

Access Arrangements Policy (Exams) 2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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Approved by Education and Standards Committee	February 2024
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Statutory/Non Statutory	Statutory
Key Individual	Lucy Harrison, Headteacher

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Kathrynne Bickers
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	
Head of centre	Lucy Harrison
Assessor(s)	Margaret Jennings
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Nikki Townley



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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed **before** an assessment. They allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. (AA Definitions as found in the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document, hereon in known as AARA)

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. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; **or**
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. (AARA Definitions)

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Archer Academy has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR



This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the ALS lead/SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2.13)

The policy is ~~annually~~ reviewed annually to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication "Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments."

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

Access Arrangements / reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course ie at the start of or during the first of a two-year GCSE course.

Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

Archer Academy Equalities Policy is located in T: docs : Lower Staff Docs . Exams Office > Policies > Policy Updates 2023-2024

The head of centre/senior leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. 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 the centre provides to disabled candidates...

for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR 5.4)

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Margaret Jennings – Certificate of Psychometric Testing , Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPT3A) **Equivalent to Level 7**

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The assessor needs to furnish Archer Academy with relevant certificates of qualifications which we are then held on file.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR 5.4)

The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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. (AARA 7.3)

The evidence of the assessor's qualifications can be found in Tdocs – AA SEN & Mentoring – Exams – Assessor Accreditation Certificates

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at / or equivalent to Level 7 (AARA7.3.3)

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Part 1 of a Form 8 needs to be completed before assessment, this must include evidence and teacher feedback. Once part 1 has been completed it must be sent to the assessor prior to the

testing date. The assessor reviews all of the information provided and this will help him/her to establish which tests are relevant for each individual student.

After completing ~~Once~~ the testing session the results are sent back to the SEND Administrator.

This is as per [AARA 7.5](#) Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and

Thus, confirming that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*

([GR 5.4](#))

Note

SENCOs and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment, which must have been agreed with the centre prior to the testing date. Once agreed, part 1 of a Form 8 needs to be completed by the school and sent to the private assessor before the testing session begins. A record of the private assessor's qualification must also be kept on file.

Also detail any process (where relevant) for private candidates, distance learners and home educated students (refer to the requirement in [GR 5.4](#))

Picture of need/normal way of working

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCO. ([AARA 7.5](#))

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to use to apply for the required access arrangement approval for the necessary qualifications. ~~covered by the tool.~~ Not all access arrangements need to be processed via AAO, some, such as rest breaks and the use of a word processor, are allowed at the centre's discretion. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AARA, (chapter 8) **Processing applications for access arrangements** and (chapter 6) **Modified papers**)

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

AAO Applications are processed by the Exams Officer according to information supplied by the SEND administrator.

The SENCO must keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed



candidate personal data consent form; a completed *data protection confirmation form by the examinations officer or SENCo form*; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA 8.6)

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam candidate may be approved to use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Word Processor policy is located in T: docs: Lower Staff Docs . Exams Office > Policies > Policy Updates 2022 -2023

~~Separate Invigilation~~ Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate sits their exams is decided by the centre and could include alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation)

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a **substantial and long-term impairment** which has an adverse effect, or which could impact the concentration of the other students sitting the exam; **and** is
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.16)
- NB: Nervousness, or low-level anxiety about examinations, is not sufficient grounds for alternative rooming arrangements (AARA Equality Act 2010 definition of disability).

Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect 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. (AARA 5.16)