



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
OXFORDSHIRE
ACADEMY TRUST



EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Version 1.1

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1. Introduction

Wallingford School's policy for access arrangements is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ) regulations document (2021) 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'. These are the regulations with which the school must comply, and this policy will outline how we do this.

2. Rationale for Access Arrangements

- Access arrangements are intended to facilitate students with the required knowledge, understanding and skills – where they are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment due to a difficulty or disability – to access the exam without changing the demands of the assessment.
- The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled (within the definition of the Equality Act 2010) would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.
- Access arrangements are intended to increase access to assessments but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- Access arrangements are not intended to give an unfair advantage but rather are to remove disadvantage.
- Access arrangements may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- Access arrangements should reflect a student's normal way of working, unless such arrangements would compromise the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements encompass a wide range of provisions, which may include: being allowed to sit examinations in a smaller room, supervised rest breaks, use of coloured overlays, a prompter, extra time, a reader, a scribe, use of a word processor, use of a reading pen, a practical assistant, etc. An access arrangement may be unique to an individual and therefore not appear in a standard list.

3. Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements

i. Stage 1: Early screening

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified early in KS3 (Years 7 to 9). A student's primary school or parent informs the

SENDCo of any history of need or access arrangements implemented in KS2 examinations. At this stage, needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed. Teachers monitor students and gather any evidence of need for access arrangements, passing it to the SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator. Adjustments to teaching within lessons are made according to the need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress, and access arrangements are trialled in tests and assessments.

ii. Stage 2: Formal testing

Formal assessments begin in the summer term of Y9 for students with a learning need. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidelines. Permission to allow access arrangements expires after 26 months, after which the student may need to be re-tested, depending on which arrangement(s) they have. Access arrangements are always determined by the most recent testing.

Requests for an access arrangement as a result of a long-term medical condition usually need to be supported with a letter from a medical professional. This will prompt an investigation by the exam access arrangement assessor, but any request for an access arrangement also needs to be supported by subject teachers who can show that there is an evidence of need for that student in their subject.

Where a parent produces a privately commissioned report on their child's needs without prior consultation with the school, this will not be able to be used to process an application. However, the SENCO will consider whether it contains information to merit instigating the process of the school assessing the pupil's needs internally. If a parent contacts the school asking for their child's needs to be assessed, the SENCO will also decide whether it is appropriate to undertake this.

Where the school is consulted **prior** to a private assessment taking place, the SENCO will, if possible, provide the parent's chosen assessor with Part 1 of **Form 8** from the JCQ. Once the resulting report is submitted to the school as evidence that the pupil requires access arrangements, e.g. extra time, the SENCO will review the report and communicate with parents/carers on whether the school is prepared to accept it and use it to form part of an application.

iii. Stage 3: Formal application for access arrangements

The outcomes of the assessments for students who have learning difficulties are recorded on JCQ Form 8 by the assessor. Completed forms are then passed to the SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator as evidence for online submission. The online submission is carried out by the exams officer. Feedback is instant and

permission for the access arrangement will be recorded and held by the school. Evidence for JCQ Form 9 for students with a substantial impairment, such as a physical disability, sensory impairment or medical condition, is gathered and the form is completed. It is not necessary to assess these students with standardised tests, as medical information and teacher evidence to show that their access arrangements are their 'normal way of working' in the school is sufficient.

Parents will be notified in writing of their child's access arrangements.

iv. Stage 4: Ensuring access arrangements are the student's 'normal way of working'

Where formal access arrangements are awarded, the SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator, in collaboration with colleagues and the student, will monitor and ensure that they continue to be normal working practice for the student. This means that appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments. If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change, or because they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

It is the responsibility of the SEND team to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the exams officer and wider staff body. The SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order and includes a data protection notice signed by the student.

4. Staff Roles and Responsibilities Relating to Access Arrangements

Examinations officer:

- To ensure that the agreed access arrangement provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To manage any on-the-day questions and queries regarding access arrangement provision.
- To deal with any emergencies, such as accidents or medical conditions, on the day of the exam (in conjunction with the SEND department).
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their access arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.

SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator:

- To encourage a 'whole centre' approach to access arrangements and to lead on the process within his/her centre.
- To ensure that they, together with the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team and the access arrangements assessor are familiar with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidelines and regulations.
- To determine, apply for and implement appropriate access arrangements with the support and help of teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team.

Exam access arrangements assessor (when separate to SENDCo):

- To work with students at KS3 to do basic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision.
- To administer standardised tests after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews and classroom observations.
- To assist the SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator in the decision-making process about access arrangements.

Teaching staff:

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's **persistent and significant difficulties**.
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and provide evidence of this for the SENDCo/access arrangements coordinator.
- To detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct access arrangements are in place for 'in class' tests.

5. Support Offered to Students with Access Arrangements

- Students with access arrangements in place are shown how to effectively use these arrangements.
- Students who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader/scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.
- Students with extra time are shown how to use the additional time allowance

effectively. They are then encouraged to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in internal exams and assessments.

6. Temporary Arrangements in Exceptional Circumstances

Temporary access arrangements may be required for a student suffering from unforeseen illness or injury. In these cases, the school must be informed at the earliest possible opportunity, and a letter from a GP, consultant or other professional detailing the problem and any arrangement deemed necessary should be obtained as soon as possible. The school will make every effort to accommodate these arrangements.

7. Alternative Accommodation

On very rare occasions, a candidate may need to sit an examination at a residential address or at a hospital due to a severe medical condition or psychological condition which prevents them from taking examinations within the centre. In this situation, the school will ensure that JCQ guidelines are followed with regard to conduct, procedures and staffing. We must be satisfied that the candidate is well enough to take the examination, and there must be appropriate evidence of need held on file.

8. Special Consideration

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. The candidate will have been fully prepared for the exams, but, due to some unforeseen circumstance, could not demonstrate what they knew.