Academy 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’s 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/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.

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Where the 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. (¹[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, **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.

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Staffordshire University Academy has an Equalities policy in place and this can be found on the SUA website [SUA Documents & policies](#).

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)

For the summer 2023 series:
Emma Buckley- Bridgett- Assessment Practicing certificate

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)

The head of centre/senior leadership team will have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... ([GR](#), section 5.4)

The head of centre **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) **must** be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. ([AA](#), section 7.3)

[AA](#), section 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Certification is checked by the head of centre prior to any assessment of a candidate to ensure qualification and understanding to at least JCQ requirements. The SENCos holds on file for

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inspection purposes evidence that the assessor, Emma Buckley-Bridgett, is suitably qualified to make appropriate assessments.

The names of our assessor, who is assessing candidates studying qualifications has been entered into the Access arrangements online system to confirm their status and . ([AA 7.4](#))

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

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, section 7.3]

Picture of need, confirming 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 well as gathering evidence to confirm students normal way of working as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA, section 7.5)

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.

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. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo team. ([AA, section 7.5](#))

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.

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The SENCo must keep detailed records, whether electronically (Exams folder-> access arrangements) 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 *Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo* form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). ([AA, section 8.6](#))

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Our process for EAA applications is as follows:

1. Referrals from class teachers / parents / identified SSO /SENCo
2. Gather evidence to support application for EAA
3. external assessed
4. Application made to exam board

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.

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A separate Word processor policy can be found on the SUA website [SUA Documents & policies.](#)

An example, by way of illustration, is provided below. However, this is an example only which if used must be adapted to address your centre-specific processes and the criteria used for awarding and allocating the use of word processors in your centre.

Staffordshire University Academy allocates word processors for use in examinations in line with JCQ regulation. The criteria used to award and allocate word processors for examinations is detailed below.

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

Rooming arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for smaller groups of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as a separate invigilation) 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, section 5.16](#))

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In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **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. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Alternative rooming arrangements **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)