ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY
2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Sabrina Hawkins	
Date of next review	September 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Jennifer Moore
Senior leader(s)	Sabrina Hawkins, Jon Hill, Femi Adeniran, Jennie Cash
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Emma Ansell, Georgina Giddings
Exams officer	Amanda Stiggants
Assessor(s)	Lynn Bostock

Role	Name(s)

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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'. (AARA[1], 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates. (AARA[1], Definitions)

*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.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Wellington 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**, 5.4)
This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo (or equivalent role) 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.

Where the SENCo (or equivalent role) is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. ([1]AARA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments t for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

[1]This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

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)

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 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.

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.

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.

Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.

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 their 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.

> The Equalities Policy is available for inspection and is stored centrally. A copy of the Policy is held by the Exams officer, is available on the Academy website and in the shared location.

This 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 AARA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

> Our current assessor is Lynne Bostock. She has a Level 7 Diploma in SpLD/Dyslexia in addition to a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate issued by Patoss.

Appointment of assessors

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 AARA. 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 has seen copies of the assessors qualifications.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will have a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of their 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)

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. (AARA 7.3)

Make full reference to AARA 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of assessors

As Per AARA 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors) the qualification of the assessor is kept on file by the SENCo.

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

The assessment process begins with initial information from primary school around the need and requirements of certain students.

Where students join the school mid-term, we use information provided by the previous school. An initial whole year assessment is carried out in the autumn term with Y7 students to determine whether provision needs to be made throughout school. Necessary interventions are put in place for relevant students with ongoing monitoring and assessment.

A whole year assessment is carried out for Y9 students to identify any further students who may qualify for Access Arrangements. The timing of this assessment allows for the 26-month valid period to see the students through their formal examinations. There is a great deal of collaboration between the assessor; SEND staff and teachers in order to ensure that a detailed picture of students can be formed. There is also an ongoing official assessment process throughout the school year, which consists of referral from class teachers, parents, self-referral, other school support staff and external professionals. The qualified assessor conducts an initial assessment using internal assessment methods.

The use of LUCID EXACT, LUCID RECALL, IDL, NGRT, DASH and CTOPP to decide whether to go forward with an application for access arrangements. The assessor/SENCo then works with the Assistant SENCO to process an application and detail the recommendations to parents/carers as well as staff and then update the school Provision Map.

SENCos and assessors will always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment. This is 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.

For a candidate such as a distance learner or a home educated student, we will put steps in place to support the students in taking the exams, such as sending the paper home with an invigilator. All Access arrangement will be appealed through the school. Refer to AA, sections 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties) for 7 further information. This confirms that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR, section 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Close liaison with classroom teachers and support staff allows for a holistic picture of need to be painted as a 'normal way of working.' This needs to be evidenced in order to be considered for any access arrangements. The SENCO/Assistant SENCO regularly liaise with teaching staff to ensure that students are using the access arrangements as their normal way of working and the system is updated regularly. In most cases there is not a requirement to carry out tests of general cognitive abilities. However, in rare and exceptional circumstances the SENCo may need to refer a candidate to an alternative professional, such as a HCPC registered psychologist or a specialist teacher assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, where further investigation is warranted which may include tests of general cognitive ability. The initial assessment may have indicated specific/ global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns.

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 AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) 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.

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. (AARA 8 Summary)

(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 listed on page 5 of AA. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 75. AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.)

We access the Access arrangements online via the SENCO/Deputy SENCo who processes the application. The application is completed with the information from the Form 8 section C and submitted and a decision is given online instantly.

The files with application approvals are kept with the SENCo/Deputy SENCo and the applications that didn't get approval are also kept. There is a hard copy and an electronic copy kept and the information is kept in line with the school's data protection policy.

The SENCo keeps detailed records, 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 a signed candidate personal data consent form. This is for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service.

Candidates must be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please refer to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) to see any requirements including late applications and temporary access arrangements.)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

> Separate invigilation is decided in collaboration with the SENCo/Deputy SENCo and Head of Year. This is recorded by the SENCo/Deputy SENCo and recognised as a reasonable adjustment.
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> 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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. For the use of word processors, we have a separate word processing policy. The SENCo/Deputy SENC0 will keep a note of this which is kept on file regarding this.
>
> The SENCo/Deputy SENCo in collaboration with the Head of Year will make a decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre. 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. Separate invigilation is decided by the SENCo/Deputy SENCo. This is recorded by the SENCo/Deputy SENCo and recognised as a reasonable adjustment

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.

> Copies of the Word Process Policy (Exams) are held centrally, in the Exams Office, on the school website (exam policies page) and on the staff drive. Policies are also available on request for inspection.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, or which could impact the concentration of the other students sitting the exam; **and** is
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.16)
- NB: nervousness, or low-level anxiety about examinations, is not sufficient grounds for alternative rooming arrangements (AARA Equality Act 2010 definition of disability).

> Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a longterm medical condition, or long-term social, mental or emotional needs. (AARA 5.16).
>
> 1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a scribe or serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)