



DISCOVERY
EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Equalities Policy (Examinations) 2024/25

Title	Equalities Policy (Examinations) 2024/25
Author/Owner	CHS and SMS Examinations Officers
Status	Final
Issue Date	Dec-24
Senior Leadership Team Review by	CHS - Colin Brodigan - Assistant Headteacher - Examinations and Timetable SMS - John Peacock - Assistant Headteacher - Assessment, Recording and Reporting
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	Sep-25
Security Classification	OFFICIAL

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1. Purpose

This Policy is provided as an examinations-specific supplement to the Centre-wide Equality Statement and Objectives and CHS and SMS Accessibility Plans, which detail how the Centre:

- recognises its duties towards disabled candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010*, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service that the Centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the Centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the Centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.
*or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect.

(Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) General Regulations for Approved Centres, Section 5.4).

This publication is further referred to in this Policy as [GR](#).

This Policy details how the Centre facilitates access to examinations and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this Policy as ‘access arrangements’);
- requesting access arrangements;
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of examinations;
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 Definition of Disability

A definition is provided in the JCQ publication (Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024-2025 (Definitions section). This publication is further referred to in this Policy as [AARA](#).

2. Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant Centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AARA](#);
- Ensures that staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for all candidates are clearly defined and documented;

- Ensures that an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained before they assess candidates, and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file;
- Ensures that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations, and that the correct procedures are followed as detailed in Chapter 7 of [AARA](#).

Senior Leader(s)

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including [GR](#) and [AARA](#);
- Ensure that a policy demonstrating the Centre’s compliance with relevant legislation is in place.

Additional Learning Support (ALS) Lead/Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant Centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication [AARA](#);
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the Centre.

Teaching Staff

- Where appropriate, inform the ALS Lead/SENDCo of any observations about a candidate or any support that might be needed by a candidate.

Support Staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Communication Support Workers)

- Provide comments/observations to support the SENDCo to ‘paint a holistic picture of need’, confirming normal way of working for a candidate.

Assessor of Candidates with Learning Difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties is an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist teacher assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication [AARA](#);
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the Centre;
- Ensures that staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for **all** candidates are clearly defined and documented;
- Ensures that an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor’s qualification(s) is obtained before they assess candidates, and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file;
- Ensures that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations, and that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of [AA](#);
- Ensures that a policy demonstrating the Centre’s compliance with relevant legislation is in place;
- Supports the SENDCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements;

- Ensures that a statement is provided, which details the criteria that the Centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations;
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates;
- Ensures that the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments approved allow the candidate to access the assessment, but do not result in the candidate gaining an unfair advantage;
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements;
- Produces and reviews a Word Processor Policy, specific to the Centre, which details the criteria that the Centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments;
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates, and the administration of the assessment process;
- Ensures that the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) that a candidate is undertaking;
- Ensures that all assessments undertaken and arrangements implemented comply with JCQ and Awarding Body regulations and guidance;
- Ensures that arrangements implemented for examinations/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the Centre;
- Ensures that the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject-by-subject basis;
- Presents, when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification;
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the Examinations Officer to ensure Centre-delegated and Awarding Body approved access arrangements are implemented for candidates taking internal and external examinations/assessments;
- Provides information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate;
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate;
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate;
- Completes appropriate documentation, as required by the regulations of JCQ and the Awarding Body;

3. Use of Word Processors

A copy of the Trust's Word Processor policy (Examinations) 2022_23 is available upon request to the Examinations Officer (AARA, Section 5.8).

4. Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

SENDCo

- Determines if the arrangements, identified for a candidate, require prior approval from the Awarding Body before the arrangements are implemented, or if approval is Centre-delegated;

