



Examinations **Access Arrangements Policy**

Reviewed April 2022

1. **AIMS**
 - 1.1 To be a Catholic school where all members of the community live according to Gospel values and the principles and teachings of Mary Ward, promoting the virtues of freedom, sincerity, justice, truth and joy, to allow all members of the community to feel secure and able to work and live in an atmosphere of courtesy and respect.
 - 1.2 To create a caring and stable environment, in which each person is respected as an individual with unique gifts, talents and ambitions, and is given the freedom and confidence to develop these.
2. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
 - 2.1 The Governors and School appreciate the responsibility of running an exam centre and to this end adopt the policies suggested by JCQ.
 - 2.2 The Governors and School recognise their obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). To this end there is an additional GDPR document specifically related to the examinations process.

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3. **WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS?**

3.1 The Governors and School appreciate the responsibility of running an exam centre and to this end adopt the policies suggested by JCQ.

3.1.1 **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'

3.1.2 **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 a number of 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.

[AA Definitions, page3]

4. **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

4.1 The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Loreto College 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 'General regulations for approved centres'Chapter5]

This document is further referred to in this policy as GR

4.2 This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations

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 and Vocational qualifications'*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

5. **EQUALITIES POLICY (EXAMS)**

5.1 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. Which can be found on the Loreto College website (<http://www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/about-loreto/policies-procedures/>).

6. **THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

6.1 Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

6.1.1 The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s):

- SENCO follows the written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their specialist assessor(s) but also that the assessment process is administered correctly;
- SENCo ensures 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 [GR 5.4], and
- SENCo ensures evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) are held on file for inspection purposes and are presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.

7. **IDENTIFYING THE NEED FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 **Roles and Responsibilities**

7.1.1 The Head of Centre will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA;
- ensure that processes for identifying the need for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements') for individual candidates is clearly defined and documented;
- ensure that staff roles and responsibilities in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined in this policy;
- ensure a qualified specialist assessor is appointed and that evidence of the appropriate qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file;
- ensure that the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations, and
- ensure a disability policy showing the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place.

7.1.2 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) will:

- be familiar with the contents, refer to and direct relevant centre staff to annually updated JCQ publications including AA;
- lead on the access arrangements process;

- if not the qualified specialist assessor, will work with the person appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process;
- ensure that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance;
- ensure arrangements put in place reflect a candidate's *normal way of working*¹ within the centre;
- ensure the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis, and
- present when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the specialist assessor's qualification.

7.1.3 In addition, the SENCo will:

- provide and annually review a centre policy on the **use of word processors** in exams and assessments, and
- ensure criteria for candidates allowed **separate invigilation within the centre** is clear, meets the requirements of JCQ access arrangements and best meets the needs of individual candidates and remaining candidates in main exam rooms.

7.1.4 Teaching staff will:

- inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate;
- provide information to evidence the *normal way of working* of a candidate, and
- support the SENCo as required in identifying the need for access arrangements.

7.1.5 The specialist assessor will:

- conduct appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate;
- provide appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate, and
- complete appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body.

¹*Normal way of working* as defined by JCQ

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre†, e.g.

- *in the classroom; or*
- *working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or*
- *literacy support lessons; or*
- *literacy intervention strategies; and/or*
- *in internal school tests and mock examinations.*

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’. For candidates with learning difficulties this is typically the background information recorded with Section A of Form 8 by the SENCo or the assessor working within the centre.

†The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment (see section 8.3, page 89).”

[AA 4.2.5]

7.2 The Assessment Process

An up to date copy of the specialist assessor's qualification is kept in the AA folder in the SENCOs Office.

The Administration of the assessment takes place in the library. All students are briefed about how the day will run and students are timetabled for 20 minute slots. An LSA is present to oversee the assessment process and ensure its integrity as well as help with the smooth running of the day. The SENCO meets with the assessor at the beginning of the day and also oversees the process.

[JCQ Criteria for a specialist assessor]

[JCQ GR 5]

7.3 **Identifying the needs of candidates**

- Assessing the needs of candidates is a continuing process. Our primary source of evidence is from teacher observation and assessment but additional information helps build a picture of need. This information could include:
 - base line data;
 - standardised assessments in reading and spelling;
 - standardised screening or assessment tools;
 - information from the primary school at transfer, and
 - evidence that current rates of progress are inadequate.

