



Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Gordon's School

Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

Centre Name	Gordon's School
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Date policy first created	28/11/2023
Current policy approved by	Jacqueline Pierce
Current policy reviewed by	Michaela Matheson
Date of next review	31/10/2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Andrew Moss
Senior leader(s)	Jacqueline Pierce
Exams officer	Lisa Clinch
ALS lead/SENCo	Victoria Phillips
Other staff (if applicable)	

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Gordon's School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

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.

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

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 particular 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'.

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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Gordon's School 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The principles for Gordon's School to consider 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 a disabled candidate (AA 4.2)

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in Equalities Policy (Exams).

2. The assessment process

At Gordon's School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

- Mrs Michaela Matheson is the schools assessor and holds the following qualifications:
Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements (CPT3A)

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Gordon's School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

Not applicable

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by The Exams Officer and the Access Arrangements Coordinator.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

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

Gordon's School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements (AA 7.3)
- Relevant staff 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 7.3)

Additional information:

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan the SENCo will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working within Section A of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Once Part 1 has been completed by the SENCo the School Assessor will then personally assess the candidate, carrying out assessments which are relevant to support the application.

The School Assessor will then share the results of the assessments with the School SENCo and any Exam Access Arrangements will be agreed.

All students at Gordon's School who require an assessment to establish Exam Access Arrangements must be referred using Expression of Concern form. Please note the deadlines for referrals:

18. October 2024 – for Year 11 and Year 13 students requiring AAO application (Access Arrangements On-line) to be filed in March 2025 (as per JCQ AARA). Please note that the deadline does not apply to any late diagnosis or injury.

Any assessment will be undertaken by the School Assessor.

All private assessments must be discussed with the School SENCo prior to the assessment being undertaken.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Gordon's School confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre

and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5)

Additional information:

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)

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustmentsArrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through 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.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by SENCo, Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator, Exams Officer with the approval of SLT. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator.

- The use of a word processor

The School's Word Processor Policy is located on our schools website. details the criteria Gordon's School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- Alternative rooming arrangements

The • Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre comes under a centre delegated access arrangement and the process below will be adopted.

- SENCos must note that candidates are only entitled to the above arrangements if they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. 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 only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition which is clearly evidenced.)

- In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, 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.

- Alternative rooming arrangements 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 alternative rooming arrangements within the centre. (AA, section 5.16) details the criteria Gordon's School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation).

Additional information:

Not applicable

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate Personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to complete the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application
- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to 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 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)
- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator

Changes 2023/2024

Due to section renumbering in the AA publication, references to AA sections in this policy have been changed to 2 places, e.g. AA 7.3.1 changed to AA 7.3, etc.

(Changed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** 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. (AA 7.3) (To) A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AA 7.3)

(Removed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** An independent assessor will be instructed to contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This will take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor will be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate (AA 7.5)

(Removed) Under **Picture of need/normal way of working:**

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 the 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 person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5)

(Changed) Under **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments** all reference to Separate invigilation within the centre (To) Alternative rooming arrangements and re-worded the section accordingly.

(Changed) Under **Roles and responsibilities:** to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6) (To) to 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 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 changes

Upon review in September 2023, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.