

## Appendix 1: access arrangements

### 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)

The purpose of this appendix is to confirm that Watford Grammar School for Girls 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 policy is maintained and held by the SENDCo 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 they **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**'.

## **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 a disabled candidate.
- The SENDCo **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.

## **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 current assessor holds this qualification : Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA)

## **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)**

Assessors with the required level of competence and training (as outlined in AA) are appointed by the head of centre to carry out assessments for access arrangements purposes.

Assessors are required to provide evidence of their relevant qualifications at the point of employment and prior to any assessment of a candidate. Evidence that the assessors are suitably qualified is kept on file within the Learning Support Department. 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. They must also be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 and either hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties or be a HCPC registered Psychologist.

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

Evidence that each assessor is suitably qualified is held on file within the Learning Support Department.

The names of all assessors who are assessing candidates are recorded within *Access Arrangements online*.

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

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan a detailed picture of need must be established, normal way of working must be demonstrated and Part 1 of Form 8 completed prior to any assessment being carried out. Watford Grammar School for Girls meets this requirement through:

- Evidence of the candidate's history of difficulties
- Evidence of the candidate's current difficulties in the classroom, tests and exams
- Evidence of the support provided for the candidate within the classroom, tests and exams
- Involvement of the candidate's subject teachers

If a detailed picture of need is established, Part 1 of Form 8 will be completed before any assessment is carried out.

The candidate will be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information detailed within Part 1 of Form 8. The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.

The assessor will use current editions of nationally standardised tests that produce standardised scores. The candidate's chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test.

Evidence of two below average standardised scores or one below average and one low average standardised score must be demonstrated in two different areas of speed of working for many access arrangements to be awarded.

The assessor must administer each assessment themselves and must then complete Part 2 of Form 8, using standardised scores. The assessor must sign and date Form 8, Part 2.

Once the assessor has completed their testing and confirmed that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance, the SENDCo will complete Part 3 of Form 8. They will make recommendations for access arrangements taking into account the information from the assessment, the requirements of the specification and the candidate's normal way of working in the school. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with Watford Grammar School for Girls cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access Arrangements online.

The SENDCo will 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 school and ultimately assessing the candidate should be instigated.

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

Before the candidate's assessment, the following processes are carried out to paint a picture of need and gather evidence to demonstrate normal way of working as per Part 1 of Form 8:

- Information and records gathered from primary school such as arrangements for Key Stage 2 tests
- Screening test results
- Comments and observations collated from subject teachers, support staff and/or pastoral staff
- Relevant information from a student's Passport to Learning
- Collate information on support in the classroom and/or interventions offered
- Obtain student's views of their difficulties
- Monitor internal assessments/mock exams to demonstrate the use of/need for access arrangements
- Gather relevant reports from external specialists such as an Educational Psychology report, Specialist Teacher report, Speech & Language Therapist report, Local Authority Specialist Service report e.g. a Hearing Impairment Advisor
- Gather relevant medical evidence obtained from CAMHS, a hospital consultant, a HCPC registered psychologist or Occupational Health Service

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. All independent assessors **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

## **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's secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Access Arrangement applications will only be processed once the necessary evidence, as outlined by the JCQ in AA, has been collated and Form 8, if relevant, has been completed.

Before making an application using AAO, Watford Grammar School for Girls is required to seek the consent of a student to record their personal data online. Permission is gained by the candidate signing a personal data consent form which is then held on file in the Learning Support Department. The SENDCo or Exams Officer completes a Data Protection confirmation form and holds this on file within the Learning Support Department.

The SENDCo and Exams Officer work closely together to process applications using AAO. Applications including those for modified papers will be submitted on AAO prior to the deadlines set out on page 5 in AA.

The SENDCo keeps detailed records of all essential information on file within the Learning Support Department. This includes a copy of the approved application, appropriate evidence of need and evidence of the assessor's qualifications.

If an application does not gain approval and an awarding body referral needs to be made, this will be done in accordance with the guidance on AAO and in AA.

Applications for a temporary injury/impairment such as a broken arm will be processed as the need arises. Appropriate documentation is required to support any temporary access arrangement made and will be held on file.

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

Evidence for Centre-delegated access arrangements is collated in the same way as any other arrangement, as previously outlined and is kept on file within the Learning Support Department. Some Centre-delegated access arrangements require a completed Form 9 which must confirm the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the access arrangement reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the school.

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

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

A separate appendix deals with arrangements for the use of word processors.

### **Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy**

A separate appendix deals with the issue of Alternative Rooming.