



Access Arrangements Policy

This document is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance: 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments,' which can be found via the link below:

[AA_regs_23-24_FINAL.pdf\(jcq.org.uk\)](https://www.jcq.org.uk/media/2023/03/AA_regs_23-24_FINAL.pdf)

What are Access Arrangements?

These are arrangements (for instance extra time, reader or scribe) that are put in place to make sure that all students have a 'level playing field' when sitting examinations. They are only available to students with substantial, long-term difficulties that are known to have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities in school. Examples of examination access arrangements (further details about these can be found on the JCQ website):

- Extra time of 25%
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe
- Laptop
- Supervised Rest Breaks
- Prompter
- Separate Room

According to JCQ guidance, "the Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body (examination board i.e. AQA, OCR, EDEXCEL) to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage."

"The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment."

Open Box Education Centre is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students. This means ensuring that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in examinations. The school abides by the strict regulations set out by the JCQ.

How do we know who needs Access Arrangements?

On entry to Open Box Education Centre, all students will be screened for cognitive ability, reading comprehension and spelling levels. It is important that referring agencies and parents alert the school to any pre-existing conditions on entry and ensure that any documentary evidence is transferred from other schools in order to build up a picture of the student's needs. Such documents may include evidence of access arrangements for SATS, school reports, personal plans/pen portraits/Individual Education Plans (IEPs), reports written by professional such as psychologists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists and speech and language therapists. Students will be monitored at Open Box Education Centre to consider whether examination access arrangements may be needed.

Students with a history of the following needs may need access arrangements. Please note that a diagnosis alone cannot entitle students to access arrangements unless there is supporting evidence from school. This is a requirement of the JCQ.

- Cognition and Learning Needs (e.g. General and/or specific learning difficulties)
- Communication and Interaction Needs (e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Speech, Language and Communication Needs)
- Sensory and Physical Needs (e.g. Hearing Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment, Physical Disability, Vision Impairment)
- Social, Mental and Emotional Needs (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Mental Health Conditions)
- English as an Additional Language

Access arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by the JCQ if the school has been aware of the student's medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place. For students who require temporary access arrangements due to medical problems such as broken limbs, the school must have a medical letter before the arrangement can be put into place and the school Exams Officer must be made aware of the situation as soon as possible. Medical letters relating to anxiety or depression which the school was not made aware of before the deadline for access arrangements will not be considered.

The deadline for access arrangements for GCSE/GCE examinations taking place in May/June 2024 is 21st March 2024. Should any student require any modification to the printed examination papers, the deadline is 31st January 2023.

For students transferring from other schools during the course of the year, relevant documentation regarding existing conditions and examination access arrangements must be provided. This can be sent on by the previous school or provided by parents.

The following documents will be required if the access arrangements are to be considered:

- Form 8 (a JCQ form held by the previous school) and any report which was used as evidence;
- Form 9 (a JCQ form held by the previous school) and any report which was used as evidence;
- Application Approved (a JCQ form held by the previous school);
- Supporting documents such as medical letters and professional reports, if necessary;
- Anecdotal evidence from teachers regarding the need for examination access arrangements;
- Pieces of work showing the use of extra time by means of a different coloured pen.

In order for us to demonstrate an ongoing need for access arrangements, current in-school evidence may need to be sought in addition to the documents listed above.

What do we need to evidence access arrangements?

JCQ inspections require all schools to have the required evidence for every student that has been awarded access arrangements. Schools are subject to at least two unannounced inspections from the JCQ every year. If the school fails to provide sufficient evidence, in line with JCQ regulations, then the student in question could have marks deducted due to their unfair advantage and our status as an approved examination centre could be jeopardised.

The required evidence needed from the school for JCQ inspection is:

- Relevant evidence of the nature and extent of the disability or difficulty/impairment which has a substantial and long term effect i.e. history of need/history of provision.
- Evidence that the difficulties are persistent and significant (this will be ascertained from progress data)
- Evidence from school staff of how the disability, difficulty or impairment has had a long term impact on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Confirmation that the student will be at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other nondisabled candidates undertaking the assessment.

For access arrangements awarded on medical grounds the school will also need to present the following evidence to enable an application to be made:

- A letter from CAMHS or a clinical psychologist; or
- A letter from a hospital consultant; or
- A Letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service; or
- A letter from the Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service; or
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT).

A letter from a GP is not sufficient.

Subject Specific Access Arrangements

Access arrangements may vary between subjects due to their different demands. If this is the case then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects e.g. a laptop may be required for longer written exams such as History but not for a Maths exam. Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed these become the 'normal way of working'. This means that the appropriate access arrangements should be taken into consideration in all planned assessments. An access arrangement must be the student's normal way of working in order for the application to comply with regulations.