- Follows guidance in [AARA](#) (Chapter 8) to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications included;
- Applies for approval, where this is required, through Access Arrangements Online (AAO), or through the Awarding Body, where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO;
- Ensures that, where approval is required, the application is processed on time and no later than the Awarding Body's published deadline;
- Ensures that full supporting evidence is in place before an online application is processed;
- Reviews the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate meets the published criteria for the respective arrangement;
- Holds all supporting evidence and presents such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector, upon request;
- Ensures that the agreed adjustment has been implemented before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal tests and mock examinations;
- Ensures that appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO, including, where required, the completion of relevant JCQ Forms, such as Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), Form 9 (Profile of need), Form 8RF, Form BD25, etc. supplemented by written statements, where required, etc.
- Ensures that, where JCQ forms are required to be completed, forms are signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated, as required, prior to approval being sought, and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (this may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version);
- Ensures that the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications covered by AAO, are entered into AAO to confirm their status;
- Confirms, by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval, that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted;
- Makes an Awarding Body referral, through AAO, where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the Centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s);
- Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate is in hard copy within the candidate's file/each of the required documents held electronically within the candidate's e-folder) that includes:
 - completed JCQ/Awarding Body application forms and evidence forms;
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement, where required;
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the Centre;
 - in addition, for those qualifications covered by AAO (where approval is required), a printout/PDF of the AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form, which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared;
 - where applicable, 'Data protection confirmation by the Examinations Officer or SENDCo' acknowledged before an application is processed online.

- Presents the files/e-folders, when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, and addresses any queries/questions raised;
- If the SENDCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates, when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, and addresses any queries/questions raised;
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates;
- Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure that arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper from CCEA and WJEC (or to download a PDF copy of the standard question paper, where provided by AQA, OCR and Pearson) or to open a question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the Awarding Body's published starting time for the examination, where the Centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component examination paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print);
- Follows the appropriate process (using AAO for those qualifications included in the tool; using Form VQ/EA), orders published modified papers, by the Awarding Body's deadline for the examination series, where these may be required for a candidate.

Examinations Officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication [GR](#) and is aware of information contained in [AARA](#), where this may be relevant to the Examinations Officer role.

5. Implementing Access Arrangements and the Conduct of Examinations

Roles and Responsibilities - External Assessments

These are assessments, which are normally set and marked/examined by an Awarding Body, and which must be conducted according to Awarding Body instructions, and/or the JCQ publication [Instructions for conducting examinations](#) (ICE).

Head of Centre

- Supports the SENDCo, the Examinations Officer and other relevant Centre staff in ensuring that appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access to examinations for disabled candidates.

SENDCo

- Ensures that appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an examination);
- Ensures that a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for them, and ensures that the candidate understands what happens at examination time;
- Ensures that, prior to any arrangements being implemented, checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested;

- Ensures that any arrangements implemented do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates;
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock examinations, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate, and, where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate is not placed at a substantial disadvantage;
- Liaises with the Examinations Officer regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in examinations;
- Liaises with the Examinations Officer to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010, and are trained in disability issues;
- Liaises with the Examinations Officer where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of examinations.

Examinations Officer

- Understands, and follows, instructions for invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and access arrangements in [ICE 2024-2025](#);
- Is familiar with the instructions for invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements and access arrangements in [ICE 2024-2025](#);
- Ensures that examination information (JCQ information for candidates' documents, individual examination timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it;
- Liaises with other relevant Centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to examinations;
- Appoints appropriate Centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional);
- Ensures that facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s);
- Ensures that a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed, or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later;
- Ensures that, where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not normally the candidate's own subject teacher, but, where the candidate's own subject teacher has to be used, ensures a separate invigilator is always present;
- Ensures that, where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, the person appointed is not a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate;
- Ensures that a facilitator, acting as a prompter, is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate;
- Ensures that invigilators, supervising access arrangement candidates, are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates, and the role of any facilitator;

- Ensures that cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement, are completed, as required, by facilitators;
- Liaises with the SENDCo and other relevant Centre staff to ensure that appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to examinations;
- Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure that examination information (JCQ information for candidates' documents, individual examination timetable etc.) is adapted, where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it;
- Liaises with the SENDCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates;
- Liaises with the SENDCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates;
- Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues;
- Ensures that appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to their examinations;
- Ensures that candidates with access arrangements are identified on examination room seating plans, and invigilators are informed of those candidates with access arrangements and made aware of the access arrangement(s) awarded;
- Ensures that invigilators are briefed, prior to each examination session, regarding the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their examination room;
- Checks, in advance of dated examinations/assessments, that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not, contacts the Awarding Body to ensure that papers are available when required);
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the Centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or, where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format, where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required, and either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the examination question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the Awarding Body's published start time of the examination;
- Understands that, where permitted/approved, a secure question paper packet may need to be opened early in the secure room to facilitate the following:
 - a Language Modifier may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the Awarding Body's published start time for the examination in order to prepare;
 - the Communication Professional may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the Awarding Body's published start time for the examination in order to prepare;
 - the Live Speaker may have access to the transcript of the listening examination 60 minutes prior to the Awarding Body's published start time for the examination in order to prepare.
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an examination, where required, for particular access arrangements, and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers;
- prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for particular arrangements;

- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of examinations in terms of rooming and invigilation;
- Liaises with the SENDCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of examinations;
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO, or through the Awarding Body, where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

Other Relevant Centre Staff

- Support the SENDCo and the Examinations Officer to ensure that appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to examinations;
- Staff responsible for IT or another specialist equipment that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate;
- Estates/site staff responsible for rooms and non-specialist equipment (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for examinations that may need to be adapted for a candidate;
- Senior staff responsible for the Centre's emergency evacuation procedures, and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability, who may need assistance when an examination room is evacuated.

Roles and Responsibilities - Internal Assessments

These are Non-Examination Assessments (NEA), which are normally set by a Centre/Awarding Body, marked and internally moderated/standardised by the Centre, and externally moderated by the Awarding Body.

SENDCo

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates;
- Ensures that Centre-delegated and Awarding Body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking their first formal supervised assessment;
- Ensures that candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments;
- Ensures that a candidate has had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination.

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

Examinations Officer

- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s);
- Ensures that cover sheets are completed, as required, by facilitators;
- Provides the SENDCo with assessment schedules to ensure that arrangements are implemented, when required;
- Liaises with the SENDCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate.

Roles and Responsibilities - Internal Examinations

These are examinations or tests, which are set and marked within the Centre; normally a precursor to external assessments.

SENDCo

- Ensures that the Examinations Officer is aware of any candidates that require access arrangements prior to examinations.

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates;
- Provide examination materials that may need to be modified for a candidate;
- Provide the SENDCo with the internal examination timetable to ensure that arrangements are implemented when required.

6. Facilitating Access - Examples

The following information confirms the Centre’s good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate-by-candidate basis, consideration is given to:

- adapting assessment arrangements;
- adapting assessment materials;
- the provision of specialist equipment, or adaptation of standard equipment;
- the adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes.

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the Centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition, which prevents the candidate from taking examinations in the Centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations; Supervised rest breaks.	<p>SENDCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take examinations at home;</p> <p>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need;</p> <p>Approval confirmed by SENDCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required;</p> <p>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm that the arrangements should be put in place;</p> <p>Examinations Officer submits ‘Alternative site form’ for timetabled written examinations to Awarding Body/Bodies online using CAP;</p> <p>An online submission must only be made for timetabled written examinations:</p> <p>Examinations Officer provides candidate with examination timetable and JCQ information for candidates;</p> <p>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood;</p> <p>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that, prior to each examination, they will call to confirm fitness to take examination;</p> <p>Examinations Officer allocates invigilator(s) to candidate’s timetable; confirms time of collection of examination papers and materials;</p> <p>Invigilator monitors candidate’s condition for each examination, and records any issues on incident log;</p> <p>Invigilator records supervised rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log, and confirms full time given for examination;</p>

		<p>Invigilator briefs Examinations Officer, after each examination, on how the candidate's performance in examination may have been affected by their condition; Examinations Officer discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged); Examinations Officer processes request(s) for special consideration, where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence, supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of Senior Leadership Team (evidence must be retained until after the publication of the results); Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested.</p>
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader; 25% extra time; Alternative rooming arrangements.	<p>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010; Papers checked for those testing reading; Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded; SENDCo produces a statement confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment, and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects their normal and current way of working within the Centre and completes appropriate form/documentation for evidence of need; AAO application for approval processed; Supporting evidence, AAO approval, signed candidate personal data consent form and completed data protection confirmation by the Examinations Officer or SENDCo form kept on file.</p>
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter; Alternative rooming arrangements.	<p>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long-term adverse impairment; Confirms with candidate how and when they are to be prompted; Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room).</p>
A wheelchair user	Desk; Rooms; Facilities; Seating arrangements; Practical assistant.	<p>Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so Awarding Body referral lists the tasks that are to be performed; Provides height adjustable desk in examination room; Allocates examination room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities; Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access; Seats candidate near examination room door; Confirms the arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the examination room;</p>

		Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment.
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