

Access Arrangements Policy



Member of Staff Responsible for Policy			
Review Committee		Full Governors	
Approving Body		Full Governors	
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What are exam access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Exam Access arrangements (EAA)

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, medical grounds 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'.

EAA at Summerhill are based on assessments carried out by a qualified assessor in accordance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) recommendations.

The regulation body is the Joint Council for Qualifications. The JCQ regulations for EAAs are updated annually and the school must adapt its criteria and methodology for assessing student entitlement to ensure compliance. This means that we cannot guarantee that a student will be awarded an EAA or that they will continue to receive the same EAAs they had at their previous school.

EAA Students will be identified for possible access arrangements through a combination of the following criteria:

- as a result of information from primary schools, prior access arrangements and/or low attainment scores in relevant assessments;
- referral from a teacher and evidence supporting student's area of need;
- EAAs granted/officially approved by previous secondary school (subject to relevant paperwork being sent to the SEND department at Summerhill), in addition to clear evidence of need and confirmation of qualifications of prior school's specialist assessor;
- presentation of a recent medical letter/diagnosis from a qualified health care professional (see Medical Grounds below); and
- parental concern expressed to a subject/form teacher.

Official approval is normally requested before the Autumn Term of Year 10 and is subject to results from the school's designated specialist and/or a medical diagnosis/report.

EAAs have to be officially approved for all students taking GCSEs.

This allows the school sufficient time to gather evidence of need in the classroom, evidence of normal way of working (including the mock exams) and assessment by our specialist assessor. The SENCo will work closely with SLT, Curriculum leads, subject teachers and other centre staff to gather information to paint a picture of need for candidates. Statements regarding the candidate's normal way of working in the classroom and in internal assessments will be held on file.

This evidence is required to meet the JCQ deadline for submissions (currently set in February).

If a student has had EAAs due to a long term sensory need or a medical or psychological condition, upon the receipt of appropriate evidence of a diagnosis from a consultant, we will request a continuation of their EAAs for the duration of their studies at Summerhill.

Assessments for Access Arrangements

Students with a learning difficulty must be formally assessed by a Level 7 specialist teacher or an Educational Psychologist. The assessment must take place no earlier than the start of Year 9. An approved range of standardised tests are used and a Form 8 is completed. The Form 8 is a legal document/application form required when making applications for access arrangements online in external examinations. A Data Protection Notice must also be signed by the student, which enables the Examinations Officer/Access arrangements team to make the online application using their information and results. The most recent testing is binding and determines any subsequent Access arrangements. Formal Access arrangements awarded for GCSEs will not automatically roll forward for GCE, they will expire after 26 Months (after the GCSE examinations have taken place). If a student continues their studies into Sixth Form or College a new application to cover the next 26 months is processed with JCQ

by the new establishment. More information on this can be found in the section below 'Rolling forward a Form 8'

Where formal Access Arrangements are determined and agreed these become part of 'normal practice'. This means that appropriate Access Arrangements should be taken into consideration in teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments. 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.

JCQ specify that **normal way of working** is priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student. **They are not permitted to award AAs based on private psychology/assessment reports.** When we receive a private report, it will trigger our internal process to assess student need and whether they meet the thresholds set by JCQ. We do accept private reports, however, in line with JCQ regulations:

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. The SENCo must provide the assessor with at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed (Part 2 of Form 8). This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

Also, the assessor must fit into one of these categories:

- a specialist teacher with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate; or
- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council.

In addition to these two categories, other educational professionals may conduct access arrangements assessments if they meet the following criteria. They must:

- hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7

AND All specialist assessors must:

- have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;
- be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a "reasonable adjustment", but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate);
- hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties.

We will also require a copy of the assessor's qualifications. A copy of this certificate will be checked to ensure compliance and validity with the above and retained on file.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online.

Rolling forward a Form 8 / Access Arrangements from a previous education setting

Students must declare the requirements for EAA on their application or enrolment, or within the first 6 weeks of their course. Although evidence for EAAs can roll over from school or a previous educational provider not all EAAs automatically carry over and we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAA. Students are responsible for providing the JCQ 'Form 8' and a copy of the JCQ approval document from their previous school to the Examinations Office. A Form 8 is only valid if the candidate was assessed no earlier than the start of Year 9. To receive EAAs students must meet one or more of the following conditions:

- declare previous EAAs so evidence can be rolled over where applicable. If the Form 8 is dated before the start of Year 9 a new screening assessment will need to take place.
- have a current Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP),
- provide appropriate medical evidence or,

- demonstrated clear evidence of observed need reflected in “normal way of working” in their learning.
- Evidence must be obtained that EAAs represent a student’s normal way of working and are not only applied in examinations and / or assessments.

