

## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY 2024/25

<b>Audience</b>	All stakeholders – staff, students, trustees, parents and visitors
<b>Status / review cycle</b>	Statutory/Annual
<b>Current review</b>	November 2024
<b>Next review</b>	November 2025
<b>Review committee</b>	Curriculum Management
<b>Staff lead</b>	Nick Levy, Learning Support Manager and Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal – Student Services
<b>Trustee lead</b>	N/A

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## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Esher Sixth Form College complies with its obligation to identify the need for, request, and implementing access arrangements. The general exam regulations in this publication are further referred to in this policy as GR. This document covers the assessment process and related issues in detail and includes, as appendices, four specific policies for Centre Delegated Access Arrangements (CDAA); Use of a Word Processor, Separate Invigilation, and Supervised Rest Breaks.

This policy is reviewed annually with reference to the current edition of the JCQ publication:

[‘Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’](#). This publication is referred to in this policy as JCQ AA. This Access Arrangements policy is communicated to all relevant centre staff and is available electronically via the Policies section of the All Staff MS Team.

## **2. ASSESSORS**

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) are appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations [JCQAA 7.3] ‘...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.’ [AA 7.4 ]

## **3. CHECKING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ASSESSOR**

Esher Sixth Form College Personnel Department checks the paper qualifications of the Specialist Assessor before confirming appointment. A copy of the Specialist Assessor’s qualifications is kept on file by the Learning Support Manager for presentation to the JCQ Centre Inspector during an Access Arrangements Inspection.

The Learning Support Manager checks that:

- the Specialist Assessor undertakes appropriate CPD for renewal of the Assessment Practising Certificate when required.
- the APC held by the Specialist Assessor remains current before assessments are carried out for each new academic year.the Specialist Assessor can confirm at the start of each academic year that they have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved.
- the Specialist Assessor hold a teaching qualification (PGCE) and is able to make recommendations for students at sixth form college.
- the Specialist Assessor holds a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, awarded by BDA and listed on SASC web-site.
- the Specialist Assessor is familiar with the Equality Act and uses this knowledge to identify access arrangements that might assist a candidate.

- the Specialist Assessor has successfully completed a post-graduate course equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which includes all relevant training in psychometric tests, the use of nationally standardised tests for the age group, objective administration of attainment tests including reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling.
- the specialist assessor has training in the use of appropriate methods of assessing writing skills.
- the Specialist Assessor has been trained in the ethical administration of testing.

The Specialist Assessors currently employed by the Centre hold the following qualifications:

#### **Assessor 1**

- Postgraduate Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) – Dyslexia Institute/York University
- Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (CCET) – British Psychological Society
- Assessment Practicing Certificate (APC) – British Dyslexia Association, APC number as listed on the SASC website: 18/APC07070
- Masters in Integrative Arts Psychotherapy – IATE/University of East London
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registration number: AS16039

#### **Assessor 2**

- Specialist Qualification held: Hornsby Diploma in Specific Learning Difficulties Level 7, AMBDA (05/AMB 936)
- Name of Awarding Body: Hornsby International Dyslexia Centre, British Dyslexia Association

## **4. ASSESSMENT**

How the assessment process is administered:

- Following either disclosure of learning needs at enrolment, student self-referral, or referral by teaching staff, the Learning Support Manager or Learning Support Coordinator makes the arrangement for individual students to be assessed by the Specialist Assessor.
- Students with a history of access arrangements are assessed by the Specialist Assessor in their first year of study and an application to cover the next two years of study is made to JCQ if need is still evidenced. Ideally access arrangements should be applied for at the start of a two year course. However, sixth form colleges require time to conduct the appropriate assessments, and build a comprehensive record of evidence of need to satisfy regulations. Formal agreement for access arrangements may, therefore, not be in place in time for internal assessments during the first year. The JCQ deadline for applications for access arrangements for external assessment is prioritised and strictly adhered to as laid out in JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- Computerised literacy screening (Exact) for students on a group basis is overseen by a Specialist Assessor.

- The Learning Support Manager and Learning Support Coordinator work closely with the Specialist Assessor to provide monitoring information and the history of need of each student, recorded in Part 1 of the JCQ Form 8, and directs the required testing in relation to an individual's study programme.
- If a learning need that meets criteria for access arrangements, i.e. literacy and/or cognitive impairments that substantially affect their performance, is identified by testing, the Specialist Assessor completes Part 2 of JCQ Form 8 and provides feedback to the Learning Support Manager or Coordinator, who then considers this information with supporting evidence from teachers.
- The Specialist Assessor personally conducts the assessments and carries out testing relevant to support the application, using recent editions of nationally standardised tests and reporting standardised scores, and ensuring that the candidate's chronological age is less than the "ceiling" of the test.
- If a learning need is not identified from testing, the Specialist Assessor completes a Record Form which is kept on file by the Learning Support Manager for Centre use only. Suitable accommodation for one-to-one assessment is provided by the Centre.