The centre agrees to:

- *ensure that it will recruit with integrity with regard to both general and vocational qualifications;*
- *ensure that learners will in an accessible format have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process must include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the examinations/assessments and achieve the qualification(s). The centre's assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to examinations/assessments, and*
- *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.*

[JCQ GR 5]

7.4 **Recording Evidence of Need**

Each student that we feel may need access arrangements has a file of evidence. This history of need may include evidence from teachers and LSAs as well as a variety of centre-devised forms, awarding body forms and JCQ forms which are used to record assessment and application information.

JCQ forms might include, for example:

- Form 8 – Application for access arrangements.
- Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements.
- Form 9 – Arrangements permitted by the centre.
- Form 11 – Notification of access arrangements Entry level.
- Form 12 – Application for access arrangements Entry level.
- Form VQ/EA – Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications.

- Form VQ/IA - Application for reasonable adjustments; Internally assessed units – Vocational qualifications.
<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>]

7.5 **Gathering evidence of normal way of working**

The senior LSA responsible for access arrangements collates and gathers information with regard to recording a normal way of working for students. She gathers information from a variety of sources including teachers, LSAs and invigilators.

7.6 **Equality Policy**

The centres equality policy sets out how the centre seeks to comply with the equality act and how it supports disabled students. This can be located on the website, in the exams office and in the Head Teachers office. Which can be found on the Loreto College website (<http://www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/about-loreto/policies-procedures/>).

7.7 **Word Processor Policy**

The centre has a written Word Processor Policy with a statement produced by a member of the leadership team detailing the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. Which can be found on the Loreto College website (<http://www.loreto.herts.sch.uk/about-loreto/policies-procedures/>).

7.8 **Separate invigilation within the centre**

Senior management will consider all the evidence presented and make the decision on an individual basis.
[see JCQ AA 5.16 plus centre-determined criteria]

8. **REQUESTING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

8.1 **Roles and Responsibilities**

8.1.1 The SENCo in conjunction with the exams officer will:

- determine if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated;
- follow guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications;
- have a username and password for one or more awarding body secure extranet site in order to gain access to *Access arrangements online*² (AAO);
- apply for approval where this is required, through AAO, or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO;
- ensure appropriate evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO; examples might include:
 - painting a picture of need on section A of JCQ form 8;
 - a completed specialist assessment to substantiate the picture of need recorded on section C of form 8;
 - a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre;
- confirm by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted;
- make an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidates does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s);

- ensure that arrangements, and approval where required, is in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated);
- ensure that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline;
- maintain a file for each candidate that will include;
 - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms;
 - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement;
 - appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre;
 - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared), and
- will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

8.1.2 The EO will:

- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for GCSE and GCSE qualifications, through AAO by the deadline date for the November (GCSE only) and summer exam series;
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Progression, ELC and Functional Skills qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form 7 – Application for modified papers* to the awarding body at least 10 weeks before the date of the assessment;
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for vocational qualifications, by submitting *JCQ Form VQ/EA - Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications* to the awarding body no later than 10 weeks before the date of the assessment, and
- order modified papers, where these may be required by a candidate for any other qualifications, by identifying and following the awarding body process by the deadline date.

²*Access arrangements online* is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

“For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

Further information on Access arrangements online is available from:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online>”

[AA 8.1]

9. **IMPLEMENTING ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

9.1 **Roles and Responsibilities**

9.1.1 **External Assessments:**

These are assessments, which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body, which must be conducted according to awarding body and/or JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

9.1.1.1 The SENCo will:

- appoint appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates who have been approved the use of:
 - a practical assistant;

- a prompter;
- an Oral Language Modifier;
- a reader;
- a scribe;
- a Sign Language Interpreter;
- ensure facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- ensure candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their exams and assessments
- liaise with the EO regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams
- ensure cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- liaise with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

9.1.1.2 The EO will:

- liaise with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates;
- liaise with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates;
- provide cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and will ensure that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers;
- print pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and GCE qualifications;
- will check in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required);
- make modifications that are delegated to the centre (a question paper on coloured/enlarged paper) that may be required and will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam;
- ensure that where a candidate has been approved for a computer reader, will open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam;
- ensure that where a candidate has been approved for an Oral Language Modifier, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time;
- ensure that where the centre has granted the candidate a Live Speaker and/or a Sign Language Interpreter, secure exam paper packets will not be opened earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time;
- have a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation, and
- where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, apply for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

9.1.2 Internal Assessments:

These are assessments which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

9.1.2.1 The SENCo will:

- liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

9.1.2.2 Teaching staff will:

- support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

9.1.3 **Internal exams:**

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments (exams).

9.1.3.1 The SENCo will:

- liaise with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

9.1.3.2 Teaching staff will:

- support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.