Medical grounds

Access arrangements awarded on medical grounds will only be accepted by JCQ if the School has been made aware of the student’s medical history and relevant evidence has been gathered for the arrangement to be put into place (see below). 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 Exams Officers 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 the current academic year will be early February for the May/June exam period.

However, on medical grounds, if from a registered professional (e.g. General Medical Council) assessment reports or letters may be accepted if no more than 3 years old. These letters/reports must be very specific to the type of support required in examinations:

- 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).

JCQ rules have now been updated regarding medical recommendations, whereas the school must first consider ‘rest breaks’ in a timed test, before an application for ‘extra time’ can be submitted to JCQ. This could be in a mock or another formally timed test.

Why is a letter from a GP insufficient?

The school follows JCQ guidelines regarding medical evidence, noting that only a specialist is able to make recommendations regarding examination allowances. If the School is not made aware of a student’s medical history prior to receiving a medical letter, then an access arrangement cannot be put into place for public examinations, as the School will be unable to build this evidence of need and provision. Schools are not obliged to accept private medical reports and are required to evidence that any medical problem presents a long-term (more than 12 months), being a substantial difficulty, or impairment, that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage compared to other candidates without the medical problem. Medical evidence should not normally be more than 24 months old, at the time of application for the allowance.

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'.

General principles

The principles that we consider are included below:

- 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 the disabled candidate.
- The SENCo 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.

Exams at Summerhill

The majority of students will sit exams with their peers in the Sports Hall. Invigilators are trained to manage the needs of students during exams and recognise that for all students this is a highly anxious time. Our invigilators and exams team are sensitive to the needs of students during exams and recognise the symptoms of stress and anxiety. When necessary they will act in accordance with the JCQ regulations to make reasonable adjustments to support students to sit and complete exams.

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 us 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.

A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Applications will be processed for both long-term and temporary conditions. The approval will be filed alongside the candidate's EHCP, the Form 8/Form 9 where appropriate, any statements gathered to evidence the candidate's normal way of working, and the signed and dated Personal data consent, Privacy Notice (AAO) and Data Protection confirmation.

Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement. The result of which will be shared with the Student and their Parents and Carers and a Candidate Notification Form will be issued (see Appendix).

Any adjustments will be looked at on a case-by-case basis but could be one of the following:

Extra Time

Students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time depending on their history of need and following assessment:

- two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
- one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (8589).

In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- speed of reading and speed of writing; or
- speed of reading and cognitive processing; or
- speed of writing and cognitive processing; or
- two different areas of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.

Scribe

A trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers including all punctuation, grammar and relevant spellings and the scribe would write exactly what the student says. This provision is usually not encouraged for Maths or Modern Foreign Languages. This provision also includes the use of a word processor with spelling and grammar functions enabled. However, relevant spelling/grammar marks would then be deducted from the final exam score (see Note 1).

Reader

A trained adult who would read the question and relevant text (with the exception of an exam testing the student's reading, such as English comprehension and Modern Foreign Languages) for the student. The student would then write the answers themselves although this text could then be read back to the student, if requested.

Scribes & Readers are increasingly being discouraged as an examination access arrangement. Both arrangements require a degree of familiarity between the student and the scribe/reader and need to be in place from Year 9 onwards where possible at the very latest in order to be effective. There is also the concern that there is an implication for marks that are based on quality of communication, which are generally not attainable for the users of these arrangements.

The recommended alternative to a scribe arrangement is the use of a laptop, and the recommended alternative to a reader arrangement is the use of a computer reader.

Centre-delegated arrangements and criteria

Rest Breaks

Where students are permitted to stop for short breaks during the exam and this time is then added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.

- If you have rest breaks for a medical condition, we require evidence from a specialist or a consultant to support your request; a letter from a GP is not sufficient.
- Rest breaks are for students with ongoing difficulties and we have to provide evidence of history of need. Evidence to support a request for rest breaks must be provided in advance of the exam and be part of the students 'normal way of working' at Summerhill. We will not provide rest breaks unless there is comprehensive medical evidence and an ongoing history of need to support the request.
- We will not accept evidence for rest breaks after the Autumn term, unless there are very exceptional circumstances.
- If you require rest breaks due to an anxiety related condition we require evidence from a specialist support service such as CAMHS or another NHS provider. We do not accept GP letters or emails/letters from private practitioners for this purpose. Anxiety related conditions are often best served by completing the exam within the normal time constraints rather than by extending the exam. We are not able or allowed to provide rest breaks in advance for anxiety/worry/stress caused by taking exams
- Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks. The time taken will be added to your exam end time.
- No rest break should not last more than 10 minutes.

Letters requesting rest breaks must be dated within one year of the exams to be taken.

WP/Laptop

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.

