

Access Arrangements policy

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1 Rationale

This policy is designed to ensure an inclusive approach to access arrangements throughout the school and should be read in conjunction with Caroline Chisholm School's Special Educational Needs policy document.

All decisions regarding an individual's access arrangements will be made in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulation's document: "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments" with effect from 1st September 2021 to 31st August 2022.

2 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

An access arrangement is an adjustment, provision or type of support given to meet the needs of an individual disabled student, so that the individual has appropriate access to an examination without affecting the integrity of the assessment. The access arrangement is based on evidence of need and 'normal way of working'.

The Equality Act 2010 requires examination Awarding Bodies to make reasonable adjustments without which a disabled individual would be at a substantial disadvantage in an examination compared to someone who is not disabled. Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

3 Principles for access arrangements

The arrangements put in place must reflect the support given to the student in the classroom. This is referred to as 'normal way of working'. The SENCo/Specialist Assessor must show a history of support and provision. The access arrangement cannot suddenly be granted to a student at the time of his/her examination. The approved access arrangements should be in place in lessons, for controlled assessments/coursework, for internal school tests, pre-public examinations and external examinations.

3.1 Access arrangements available

Extra time (of up to 25%, up to 50%, over 50%)

Students may be entitled to extra time depending on the history of need and evidence of need. Extra time will only be given on the recommendation of the SENCo and Specialist Assessor.

Extra time allowances over 25% of the standard examination time are exceptionally rare and generally for a very substantial impairment.

To qualify for extra time, students will have an assessment, using JCQ-approved standardised tests, to determine their speed of processing. A student with **at least two** standardised score(s) of 84 or below (100 being a mid-average score) on tests measuring speed of processing may be considered for qualification for extra time.

Consideration will also be given to students without such scores who have persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information and are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Such difficulties may include:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Specific Learning Difficulties
- Sensory and/or Physical Needs
- Social, Mental and Emotional Needs
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs

In all cases, a report by the Specialist Assessor and an extensive file of supporting evidence must be held on the individual that reflects his/her current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom. The file must show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for extra time, that it is the 'normal way of working' and that without it the student would be at a significant disadvantage.

3.2 Scribe

A scribe is a trained adult who writes the student's dictated answers. The scribe writes exactly what the student says. The student can be awarded no marks for spelling or punctuation, unless these are precisely dictated. A scribe may be given to a student who has an impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her writing and/or when he/she cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at a sufficient speed, to record answers even with extra time allowed. The student may have a physical disability where his/her writing is illegible or slower than average or where the speed of processing is below average.

3.3 Reader / computer reader

A reader is a trained adult who reads aloud, at the request of the student, specific words, instructions, questions or the whole of the examination paper. A reader is not permitted in the reading sections of GCSE English Language papers, in which case a reading pen is provided instead.

3.4 Use of a word processor

A student may be given access to a laptop computer, if appropriate, so that he/she can word process his/her answers. Spelling and grammar checkers are disabled (unless allowed as an exceptional alternative for students who have qualified for a scribe but prefer to work independently) and each student logs on to an exam user area that has no internet access.

The particular type of candidates who might benefit from use of a word processor are students with:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment 5
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting.

This list is not exhaustive.

The use of a word processor must reflect the student's normal way of working. It cannot be granted to a student simply because this is his/her preferred way of working, or because typing speed is quicker than handwriting speed.

3.5 Supervised rest breaks

Students are allowed to 'stop the clock' for short breaks during an examination, with any time taken added to the finish time at the end.

There may be a need for rest breaks on account of:

- Cognition and learning needs
- Communication and interaction needs.
- A medical condition
- Sensory and physical needs
- Social, mental and emotional needs

Rest breaks are JCQ's recommended option, before considering the awarding of extra time.

3.6 Prompter

A trained adult may prompt a student during an examination, using a few permitted phrases. This is designed to encourage him/her to refocus or to indicate the amount of time remaining. Students who have a substantial and long-term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating may qualify for a prompter. Those students who have a limited sense of time may also be eligible for this arrangement.

4 Identifying the need for access arrangements

Students who may qualify for access arrangements during Key Stages 4 and 5 are identified early in Key Stage 3. Information from primary schools, baseline cognitive ability tests and reading and spelling screening tests (conducted in the first term of Year 7) help to identify students with additional needs.

For students who may require access arrangements for GCSE-level study and beyond, formal assessment and application processes are carried out in Year 9. Assessments may also be conducted at other times, as necessary. Any student who has identified learning needs will be considered for access arrangements. The Specialist Assessor will carry out the necessary tests and make applications to the relevant exam boards to request appropriate arrangements.

5 Privately commissioned assessment reports

Privately commissioned assessment reports could recommend that a student be awarded extra time, or other access arrangements. This may be in conflict with the evidence that the SENCo/Specialist Assessor has gathered and there may be limited evidence of 'history of need', so each report and its recommendations will be considered on an individual basis.

An independent assessor must contact the school and ask for evidence of the student's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the student is assessed. The independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo.

6 Contact regarding access arrangements

Any questions relating to the award of access arrangements should be directed to the SENCo (Lisa West). Further investigation and/or assessment may then be undertaken by the Specialist Assessor and Inclusion Leader (Julia Smith).