Glenthorne High School

Exam Access Arrangements Policy 2023-2024

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided to ensure that the student has appropriate access to the exam. They are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need. They extend and reflect the support that is given to a pupil who has SEND in the classroom, internal exams and mock exams. Access arrangements fall into two distinct categories: those delegated to centres and those that require prior JCQ awarding body approval. Access arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. In this way, Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

The Glenthorne High School Policy for Exam Access Arrangements is written in line with **Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'**.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with the school's **SEND Policy**, which sets out the procedures for identifying SEND and making and evaluating provision for pupils with SEND.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires and Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner, the effectiveness of the adjustments and the likely impact on the adjustments on the candidate and the other candidates. A reasonable adjustment will not be approved if it involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body, involves unreasonable timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

Duty to make a reasonable adjustment

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

Definition of disability

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'.

Definition of special educational needs

A candidate has special educational needs as defined by the SEND Code of Practice 2015: 0 to 25 years. As outlined in the SEND Policy, a child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements may include:

1. Supervised rest breaks
2. Extra time of up to 25%
3. Extra time of up to 50%
4. Extra time of over 50%
5. Reader / computer reader
6. Read aloud
7. Scribe
8. Word processor (see appendix 1)
9. Prompter
10. Modified language papers
11. Language Modifier
12. Live speaker
13. Communication Professional
14. Practical Assistant
15. Alternative site arrangement
16. Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: Braille resources, modified papers (coloured or enlarged papers), colour naming for candidates who are colour blind, coloured overlays, separate invigilation within the centre.

Basic principles

In line with JCQ regulations, Glenthorne will make all decisions with regards to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working at Glenthorne. Teaching staff will be involved in determining the need for the access arrangement via the SEND referral system (described in the SEND Policy), if the need is not already identified through the candidate's SEN Support Plan (SSP) or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Appropriate evidence of need must be held by Glenthorne and will be made available for inspection by JCQ when requested.

Identifying the needs for access arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements during KS4 and KS5 are identified as early as possible in KS3, including recording whether exam access arrangements were applied in KS2. During KS3, needs are identified rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to teaching within lesson are made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments. Formal assessments for Access Arrangements take place during the last term of Year 9 or in Year 10 for GCSE. Formal assessments take place in Year 12 for A-Level students who are new to the school.

Assessment and implementation

Formal assessments and applications for JCQ are made in Year 9 / 10 and Year 12. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted, access arrangements are valid for 26 months.

Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements. The recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent access arrangements.

Specialist assessments for access arrangements are carried out at Glenthorne by an appropriately qualified assessor.

The SENCO, specialist assessor, examination officer and subject leaders all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for tests and examinations. Teaching staff will have regard to the identified access arrangements for classroom-based assessments, but it will not always be possible to implement all arrangements during informal testing.

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

If the SENCO and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/carers.

Procedures for processing an application for access arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam access arrangements to JCQ. These include:

- Form 8 reports completed and signed by the specialist assessor within the centre, as well as the SENCO
- A current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or SEND Support Plan (SSP)
- Reports from relevant professionals, such as:
  - Educational Psychologist
  - Speech and Language Therapist
  - Occupational Therapist
  - Hearing Impairment (HI) or Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers
  - CAMHS
  - Medical professionals

These reports are kept on file and made available for inspection if required. These reports must be supported by evidence of the need and demonstrate the candidate's substantial impairment. This should include:

- the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for the arrangement
- evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom
- confirmation that the arrangement is the candidate's normal way of working
- confirmation that the candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage without the access arrangement

Centre-delegated access arrangements must also be supported with evidence demonstrating the points above.

When a need for access arrangements has been identified, applied for and approved, relevant parties are informed as follows:

- parents are informed by letter of the type of arrangements that have been awarded
- students are informed verbally
- the examinations officer receives a list of all candidates who have been approved for access arrangements
- subject leaders and teaching staff receive a list of all candidates who have been approved for access arrangements, via the school's shared drive and via email before key exam periods

Private Educational Psychologist (EP) or Assessment Reports

A parent may have their child assessed by a private educational psychologist (EP) or similar professional and submit the report to the SENCO as evidence that their child requires access arrangements such as extra time. Private EP reports cost a significant amount of money and this means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report because of their financial circumstances would be at a disadvantage. As an exam centre, Glenthorne must be consistent in its decisions and ensure that no student is given an unfair advantage or disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Therefore, when parents submit such reports to Glenthorne, we will look for evidence of a history of need. If the private report is not consistent with school test results and evidence, then the school's assessments will take precedence in informing the school's decisions regarding access arrangements.

