



# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

## 2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Mr Maurice Dixon	
Date of next review	Nov 2026

### Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>Mrs Charlotte COLEY</b>
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Mrs Ruthann Clay</b>
Head of centre	<b>Mrs Louise COWLEY</b>
Assessor(s)	<b>Mrs Madison Pratley, Mrs Rahila Rashid</b>
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	<b>Mrs Charlotte Coley</b>

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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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, Definitions)

### 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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, Definitions)

\*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Oxford Spires 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's **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 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. (<sup>1</sup>AA, section 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed 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**'.

<sup>1</sup>This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

## General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the 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.

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

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments 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.

**The head of centre/senior leadership team will...** recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010<sup>†</sup>, particularly Section 20 (7). 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. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

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

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## 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 AA, section 7.3.

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

Mrs Rahila Rashid: Level 7 - Working with children with literacy difficulties

Mrs Madison Pratley: PG Certificate - Working with children with literacy difficulties

### 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 AA. This is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The head of centre must satisfy themselves that an assessor does have the required level of competence and training. The assessor must present evidence of successful completion of a postgraduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) are held on file for inspection purposes and are presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.

### **Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)**

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) are held on file for inspection purposes and are presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.

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

The SENCo, using historical data and teacher feedback, arranges for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo provides the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8.

The assessor establishes if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

The assessor conducts the assessments which are relevant to support the application.

Results are given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

Parts 2 and 3 are completed on the Form 8.

The student completes a data protection form. An online application on Access Arrangements Online is completed.

All evidence is kept on file to be presented in an inspection.

Note: Any privately commissioned assessment are carefully considered to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated.

### **Picture of need/normal way of working**

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo provides the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8.

The SENCo must have completed at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 before the candidate is assessed. Once the assessment has been completed, and before processing an online application, the SENCo must ensure that Part 1 of Form 8 has been fully completed.

Teachers are asked to provide information detailing a student's current difficulties and normal way of working in a classroom to enable background information to be sought.

### **Processing access arrangements and adjustments**

#### **Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval**

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) 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.

The SENCO or Assessor will complete an application using AAO following completion of testing if a candidate has to supporting scores.

All applications are printed and stored in the student's file. These files are stored in the SEN department.

In extreme cases, awarding body referrals are made and supplementary information provided.

The exams officer is responsible for ordering any modified papers.

Candidates complete a personal data consent from prior to the processing of the online application, which is retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENCo keeps detailed records for inspection purposes, in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file.

### **Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments**

All centre delegated access arrangements are provided following a history of need established within the centre.

Appropriate evidence is kept on file.

### **Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments**

#### **Word Processor Policy (Exams)**

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

**The Exams Manager stores a hard copy of the Policy in her office together with a copy within the Exams Summer 2026 folder in the school's hard drive.**

#### **Separate Invigilation Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

The decision will be 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, section 5.16)

Alternative rooming arrangements include a smaller room for a group of candidates with similar needs established within the centre and one-to-one invigilation.

Students with one-to-one invigilation have access to a scribe.

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre and is known to the SENCO.**

Alternative rooming arrangements reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

