



Access Arrangements

Introduction

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.

Disabled candidates and candidates with learning difficulties, as set out below, may require access arrangements/reasonable adjustments. Each adjustment must be based on the candidate's individual profile and the impact their needs have on their ability to access examinations/assessments.

The aim is to remove barriers to assessment without giving an unfair advantage to any particular candidate or group, ensuring all candidates have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Cognition and learning needs
 - E.g. Learning difficulties or specific learning difficulties (such as Dyscalculia and Dyslexia)
- Communication and interaction needs
 - E.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Sensory and physical needs
 - E.g. Deaf, Vision Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Physical Disability
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
 - E.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Conditions

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working' and may include:

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

If a candidate does not make use of an arrangement granted to them, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is **not** their normal way of working and should **not** be suddenly granted to the candidate at the time of their examinations.

Procedures for Identifying Need and Applying for Access Arrangements

- Candidates potentially requiring Access Arrangements are flagged to the SENDCo and Specialist Assessor by teaching staff, support staff, parents/carers and/or the candidates themselves.
- Candidates are assessed by the Specialist Assessor and evidence is gathered to support an application on Access Arrangements Online. There must be evidence of the candidate's 'normal way of working', clearly demonstrating the need for a particular Access Arrangement, as the arrangement cannot suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of their examinations.
- Online applications are only 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.
- **A diagnosed medical condition, or previous/existing undiagnosed issue, does not automatically entitle a candidate to Access Arrangements**
- The SENDCo and the Specialist Assessor work with teaching staff, support staff and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.

Alternative Accommodation

If a candidate has been granted an Access Arrangement, this does not necessarily entitle the candidate to alternative or individual accommodation for their examinations. There is very limited scope for candidates to be accommodated outside of the main examination room. The SENDCo, Specialist Assessor, Exams Officer and relevant Senior Leader(s) will make decisions about alternative rooming based on a combination of the individual's needs and available appropriate accommodation within the school.

Extra Time

Candidates who are entitled to Extra Time do not have to take it in every examination, however:

- If they do choose to take their Extra Time they must stay for the whole duration of it, so as not to disrupt other candidates with constant intermittent departures.
- If a candidate chooses not to take advantage of their Extra Time entitlement, then they must sign a waiver form to declare their intention to do so.
- If a candidate repeatedly chooses to not take their Extra Time entitlement, then that could demonstrate that it is not their 'normal way of working' to require it. The SENDCo may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Supervised Rest Breaks

Candidates who are entitled to Supervised Rest Breaks can alert the invigilators when they wish to take a break.

- Candidates cannot be given as many supervised rest breaks as they like for as long as they like.
- The candidate remains in their seat for the duration of their rest break unless they are also entitled to movement breaks. The duration of the supervised rest break is determined by the SENDCo based on their knowledge of the candidate's needs and the candidate's normal way of working.

- For the duration of the rest break the examination paper is either taken away by the invigilator or placed faced down on the candidate's desk.
- The timing of the examination is paused and restarted when the candidate is ready to continue.
- If the candidate is also entitled to movement breaks and they wish to leave the examination room, they will always be escorted by an invigilator, and only allowed in designated areas, so as not to compromise the integrity of the examination.

Access to a Mobile Phone for Medical Purposes

Formal evidence **must** be available to confirm the candidate's medical condition to support an application for this Access Arrangement.

- Candidates entitled to access to a mobile phone are not automatically entitled to 25% extra time.
- Invigilators will be informed about the presence of candidates who have access to a mobile phone for medical purposes.
- Candidates must put the phone into a mode where it is not connected to the internet and will not receive calls, messages or notifications; or emit sounds, music or audible vibrations (other than those required for the specific medical purpose) for the duration of the examination.
- Candidates must alert the invigilator if they need to look at their mobile phone during the examination, so that they can be closely supervised doing so, in order to maintain the integrity of the examination
- If the candidate needs to act in response to a medical alert, they must inform the invigilator. They can take the required action in the examination room or be accompanied to a suitable discrete location by the invigilator.

Word Processor Policy

The centre will:

- Complete a formal assessment of identified candidates' needs with the College's assessor under the direction of the SENCo to determine whether they are eligible for consideration for use of word processor as part of their Access Arrangements for examinations.
- This will be confirmed at the discretion of SENCo and Senior Leadership Team, and each candidate will be reviewed on an individual basis.
- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate where appropriate to their needs.

For example, 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

- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because they want to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

Exceptions

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where they have 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
- illegible/poor handwriting
- in the event of 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
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically, and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in an appropriate room used throughout the exam period.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- where a candidate is to be seated without the use of a power point) checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that their centre number, candidate number, unit/component code and page numbers appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 33603/8001 – 6391/01 – 1 of 3. The candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way.

- ensures the candidate is reminded to save their work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to make marking easier for examiners

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Portable storage medium

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam is over

The centre will ensure

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is their own
- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- where an awarding body requires a cover sheet to be completed this is included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)