



SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON
ACADEMY

EXAMINATIONS ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

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1.0 Guidelines for Subject Teachers, Tutors and Learning Support Staff

Access arrangements allow candidates/learners to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment (JCQ 2013)

You are likely to be aware of candidates in your classes/teaching groups who have difficulties that may make them eligible for access arrangements in test and public examinations. Please watch out for these candidates each year, especially new starters to the school, and keep the SEN department informed of their needs. It is likely some screening procedures will be carried out to identify these candidates but there are some candidates who may not be identified. The Learning Support Department are dependent upon staff to keep them informed of potential candidates.

It is essential that candidates are identified as early as possible in their school career for the following reasons:

- Arrangements should be in place at the start of the course so candidates are aware of the arrangements available for controlled assessments and coursework.
- Arrangements should reflect the candidates 'normal' way of working, including if a candidate regularly uses a scribe/reader in the classroom.
- There are deadlines for applications for access arrangements. It is not possible to process a late request for access arrangements, with all the required testing, within a few weeks of the examination.
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Centres are required to have made sure candidates have practised using their access arrangements in class tests and examinations. As a subject teacher you have some responsibility to make opportunities available.

The main types of access arrangements are as follows:

- **Extra time**
- **Rest breaks**
- **Use of bilingual dictionary**
- **Readers** – for very poor readers with decoding / comprehension difficulties
- **Scribes** – for very poor / slow writers
- **Word processors** – for candidates who word process their work
- **Prompters**
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There are also technical arrangements available for visually/hearing impaired candidates.

There is no specific access arrangement for poor spelling unless it is so poor that it is illegible. In this case a word processor may be appropriate.

Regulations have changed over the last few years and a diagnosis of dyslexia is no longer sufficient to allow access arrangements. The awarding bodies now require a below average score in a test assessing cognitive processing, reading or writing plus the centre must demonstrate that additional time is the normal way of working for the candidate.

Summary

Although applying for and implementing access arrangements are the responsibilities of the SENCO and Exams Officers, all teaching and support staff have a central role to play in the identification of candidates who need adjustments during public examinations, and in training the students to use these arrangements effectively.

2.0 Examination Access Arrangements Policy

Rationale

The Examination Access Arrangements Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout Sir William Robertson Academy for all students with additional learning needs (ALN), including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student may fulfil his or her full potential.

What are Examination Access Arrangements?

Examination access arrangements (EAA) are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Access arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. (For example, by the provision of readers, scribes, Braille question papers etc.). In this way awarding bodies comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'. Candidates who may benefit from access arrangements may have:

- A learning disability which has substantial and long term adverse effects 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

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors, including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

Responsibility

Access arrangements are the responsibility of the SENCO, directed by the Headteacher. The assessment of candidates for examination access arrangements needs to be conducted by a member of staff who is appropriately qualified, as defined by JCQ regulations: *Adjustments for Candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments*.

The SENCO may also direct other appropriately qualified staff to be part of the assessment process. These are:

- a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website
- An appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council.

In addition to these two categories, other educational professionals may conduct access arrangements assessments if they meet the following criteria:

They must hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 which must include training in all of the following:

- The theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals
- the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested
- The objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered
- The appropriate selection and objective use of cognitive tests including tests of verbal and non-verbal ability and wider cognitive processing skills
- The ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional.

In rare and exceptional circumstances, where further investigation is warranted, the centre may need to refer a candidate to an alternative professional such as a clinical psychologist or a neuropsychologist. The initial assessment may have indicated specific/global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns.

For details regarding the qualifications held by our specialist assessors please speak to the SENCO or Examinations Officer, who hold this information on file.

Access Arrangements for Examinations

JCQ regulations can change annually. However the most common access arrangements usually include:

- Rest breaks
- Readers
- Reading aloud
- Scribes
- Prompts
- Use of word processors

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements at Sir William Robertson Academy

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 are preferably identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage needs are screened and identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to quality first teaching (QFT) within lessons are then made according to need to enable students to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

Formal assessments take place during Y9. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are conducted in accordance with JCQ regulations. Approved access arrangements expire after 26 months, and after this period the student may be re-tested if necessary. The most recent testing is binding and determines any subsequent access arrangements.

Where formal access arrangements are approved these become part of 'normal practice'. This means that appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in everyday teaching as well as formally applied in any internal or external assessments. If a student regularly opts not to use agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change or they do not feel their learning or achievement are improved as a result, then access arrangements can be removed.

PROCEDURE

How are students identified for exam access arrangements?

- They have had examination access arrangements for KS2 SATs
- From baseline testing e.g. CATS
- Parental referral
- Subject teacher referral

KS2 SAT EAA - Students who have EAA at KS2 are screened for EAA at KS3 and KS4. Although they may have received EAA at KS2, this does not necessarily mean that they will automatically qualify at KS3 or KS4 because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had a reader for KS2 may not qualify for a reader at KS4 because their reading has improved to the extent it does not meet the exam board criteria.

Baseline Testing - All students joining SWRA in Year 7 are tested using CATs, and also have a reading comprehension test and a spelling test. Reading comprehension and spelling are tested three times a year for all pupils in KS3. These tests can help identify learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The SENCO will contact parents where concerns are identified, carry out further testing and put appropriate intervention into place if necessary.