## 5. RECORDING EVIDENCE OF NEED

Evidence to paint a picture of need for Form 8 is drawn from:

- Documentation evidencing Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) provided by educational and other relevant professionals who have been working with a student since year 9 of secondary school.
- The Learning Support database which shows any self-disclosed access arrangements received by students at their previous school, and self-reported information from students and parents. The database is updated throughout the academic year using information gathered from enrolment, and new or further information and documentation supplied by students, teachers, support staff, and Student Services (which may include Mental Health Coordinator, Tutor Team Leaders and Director of Safeguarding and EDI).
- JCQ Form 8's from secondary schools are used to inform a history of need for students, and to inform teaching staff of student need prior to teaching. A JCQ "rollover" form will be completed for each Form 8 received from a secondary school.
- Computerised literacy screening (Lucid Exact) test results can provide further supplementary evidence.
- Notes recorded by learning support staff on the Learning Support Department database for individual students; students with a disclosed history of need have access to regular learning support sessions through which their normal way of working is monitored and supported; student dialogue and self-reporting is also recorded by support staff.
- Comments from Progress Review data (tracking data) relating to relevant difficulties.

Gathering evidence to support normal way of working:

"The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

in the classroom (where appropriate);

- working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
- literacy support lessons;
- literacy intervention strategies;
- in internal tests/examinations;
- mock examinations.

This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working' and comprises the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8".

Awarding extra time for medical reasons:

In August 2024, JCQ, in recognition of CAMHS waiting list times, introduced a new rule which outlined how proof that a student had been referred to CAMHS would now be acceptable as evidence supporting an application for any exam access arrangements needing JCQ permission, rather than a student having to supply a signed diagnostic report from a Consultant or equivalent professional. (This would of course be covered by the completion of a "Form 9" rather than a Form 8.)

## **6. PROCESSING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval:

- The Learning Support Manager and Learning Support Coordinator are responsible for completing awarding body referrals where necessary, and for explaining the outcomes of a referral to a candidate, including when a referral has not been approved.
- The Learning Support Manager and Learning Support Coordinator are responsible for processing applications for access arrangements. The resulting approval or rejection notice for the candidate is retained with the original Form 8.
- The Learning Support Manager or Coordinator considers all information and assessment findings in relation to JCQ criteria, before making an online application for access arrangements.
- Privately commissioned assessments cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access Arrangements Online. Privately commissioned assessments can only be used when the assessor has contacted the centre, established a working relationship with the centre and has been approved by the head of centre. If these conditions are met, prior to a private assessment, the assessor must receive at least a 'skeleton' Form 8 from the Learning Support Team at the College.

## **7. CENTRE DELEGATED ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

There is not a requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online for JCQ/Awarding Body approval for these arrangements. However, the college must be satisfied:

- The student has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.
- The student has a need on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.
- The College must be satisfied that there is a genuine need and that there is written evidence available confirming the student has established difficulties. In addition the arrangement must reflect the student's normal way of working within the centre. This evidence must be available to a JCQ Inspector on request. A JCQ Form 9 will also need to be completed.

In the case of a temporary arrangement due to temporary injury, the evidence should take the form of a letter from a GP or treatment centre.

#### **USE OF A WORD PROCESSOR POLICY (EXAMS) (APPENDIX 1)**

“..a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs...A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.” [AA 5.8]

Approval for this arrangement will be given by the Learning Support Manager.

#### **USE OF A WORD PROCESSOR STATEMENT (APPENDIX 2)**

‘Centres are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to their needs.’ [5.8.1 AA] The use of a Word Processor will be considered for students with:

- A medical condition that impacts on the legibility and/or speed of handwriting
- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A physical disability that impacts on the legibility and/or speed of handwriting
- A sensory impairment that impacts on handwriting due to visual stress or requirement to read work in a larger font size
- Poor handwriting that doesn't improve with targeted help - making writing illegible or incomprehensible to anyone unfamiliar with it
- Planning and organisational problems that impact on the legibility and/or speed of handwriting

In all cases, the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

This arrangement is allocated by the Learning Support Manager when fully evidenced and appropriate to the student's needs. This may mean that it is not a suitable arrangement for all subjects e.g. Mathematics, Physics, and short answer subjects or those with graphs and diagrams.

The arrangement is made on the understanding that, if it is not used for the full range of assessments, within a subject, taken by the student during the two year course, it will not be made available for the final summer external exams at the end of the two year period of study.

Dependent on need candidates may use a mixture of writing and typing for an examination – the Learning Support Manager will discuss this fully with the candidate during assessment for this access arrangement.

