



SHIRELAND
COLLEGIATE ACADEMY
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ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
M Salloo/T Reade/J Kaur	
Date of next review	Nov 2026

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	L Prince/Myles Appleby-Mallinder
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Thomas Daly
Head of centre	Thomas Daly
Assessor(s)	Ms D Woodhall
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	L Prince/Mr Myles Appleby-Mallinder

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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'. (¹AA, 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'. (¹AA, 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 Shireland Collegiate 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. (¹AA, 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**'.

¹This 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†, 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)

Level 7 OCR Qualification in Assessing Learners with Dyslexia/Specific Learning 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 process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The relevance of the qualification has been checked and confirmed by the SENCo and Head of Centre.

The assessment process is overseen by the SENCo.

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](#), section 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. ([AA](#), section 7.3)

Make full reference to [AA](#), section 7.3 (Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The Examination Officer has on file copies of the assessor's examinations certificates as evidence of their qualification and their details are included in the AAO application.

Make full reference to [AA](#), section 7.4 (Reporting the appointment of assessors) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

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

Candidates are initially identified by the SENCo as requiring assessment for access arrangements. This can be due to prior knowledge regarding testing of reading ages, diagnosed learning or physical disabilities, EAL needs, observation within the classroom environment, referral from a teaching member of staff or as a result of feedback from internal examinations.

Information will be gathered from the candidate's subject teachers with regards their normal way of working and used to identify whether there is a specific access arrangement required, and whether assessment needs to take place. The SENCo may also meet with the student at this stage to do an informal assessment, dependent on the need identified.

The SENCo will use the information gathered to complete Form 8 and then discuss with the assessor the type of assessment which needs to take place according to the evidence of need.

Make full reference to [AA](#), sections 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 record your process that reflects the requirements.

By detailing this, you should be confirming ...that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* ([GR](#), section 5.4)

Note

...SENCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment 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 ([AA](#), section 7.3)

Picture of need/normal way of working

The SENCo will complete part 1 of Form 8 using information gathered as part of the process of identifying the candidate's normal way of working as well as an current information held by the Inclusion team regarding the candidate. She will then pass this to the assessor as well as having a conversation to discuss the type of assessment required.

Once the assessment has been completed the assessor meets with the SENCo and discusses the recommendations for Access Arrangements.

The Academy implement all aspects of an identified access arrangement for a candidate within any external or internal assessment so that it is their normal way of working.

All required document and evidence is held within an individual e-folder for each student which is accessible to the SENCo, assessor and Exam Officer.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

An independent assessor **must** contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This **must** take place **before** the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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

An independent assessor **must** discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA, section 7.5)

Make full reference to AA, sections 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 record your process that reflects the requirements.

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.

Access Arrangements are applied for, where possible within the first half of the Autumn term for Year 10. The SENCo and Exams Officer meet to discuss the existing and future access arrangement applications which includes any recommendations for additional access arrangements they may have received, any current access arrangements which may need amending or updating and any candidates who may need any form of modified papers. The SENCo is responsible for completing the AAO and storing all relevant documentation and evidence in candidate's e-folders. The Exams Officer is responsible for facilitating all access arrangements and ordering any modified papers.

Note the change to the (AAO) Candidate **Personal data consent form** and the requirement for completion of the [Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo](#), prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

The SENCo **must** keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA, section 8.6)

Make full reference to AA, section 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), section 6 (Modified papers) and record your process that reflects the requirements.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

The SENCo oversees the allocation of all centre-delegated access arrangements in collaboration with the Exams Officer. All the evidence of these arrangements and supporting documents were necessary are held within the candidate's e-folder on the Inclusion site.

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 Word Processor policy (exams) can be found on the Examinations site on the Gateway in the student portal.

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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)

Candidates will have separate invigilation within the centre if they have an access arrangement which would provide a distraction to other candidates such as a candidate who reads aloud to himself.

Candidates also may be approved separate invigilation if their being in a room with other candidates would provide too much of a distraction to themselves or the other candidates in a room, for example a candidate who has been removed to work in isolation throughout Year 11 due to social issues.

A candidate may also be granted separate invigilation if there is a medical or safeguarding issue that means it is safer for them to be on their own in a room with an invigilator.

These provisions may be made at the request of the SENCo, Exams Officer, Safeguarding Team, Academy First Aider and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

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. ([AA](#), section 5.16)