Parental Referral - Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made by a parent the SENCO will investigate their

concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral - Teachers can refer a student to the SENCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to provide feedback and information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student for EAA. Where a teacher thinks that a student requires extra time, they are asked to get the student to change the colour of the pen that they are using once the allotted time is up, and continue writing until they are finished. This is then used to provide JCQ and the awarding bodies with evidence of a history of need. Teachers are asked to refer students to the SENCO initially if they feel that a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting parents about their concerns. The SENCO will then contact the parents if the concerns are founded.

KS3 Screening

Pupils who are flagged either during transition or during Y7 as having difficulties accessing their learning are screened. All teaching and TA support staff are involved in this early identification process.

Throughout KS3 all staff are responsible for implementing recommended adjustments to QFT and assessment access arrangements. All staff are involved in the monitoring of these adjustments. Needs of students not identified in Y7 may become apparent at any point during KS3. Staff are responsible for reporting any concerns to the SENCO, who can then arrange for screening to be carried out.

What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- Form 8 report from Specialist Teacher or Specialist Teaching Assistant
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests

See Appendix 1: Guidelines for Subject Teachers

Private Educational Psychologists Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private educational psychologists and submitting the reports to the SENCO as evidence that their child should be awarded EAA; usually in the form of extra time. These reports cost a significant amount of money, meaning that parents who are unable to obtain a private report because of their financial circumstances are put at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be consistent in our decisions and ensure that no student is either unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Often, recommendations by private educational psychologists that children should receive EAA contradict the recommendations of the centre’s Specialist Tester. As a centre we will therefore always also look for evidence of a candidate’s history of need.

JCQ regulations state that *“if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time.”*

As such the school will not accept the recommendations of private reports, but will instead follow the recommendations of the Specialist Tester.

JCQ regulations also state that *“Where a centre elects either to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre [the Principal] or a member of the senior leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes.”*

Formal Access Arrangement Testing

Students qualifying for these formal assessments are determined by specified indicators following screening. Students with an EHCP automatically qualify for a need-matched access arrangements screening, and the formal assessment is a staged process:

Stage 1: Early Screening

A report is produced by the SENCO highlighting the key elements, including history of need and screening outcomes. This early screening information comes from IEPs, history of need, reading and spelling test information, current arrangements and CATs.

Many access arrangements require evidence that the arrangement is the 'normal' way of working. It is the responsibility of every teacher to ensure that all required information is collated and accessible to the SENCO, Exams Officer and wider staff body. The SENCO, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that access arrangements are normal working practice. The SENCO and Exams Officer will ensure that all paperwork required by JCQ is in order.

Stage 2: Formal Testing

Summer term of Y9

Depending on outcomes of screening, formal assessments are conducted to confirm access arrangements for exams. Assessments are carried out by qualified Specialist Teachers. No single assessment can be submitted as evidence.

Assessments may include:

- WRAT (WIDE RANGE ACHIEVEMENT TEST)
- YARC Secondary
- Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (DASH)
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP)

The tests that the Specialist Tester uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

Stage 3: Formal application for Access arrangements for examinations

The outcome of the assessments are recorded and summarised on the pupil profile sheet by the assessor. Completed forms are then passed to the SENCO as evidence for online submission. The online submission is carried out by the SENCO.

What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the Specialist Tester for EAA, the SENCO then applies to the exam boards. The feedback is instant and at this point the parents/carers of qualifying students are informed of the EAA by letter.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, health & Care Plans (EHCP)
- Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s:
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the student
- A record of all occasions when a student has been supported by EAA
- For extra time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

Access Arrangements – The requirement for 'normal' practice

The provision of access arrangements in examinations must reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to a candidate's needs. Evidence that this is the case must also be provided by the centre.

3.0 Word processor use in Assessments and Examinations at Sir William Robertson Academy

Sir William Robertson Academy fully supports the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in assessments and examinations in line with the JCQ regulations and guidance published in *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AA) and Instructions for Conducting Examinations (ICE)*. This policy details how the centre manages and administers their use.

Principles for using a word processor

Sir William Robertson Academy complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

(AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

(AA 4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

- in the classroom (where appropriate); or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal school tests/examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

The use of a word processor

Sir William Robertson Academy complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off)

- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand)
- (The above also extends to the use of electronic brailers and tablets)

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

Sir William Robertson Academy School Word Processor Statement 2017-18

Use of a word processor in examinations is a centre-delegated arrangement. This statement about the use of word processors has been prepared to be shared with stakeholders. Principally, a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now **wants to** type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

It is not a reasonable adjustment for a candidate to request use of a word processor because they can type faster than they can handwrite. A word processor will be allocated as a result of a **well-established SEN need or a history of illegible handwriting which has been identified and evidenced over time**. It will reflect a candidate's normal way of working, and will recognise that by not being awarded a word processor a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates.

Permission to use a word processor in an exam may well be granted for a candidate with:

- 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.

This list is not exhaustive. Each case will be considered on its merits and a decision will be made by the SENCO in consultation with SLT.

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by the IT department in liaison with the SENCO and the Exams Officer, and their use will comply with all ICE 8.8 *Word processors* instructions.

POLICY INFORMATION

Ratified by Governors:

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Document Owner: Sarah Davies

Additional Distribution:

- School Website
- Lincolnshire County Council
- WYPF