



Ryburn Valley High School

**Examination Access Arrangements Policy and
Procedure**

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Examination Access Arrangements Policy and Procedure

Ryburn Valley High School recognises its responsibilities in ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to allow fair and equal access to examinations and assessments for students.

The aim of this policy is to inform students, staff and other parties of the procedures in place to make appropriate additional assessment and examination arrangements for disabled students or those with specific learning difficulties.

The policy also aims to ensure that appropriate, effective and additional assessments and exam access arrangements are in place for disabled learners and those with specific learning difficulties and; that these arrangements are communicated to the student, Exams Team, Course Tutors, parents/guardians and employers, as appropriate.

Some adjustments may not be permitted by particular Awarding Bodies. In all cases, the Exams Team will request approval and confirmation from the relevant Awarding Bodies.

Examination Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments at Ryburn Valley High School.

This document outlines the School's Policy on examination access arrangements. These are arrangements put in place to ensure all students have equal access to examinations. Students should not be put at a disadvantage by a learning, medical, physical, sensory or psychological difficulty they may experience. The policy is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document, which is updated annually, 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'.

RVHS will take every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the school and throughout their time at the school.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of 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 Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

A candidate has a 'special educational need' as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. "Children have special educational needs if they have a learning a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them."

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes "substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN."

A student with a disability or difficulty, which has a substantial and long-term effect on performance in examinations, may qualify for access arrangements.

Access Arrangements are agreed before an assessment or examination and before the published deadline dates, which are published annually in the Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments booklet : <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>. They allow a candidate with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- Access the assessment, show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements can only be applied for if the candidate meets all of the following criteria:

- They must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010*
- The Access Arrangement/s being applied must be their normal way of working
- Their disability is persistent and significant

- There must be evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom

Evidence of Need

Teaching staff must provide evidence of the need and the provision of reasonable adjustments in the classroom to meet the candidate's needs due to their disability.

Written confirmation must be provided to say that without the Access Arrangement applied for, the candidate would continue to be at a substantial disadvantage.

The evidence of need will vary depending on the disability and the access arrangement(s) being applied for. Failure to produce the appropriate evidence of need will lead to the application being rejected. Usually, further evidence of need will be required for a substantial impairment.

Special Consideration

Special consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment, requiring authoritative support and at the discretion of the examining body.

Who is Eligible for Examination Access Arrangements?

Students who have been formally identified as having a condition, which adversely affects their ability to learn or take tests and examination, may be eligible for examination access arrangements. The criteria by which individuals are identified are set out clearly by the JCQ. The decision is based on whether the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment, which affects their ability to display their knowledge within an assessment situation. Students may have a range of diagnosed conditions or disabilities requiring 'reasonable adjustments' to be made for them.

The following are two examples where a student would be granted a separate invigilation:

A student with depression who has been under Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and there is written evidence from the tutor and the Inclusive Learning Team as to how they differentiate the learning environment for this student.

A student with an established medical condition or formally recognised social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and seeks support in School.

Where a student panics on the days running up to the examination or becomes anxious, then they would not be eligible for access arrangements but be seated more appropriately within the main examination venue.

Students with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for access arrangements. For example, a student with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an examination may not meet the criteria for access arrangements.

However, when concerns are raised about a particular student, information from all teaching and support staff is sought to see if similar concerns are confirmed by others, prior to the implementation of access arrangements.

Access Arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subject areas. If this is the case, then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects, or adapted and changed for other subjects. All access arrangements decisions are based in line with the student's normal way of working.

Access Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

Cognition and learning need e.g., students with general or specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)

Candidates with learning difficulties may require for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- a word processor
- a scribe
- a prompter
- a practical assistant
- coloured overlays
- coloured/enlarged papers
- modified language papers

Please note: the candidate must have an impairment in their first language which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect. A candidate does not have a learning difficulty simply because their first language is not English.