Who can assess and how are decisions made?

Decisions regarding access arrangements are determined by the outcome of the Access Arrangement Screening Process, described in Appendix 1. The Head of Centre is ultimately responsible for appointing an appropriately qualified Access Arrangement Assessor with a certified level of competence as dictated by the JCQ.

Schools are not obliged to accept private reports and will only work with assessors where there is an established relationship. Private assessors must contact school to request evidence of the student's normal way of working and relevant background information prior to undertaking any assessment. Private assessors are responsible for providing JCoSS with a copy of their up to date practising certificate which the school must keep on file in preparation for JCQ inspection. Access arrangement assessments cannot be completed without JCQ's Form 8, section A first being completed by the school. This will only be done if in the school's opinion there is a sufficient history of need; this must be supported with school data and evidence. If there is insufficient school evidence, the school will reject the assessor's recommendations and notify parents in writing of this decision. Final decisions regarding access arrangements are made by the school.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements or to process and access arrangement application.

Assistive Technologies

Where possible, students should work towards greater independence; scribes should only be considered when a student does not have sufficient word processing skills to use a laptop, and readers should only be considered after the possibility of using a computer reader has been explored. Access arrangements must reflect normal way of working and therefore only students identified as working in this way will be considered for a scribe or 1:1 reader.

Supervised Rest Breaks

The JCQ state that supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making an application for extra time. To qualify for rest breaks a concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, before the deadline(s), must be in place for each candidate confirming the need for supervised rest breaks and confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that supervised rest breaks reflect his/her normal way of working. Rest breaks are the appropriate provision for a range of difficulties including:

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

English as an Additional Language

Up to 10% extra time may be awarded for students who have lived in the UK for less than three years, providing they arrived in the UK with no prior knowledge of English and English is not the spoken language at home; the extra time is for the use of a bilingual dictionary. Due to the nature of set assessment objectives this provision will not be awarded in GCSE: English Language, English Literature, Geography, History, and Religious Studies. Furthermore, extra time is not awarded for GCE.

Data Protection

Students who are granted access arrangements must sign a Data Protection Notice allowing the school permission to make an application online to the JCQ. Failure to do so will mean that an application cannot be made and examination access arrangements will not be granted.

Approved by: (Principal)..... (date)

Authorised by:..... (Chair of Governors) 21-11-2023

To be reviewed every: 1 Year

Next review date: September 2024

Date of Review	Reviewed by	Date of next review
Sep 2018 version 1.0	Siobhan Garrett	Sep 2019
March 2020 version 1.1	Elinor Fahy	Sep 2020
January 2021 version 1.2	Elinor Fahy	Sep 2021
September 2021 version 1.3	Elinor Fahy	Sep 2022
September 2022 version 1.4	Elinor Fahy	Sep 2023
September 2023 version 1.5	Samantha Hutton	Sep 2024

Appendix 1

Access Arrangements Screening Process

Stage	Action and Next Steps
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the student have a statement/EHCP, or • have concerns been raised by teaching staff, or • are there concerns about a student's mental health and has there been involvement from outside agencies? • If yes, move to Stage 2 • If no, consult recent school data information to assess if there is a history of underachievement (in line with the student's targets) in English and/or Maths in the last 12 months. If yes, move to Stage 2. If no, end.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENCo to seek information and feedback from all teachers to establish normal way of working in lessons, with a focus on the student's needs. • If several concerns are raised, move to stage 3. • If there are no or limited concerns, the process will end.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student is screened by a specialist assessor in school using recognised standardised tests in order to establish any below average standard scores as outlined by the JCQ. • If below average standard score(s) are identified, move to stage 4 • If there are no below average standard scores, the process will end. • If an assessment has been carried out by an external assessor with prior consultation with school, the results should identify below average standard scores as above. A separate screening in school will not be carried out.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All evidence will be collated, and appropriate access arrangements will be discussed and decided with key staff in school. The final decision for all access arrangements rests with the Principal.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exams Officer and SENCo will apply to JCQ for specific access arrangements in preparation for GCSE and GCE assessments (N.B. Any access arrangements will expire 26 months from date of application to the JCQ). • Teachers will be informed of the access arrangements • Parents will be informed of approved access arrangement(s) by letter from the SENCo.
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and Support staff, the Exams Officer, Invigilating team and SENCo will monitor effective use of access arrangements after each planned assessment. • Findings from this will determine whether the access arrangements will remain in place or be removed by the SENCo as advised by the JCQ. • If an access arrangement is removed, the SENCo will inform parents by letter