### **ALTERNATIVE ROOMING ARRANGEMENTS (FORMALLY KNOWN AS "SEPARATE INVIGILATION WITHIN THE CENTRE") (APPENDIX 3)**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre must be made 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." [AA 5.16]

The candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities and documented accordingly.

These difficulties are a consequence of a documented long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

In making an application the Learning support Manager will gather signed data consent, privacy notice (AAO) and Data Protection Confirmation Forms. Approval for this arrangement will be given by the Learning Support Manager.

### **SUPERVISED REST BREAKS (APPENDIX 4)**

'....must always be considered before making an application for extra time.' ....for GCSE and GCE qualifications ..... must produce written evidence confirming the need for supervised rest breaks to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. This must confirm the candidate's established difficulties and that supervised rest breaks reflect his/her normal way of working within the centre....' [AA 5.1]

'..There will be some constraints on timing if the candidate has more than one examination to take each day. The supervised rest break is not included in any extra time allowance. Centres must seek medical advice in cases of serious illness on whether the candidate is fit to take the examination.....'

Approval for this arrangement will be given by the Learning Support Manager.

### **SEPARATE INVIGILATION (APPENDIX 5)**

[Note: see JCQ AA 5.16 in addition to centre-determined criteria]

Candidates are only entitled to the above arrangement if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. The candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other non-disabled candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition that is clearly evidenced.)

Separate invigilation should reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal tests and mock examinations, as a consequence of a long term medical condition, or long term social, mental or emotional needs [AA 5.16]

There is an internal deadline of early February (specifically 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025) for referral, assessment, and evidence of need.

Students who present after that deadline or on the day of an exam, are treated with emergency measures that may or may not include separate invigilation, within the limitations of available resources.

The Learning Support Manager will gather information from Student Services within College including, but not limited to:

- the Mental Health Coordinator
- College Counsellors
- Director of Safeguarding and EDI
- Tutor Team Leaders

The Learning Support Manager may also gather information, if available, from external specialists currently treating a student for a medical or mental health condition.

The information is considered by the Learning Support Manager and if need is evidenced, a file note is written by the Learning Support Manager to evidence support for the access arrangement.



The Learning Support Manager works with the Exams Officer to facilitate provision, in advance, for the day of the exam.

### **SUPERVISED REST BREAKS (APPENDIX 6)**

The Learning Support Manager is allowed to provide a supervised rest break to a candidate where it is his/her normal way of working in the centre. The Learning Support Manager must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act and there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- cognition and learning needs;
- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;
- social, mental and emotional needs.

In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established within the centre and thus known to their Tutor, Tutor Team Leader, the Learning Support Manager and /or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. [AA 5.1]

It is also stated within [AA 5.1] : A single supervised rest break should be no more than 30 minutes in duration. A supervised rest break will often be shorter than this. Candidates cannot be given as many supervised rest breaks as they like for as long as they like. A supervised rest break will not normally be required within the first 10 minutes of an examination but may be thereafter.

The duration of the rest break must be determined by the Learning Support Manager based on knowledge of the candidate's needs and normal way of working.

The Learning Support Manager will determine the frequency and duration of supervised rest breaks, as above, where appropriate, and by prior arrangement with the individual student. As a standard, we usually expect rest breaks to be taken for 5 minutes for every hour of an examination, dependant on the individual student's needs, a supervised rest break may or may not take place in the examination room

### **READER/COMPUTER READER (APPENDIX 7)**

"For a candidate with a disability or a learning difficulty a computer reader may allow them to demonstrate their attainment more effectively and independently than would be possible with a reader." (AA 5.5.1)

Esher Sixth Form College considers the use of a computer reader as it's normal way of working for the centre. The college subscribe to, and provide JCQ Approved Read & Write software to every student in the college, which can be accessed from any PC.

The Learning Support Manager will produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre.

For candidates with learning difficulties assessment evidence and Form 8 is no longer required. However, the must be satisfied that: the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant reading difficulties; (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.)

A Form 9 will be completed 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.

A computer reader/reader will be awarded on account of  
cognition and learning needs;

- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;
- social, mental and emotional needs

"A computer reader will be allowed in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading. A computer reader and a reader do not interpret text in the same way. A reader can add a layer of vocal interpretation (nuance and meaning). This could affect a candidate's response and therefore compromise the reliability of the qualification. A computer reader is an acceptable arrangement since it allows the candidate to independently meet the requirements of the reading standard" (AA 5.5.6)

In rare circumstances where a computer reader does not meet the need of a student, options such as reading pens, read aloud and the use of a human reader will be explored. The Learning Support Manager will approve all arrangements involving the use of a reading aid.