Access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate but not usually for subjects such as Maths and Modern Foreign Languages) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled other than in exceptional circumstances where the student has 'scribe' provision (see Note 1)

Prompter

Used for students with little sense of time or ability to concentrate, a trained adult/invigilator can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus or move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

Separate Invigilation (students sit exams with others in a smaller room)

There is an exceptionally high demand for separate invigilation and we require medical evidence of need from a consultant or specialist. We cannot accept a letter from GPs. This must be dated within one year of the exam to be taken. Unless it is for a serious, acute and/or chronic medical or psychological condition, we cannot provide Separate Invigilation. General anxiety, low mood, stress indicators or other common conditions or factors will generally not provide adequate evidence for separate invigilation. We encourage all students requesting separate invigilation to make use of the school's pastoral team to help with student welfare, wellbeing and exam stress.

Individual Invigilation (student sits exam alone in a small room)

There are some very rare cases when this is necessary. We require evidence of need from a consultant or specialist which provides details of the student's condition and stating exactly why Individual Invigilation is necessary. Following submission of this evidence, we will make a final decision and communicate this back to the applicant and parents or carers.

Individual Invigilation can only be accommodated in highly exceptional circumstances and evidence of need must be provided in order for us to make ongoing reasonable adjustments to support the student and to comply with JCQ regulations.

The above list is not exhaustive but does cover the most commonly used exam access arrangements but the school would ensure each student's needs are met as required.

Note 1: Deduction of SPAG marks when using a Scribe/WP with spellcheck enabled

Marks for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG) in written exams when using a Scribe or use of a WP with Spellcheck enabled

For students who are entitled to a Scribe and/or a Word Processor with Spellcheck enabled in written exams. They should be aware in some subjects (e.g. GCSE English Language, English Literature, Geography, History and R.E, and GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Languages) that marks are allocated in certain questions for SPaG.

It is particularly important to understand that SpaG in the GCSE English Language and/or English Literature specifications can be worth up to 20% of the total marks.

More information can be found by consulting the specification for the subject concerned on the relevant exam board website, or by talking to the subject teacher.

This has implications if a student uses a Scribe or Spellcheck enabled Word Processor

- If a student is using a human scribe in a subject where marks are awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar, they will not be able to receive any of the marks available for spelling or grammar. To receive the marks for punctuation a student will need to dictate every item of punctuation to their scribe. The invigilator will make a note on the exam cover sheet to enable the exam board to award marks correctly.

- If a student uses a word processor with spellcheck enabled they will not be able to receive any of the marks available for spelling or grammar. A student will, however, be able to receive the marks for punctuation. The invigilator will make a note on the exam cover sheet to enable the exam board to award marks correctly.
- If a student wishes to receive their marks for spelling and grammar it is the responsibility of the student to inform us. The use of a WP with spellcheck on (Scribe) is given to support the student with spelling and grammar and not because he/she wants to type rather than write in exams, can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. If the student chooses to not use the spellcheck facility, then the use of a Word Processor is withdrawn.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS: CANDIDATE NOTIFICATION FORM

Candidate name:

Form:

Candidate number:

This notification is to inform you of the approved access arrangement(s) and/or reasonable adjustment(s) that have been arranged for your upcoming exams/assessments

You will have practiced using this arrangement/these arrangements in any internal tests/assessments and/or mock exams you have taken before your external exams/assessments take place.

You should read through the information and if anything is unclear, contact Mrs Sprouting.

Please sign the candidate declaration on both copies - one copy is for you to keep for reference - the other copy should be returned to Mrs Sprouting or left at Reception by

Arrangement(s)		
25% Extra Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of the time allocated to the paper will be added to the total duration. eg. a 2hr paper with extra time added will be 2hr 30mins 	
Rest Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time taken is added to the finish time. Students are not permitted to have exam materials with them during rest breaks. The time taken will be added to your exam end time. Rest breaks may not normally be taken in exams lasting less than 60 minutes They may not be taken in the first or last 20 minutes of any exam. 	
Word Processor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An exams laptop will be made available for use during the exam. A WP will not be used for GCSE Maths examinations 	
Scribe [Word Processor with Spellcheck ON]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An exams laptop with spellcheck enabled will be made available for use during the exam A WP will not be used for GCSE Maths examinations Marks will be forfeited for spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	
Reader Pen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not supplied by the School. You are responsible for bringing your own reader pen The reader pen will not have an in built dictionary, thesaurus or data storage facility 	
Coloured Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam papers will be printed on coloured paper An original copy of the paper will also be provided in the event of coloured graphs/charts/images which will appear in black and white on the coloured paper copy 	
Other		

Candidate confirmation

- By signing here, I am confirming I understand and agree to the arrangement(s) that have been approved for my exams/assessments.
- I understand that if I choose to continually not use my access arrangement for specific subjects in class or during internal tests or assessments the access arrangement may be removed as it is not my 'normal way of working'
- I also confirm I understand how the arrangement(s) will be applied and any exception(s) that applies/apply:

..... Date: