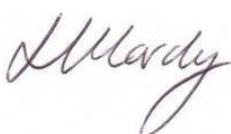


Access Arrangements Policy (Exams)

2021/22

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
 Principal	
Date of next review	Sept 2022

Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)
ALS Lead/SENCo	David Griffiths
ALS Lead/SENCo line manager (Senior Leader)	Ali Bickle
Head of centre	Kathy Hardy
Assessor(s)	Dave Griffiths
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Jane Andrews

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](#))

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;
- 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;
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'. ([AA Definitions](#))

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The de Ferrers 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...*" [JQC *General Regulations for Approved Centres*, 5.4] This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#).

The 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 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. ([AA 4.2](#))"

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JQC publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*'. This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#).

General Principles

The principles for the centre to consider are details 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 a 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 Equalities Policy (Exams) is stored on Google Drive

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, 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)

Dave Griffiths – Certificate in Psychometric Tests, Assessments and Access Arrangements (CPT3A)
Registered member of the British Psychological Society (BPS_

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)

Certification/qualifications are checked by Ali Bickle (Senior Vice Principal) and counter checked by Kathy Hardy (Principal) prior to the commencement of any assessment.

The de Ferrers Academy has a series of administrative and legal checks in place, to ensure that where a candidate with a learning difficulty requires an assessment of his/her needs, he/she is assessed by an appropriately qualified specialist assessor **as appointed by the head of centre (Kathy Hardy)**. The Senior Vice Principal and SENCO inspect the assessor's certificate and qualifications to ensure that they are appropriate for assessing student's needs.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Dave Griffiths acts as the Assessor for examination access arrangements. Copies of his certificates are kept on the school file and within the Access Arrangements folder in preparation for the JCQ inspection. The SENCo has a Level 7 qualification in Psychometric testing and has undergone additional training in Access Arrangements. The SENCo must keep up to date with any changes made to the JCQ examination and application processes.

The names of the assessors are entered onto the Access Arrangements Online (AAO) system to confirm their status.

How the assessment process is administered

The assessment process is administrated effectively by executing the following steps:

- The SENCO has a list of students who the teachers have highlighted as needing additional support / reasonable adjustments to help access the curriculum / examinations.
- The SENCO will observe a series of lessons to gauge an idea of 'normal working practise' and ask for written feedback from teaching staff.
- The SENCO will then highlight students, and their area of need (extra time, reader, scribe), who require additional support to determine whether access arrangements are needed.
- Communication with parents / carers to inform them of the assessment process

Cognition and Learning:

Parental consent must be gained from the parent/carer before any paperwork or application is processed.

The SENCO must complete a Form 8 profile detailing the candidate's history, learning needs and normal way of working. This information is given to the Assessor to help inform them of what appropriate tests need to be carried out.

Supporting evidence is needed from teaching staff that highlights the candidate's normal way of working. If the candidate is entitled to a Reader, the SENCO must write a concise file note that details the candidate's normal way of working.

Extra Time: **Supervised rest breaks need to be considered and suitably exhausted before exploring the option of extra time.** Please see Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments documentation from JCQ for further details on extra time, standardised testing and supervised rest breaks.

Medical:

Parental consent must be gained from the parent/carer before any paperwork or application is processed.

Medical evidence must be provided to the Academy on letter headed paper and signed by the relevant professional (cannot be a GP – has to be specialist). The Academy must have the evidence of normal way of working to support the application for access arrangements.

The same procedures apply if it is a private candidate. Information needs to be gathered to gather an appropriate picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working.

Recording evidence of need

All SEN students have an individual passport detailing their SEN need and Reasonable Adjustments. The passports are stored on Google Drive (Academy resources > SEN > Passports) and are regularly updated based upon external agencies / teacher / student / parental feedback

Teacher Feedback is collated and stored, under lock and key, in the Access Arrangements folder in TA44.

All Form 8 paperwork is also stored, under lock and key, in TA44.

Educational Health Care Plans are stored, under lock and key, in DA8

Gathering evidence to demonstrate *normal way of working*

A thorough transition programme is in place whereby the SENCO / Assistant SENCO communicated with primary school / external agencies prior to the students arriving at the Academy in Year 7. As part of the transition process, staff will learn what the students' normal way of working is and create a series of Reasonable Adjustments to support the learners' needs. All SEND students will have a personalised passport made for them that highlights their SEN need.

Teaching and support staff (Inclusion Support Assistants) are asked to implement the adjustment to support the student with their learning. Depending on the need, support can be individual, or small group for the following areas:

- *in the classroom (where appropriate);*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing;*
- *literacy support lessons;*
- *numeracy support lessons;*
- *numeracy intervention strategies;*
- *literacy intervention strategies;*
- *in internal school tests/examinations;*
- *pre-public examinations.*
- *Other*

For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

SENCOs and assessors must refer to section 7.6.1, page 87, for information on how to confirm 'normal way of working'. †The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment

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 by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included.

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 is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The Assessor and SENCO will make the relevant application on Access Arrangements Online. The SENCO will keep a record of the administrative paperwork and will share it with the Examinations Officer / Access Arrangements Facilitator.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Supervised Rest Breaks:

The SENCO must have evidence of normal way of working to support an application for supervised rest breaks. The SENCO must write a file note that states the reason for the rest breaks and provide supporting evidence.

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.

Students will only be granted the user of a word processor (without spell check) where it is deemed at normal way of working and appropriate for the individual's needs. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

Please see Word Processor Policy.

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.5.16]

The candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to the Pastoral Team and the SENCO.

Separate invigilation will only be granted if it is normal way of working or for medical reasons. Supporting evidence is required from professionals (GP, CAMHS etc.).

Separate Accommodation Policy

If a parent, member of staff or a candidate requests to be accommodated in a separate room, or apart from the main cohort, this should be referred to the head of centre or senior leader responsible for examinations.

A request for separate accommodation is often based upon anxiety levels or an issue prior to the examination which is impacting a candidate on a short-term basis. Although such issues experienced by candidates should not be ignored, centres should carefully consider a request for separate accommodation to ensure that this does not create an unfair advantage for the candidate in question, or unsustainable pressure upon rooming requirements on subsequent exam days.

If a candidate panics on the day of an examination, or becomes anxious, or has experienced a trauma prior to the examination, it may be appropriate to accommodate them separately away from the main cohort, but this decision must be made by the head of centre or relevant member of the senior leadership team.

When making such decisions, the following factors will be considered:

- Additional administration in the form of requests from other candidates on subsequent days for separate accommodation
- Requests for separate accommodation placing pressure upon rooming and accommodation within the centre
- Creating an uneven playing field and advantaging candidates who have been granted separate accommodation. This may result in complaints from other candidates (or their parents/ carers)
- Exploring all other alternatives