Communication and Interaction Needs e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Candidates with communication and interaction difficulties may require for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- modified language papers
- a word processor
- a scribe

Sensory and Physical Needs e.g., Hearing Impairment (HI), Multi- Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Disability (PD), Vision impairment (VI.)

Candidates with sensory and physical needs may require for example:

- supervised rest breaks

- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- a word processor
- a scribe
- a live speaker
- a communication professional
- a practical assistant
- braille papers, modified enlarged and/or modified language papers

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs e.g., Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Mental Health Conditions. Candidates with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs may require for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- a prompter
- separate invigilation within the centre (a letter from a medical professional – not a GP)
- extra time
- a word processor
- a computer reader or a reader
- read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe

Separate Invigilation

Separate invigilation within the centre is an access arrangement and the need for the arrangement is determined by the SENCo, in conjunction with relevant teaching staff and the Access Arrangements Manager and SLT.

The decision for separate invigilation must be based on the following criteria:

- the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre
- the candidate's difficulties are known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities
- separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs
- 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 following are two examples where candidates would be eligible for separate invigilation:

- a candidate with depression or anxiety who is being supported by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- a candidate with an established medical condition or a formally recognised social, emotional or behavioural difficulty

Where a candidate simply panics on the day of an examination or becomes anxious, then he/she should not be offered separate invigilation but be seated more appropriately within a main examination room.

In order to evidence the need for separate invigilation the school would require a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, the Local Authority Specialist or Sensory Impairment Service, Occupational Health Service, a Speech and Language Therapist or an Educational Health and Care Plan. **Letters from a GP will not be accepted.** The evidence must confirm the candidate's eligibility for separate invigilation.

Separate invigilation within the centre is no different to other access arrangements, such as prompters, supervised rest breaks etc. Senior staff with pastoral responsibilities will be aware of students with established and long-term difficulties and which candidates may require and be eligible for separate invigilation. Working with the Access Arrangements Manager, and the Exams Officer (EO) who may highlight issues such as room availability and the need for additional invigilators, a centre-based decision is made on the need for separate invigilation.

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 without prior knowledge of English. If English is not be spoken at home; they will be granted extra time for the use of a bilingual dictionary. Due to the nature of set assessment objectives, this provision will not be awarded in GCSE's where the student's level of English language is being tested.

A bilingual dictionary and 10% extra time are not available for candidates entered for the following level 3 qualifications:

- AQA Applied General qualifications
- AQA level 3 Technical qualifications
- BTEC nationals
- Cambridge Technical (level 3)
- GCE As and A-level qualifications
- OCR level 3 Certificate
- WJEC level 3 Applied qualifications

Access Arrangements Process

If a student requires EAA, the SEN Team will ensure that teaching staff and support staff are aware of support needs at the start of the course. This ensures that the student has access to support throughout the year and that any access arrangements assigned are the student's normal way of working.

If a tutor or other support staff identifies a student as requiring access arrangement needs, then the following procedures should be followed:

- Staff should complete a normal way of working form and email the EAA team requesting an EAA assessment, outlining the difficulties the student presents within the assessment and classroom setting.
- This applies in all circumstances, including students who have previously had access arrangements and ensures the EAA Team have up to date evidence of their needs.
- This applies to all examinations and assessment scenarios across school.
- When referring a student, staff should give as much detail as possible about the nature of a student's needs.
- When a referral is received, the student will be invited to meet a member of the EAA Team.
- The EAA Team will check the student's eligibility and discuss the most appropriate course of action for them.
- Data protection notices will be sent to parent/carer outlining arrangements applying for
- The Exams Team will then submit a request with evidence to the Exam Board, who must approve the application before the arrangement can be put in place.
- Outcomes will be recorded on the school systems.
- Early referral is essential for any access arrangement, as it must be linked to the student's normal way of working. The student should have had this support throughout the year.