Appendix 1 – Policy for the use of Word Processors in Examinations

The policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of the updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' and 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' (available on the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk).

Qualifications for Use

Word processors cannot be granted to students simply because they do not wish to write, they work faster on a laptop or they use a word processor when they work at home. Candidates will be permitted to use a word processor if that is their normal method of working whilst attending Glenthorne. The types of candidates that will be permitted to use a word processor during an examination or assessment will broadly fall under one of the following definitions:
- a candidate with a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a candidate with a medical condition
- a candidate with a physical disability
- a candidate with a sensory impairment
- a candidate with such poor handwriting that it would be illegible when writing during an exam
- a candidate with planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

The following evidence would be required to justify a student using a word processor for one or more of their examinations:
- They fall below the writing speed or legibility or comprehensibility threshold in the formal access arrangements assessment
- Teachers report that the pupil has illegible handwriting. This must be supported with a sample of the writing and the SENCO must agree with the judgment
- Teachers report that the pupil has very slow handwriting so that they rarely complete a timed test. This must be supported with a sample of timed writing. This could be followed up with a formal assessment of writing speed.
- There is a diagnosed medical condition made by a trained medical professional that clearly states the use of a word processor would be required for examinations

Regardless of which of the above applies, the pupil must be able to demonstrate that they can competently use a laptop (i.e. typing speed) and if possible, this should have been practised in at least one series of exams before the end of Year 11.

If a student is deemed to need the use of word processor for examinations, this does not necessarily mean they will have access to one for every exam they take. Examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate therefore avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen. It is also permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.

The decision to issue a word processor will rest with the SENCO and the member of staff who has the responsibility to assess for exam access arrangements, in conjunction with the school Exams Officer

If a word processor is approved, the guidelines set out in the publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' will be followed.

Appendix 2 – Policy for the use of separate invigilation within the centre

The policy on the use of separate invigilation within the centre (sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall) in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of the updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' and 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' (available on the JCQ website www.jcq.org.uk).

Qualifications for Use

The SENCO must make their decision 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.

In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's disability must be **established within the centre**. It should be known to a Form Tutor, Head of Year, the SENCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

If separate invigilation within the centre is approved, the guidelines set out in the publication 'Instructions for Conducting Examinations' will be followed.

Appendix 3 – Roles and Responsibilities in the Provision of Access Arrangements

The SENCO and/or 2ic SEN (KS4/5) will:
-   Identify pupils for assessment, based on KS3 access arrangements lists and teacher referrals
-   Produce Part 1 of Form 8 prior to assessment
-   Liaise with the relevant assessor
-   Process Part 2 of Form 8 when the assessment has been completed and then complete Part 3 of Form 8
-   Apply for access arrangements at *Access Arrangements Online*, as soon as Form 8 is completed or other relevant evidence is collated
-   Ensure that all pupils receiving access arrangements have appropriate evidence and justification
-   Send a letter to parents confirming the access arrangements as soon as the arrangement is confirmed, and no later than the beginning of exam series
-   Maintain the folder of access arrangements paperwork, including the Form 8s, data consent, file notes and evidence
-   Maintain the list of access arrangements for KS4 and KS5 and ensure the list is kept up to date on SharePoint and circulated to Subject Leaders and the Examinations Officer whenever updated
-   Allocate TAs to the exam timetable when received from the Examinations Officer and share with TAs
-   Designate a 'lead TA' in rooms where there is no external invigilator present
-   Train the TAs providing access arrangements prior to the beginning of the exam series
-   Ensure that all relevant equipment (eg word processors) is available for use in the exams as confirmed
-   Review provision for access arrangements pupils if they consistently choose not to use the arrangement

The Examinations Officer will:
-   Produce a timetable of exams for students with access arrangements for internal and external exams
-   Indicate on the timetable the number of external invigilators booked
-   Share timetable with the SENCO and 2i/c SEN (KS4/5), at least 3 weeks before exams
-   Allocate and book appropriate rooms for access arrangements pupils, including during registration periods
-   Ensure all rooms used for access arrangements pupils are suitable (i.e. non subject-specific) and have regulation posters on display prior to start of exam
-   Train invigilators in managing access arrangements venues (roles of scribes/readers/TAs) (responsibility for cover sheets, time, papers)
-   Apply to Pearson for BTEC access arrangements for all relevant pupils