Evidence needed to apply for Examination Access Arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports completed by specialist assessor
- Data Protection notice signed by the student
- Subject teachers –examples of work appropriate and support given in class or evidence from test or mock exams
- Results from baseline tests such as reading and writing tests
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability
- An educational psychologist report which explicitly identifies a learning difficulty
- A speech therapy report with a diagnoses of a severe language impairment

Evidence to support an application for Examination Access Arrangements

All examination arrangements awarded have to be supported by documentary evidence kept on file. JCQ inspections take place annually and must have the requested evidence available; failure to comply with the regulations can result in institutional malpractice, which may affect the candidate's result(s).

The school will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Supporting statements from teaching staff and the Inclusive learning team, if applicable, identifying the student's current difficulties in classroom and examinations, and the adjustments that are in place in the classroom and exams
- Educational Psychologist reports
- Speech Therapist reports
- Occupation Therapist reports
- Letters from hospital consultants and other medical practitioners in support of e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers
- Copies of Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangement
- A signed copy of the Form 8 or Form 1 by School's designated assessor
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other mental health professionals.

In cases where a GP has provided medical letters for anxiety or depression, then the normal way of working evidence must show that the school has been working with this student to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. If the teaching staff are unable to provide this information, then the access arrangement cannot be awarded.

Data Protection

Students will have to sign a Personal Data Consent Notice giving the school permission to make an application online to JCQ. Failure to do so will mean that an application cannot be made and examination arrangements cannot be granted.

Parent/Carer Concerns

It is important if you think your son or daughter may have special educational needs or disability and would benefit from Exam Access Arrangements, that you talk to their teaching team or SEN Team as early as possible to ensure Examination Board's deadline dates are met. Parents and carers may be required to obtain letters from other professionals to support an application when a student requires arrangements due to psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties. Parents and carers should be aware that the regulations state that access arrangements cannot be put in place purely on the evidence of a medical professional. A medical letter will trigger an internal investigation, but there needs to be internal evidence found to support such an application.

Withdrawal of Access Arrangements

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 Specialist Assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the students' 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/carers.

Vocational Qualifications

Students entered for an examination set by an awarding body that is not regulated by JCQ, may find that the rules regarding access arrangements are different. The awarding bodies set their own rules regarding access arrangements and their use in specific subjects.

Access Arrangements Responsibilities

A student's access arrangements requirement is determined by the Exam Access Arrangements Team. Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a student is the responsibility of all: student, tutors, parents and Inclusive Learning team.

Completing access arrangement applications online to awarding bodies is the responsibility of the EAA Team.

Rooming for access arrangements is the responsibility of the Exams Team.

Invigilation, rooms and support for access arrangements candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations, will be organised by the Access Arrangements Manager with the support of the Exam Team.

The Access Arrangements Manager ensures that approved access arrangements are applied for and securely stores all access arrangements documentation and evidence.

Access Arrangement Assessments are carried out by a specialist assessor who have successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, who may conduct assessments to be recorded in section C of the form 8.

Exam Access Arrangements are overseen by the SENCo. Access Arrangements are processed and implemented by the Access Arrangements Manager which is overseen by the SENCo.

Examples of Exam Access Arrangements

- A small shared room (friendly) can be categorised as having 2, to 20 people within it.
- Rest breaks as required by the student.
- Main examination hall/room (may be the sports hall/ theatre seating or a large classroom)
- Word Processor or use of a PC for those with permission to type examinations, some of whom may have extra time)
- Computer Reader: this can be in a smaller room with up to 20 students

How do Staff and Parents know whether a student has Access Arrangements

When a need for access arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

Students are sent letters home addressed to parent if under the age 18.

Higher Education students, tutors and the Exams Team are informed via their school system

A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff via Staff Doc's and on the student records (Arbor)

Documents Associated with this Policy

- Joint Council of Qualifications (2022) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. 2022-2023. Joint Council of qualifications. Available at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/> [Accessed 23 January 2023]
- Legislation.gov.uk. (2010). Equality Act 2010. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/content> [Accessed 23 January 2023].
- Ryburn Valley High School SEND Policy