



Exam Access
Arrangement
&
Reasonable
Adjustments

Exam Access and Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Procedures

2023/24

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1. Policy Aims

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Nescot College complies with its ‘... *obligation to identify the need for, request, and implementing access arrangements...*’

[JCQ ‘General Regulations for Approved Centres’]

This document covers the assessment process and related issues in detail and includes, as appendices, three specific policies for Centre Delegated Access Arrangements (CDAA); Use of a Word Processor, Separate and Quiet (shared) Room Invigilation and Supervised Rest Breaks.

This policy is reviewed annually with reference to the current edition of the JCQ publication ‘*Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*’. This publication is referred to in this policy as JCQ AARA.

This policy is communicated to all relevant Centre staff and is available electronically via the SharePoint portal under *My Departments/Exams/Access Arrangements*. Staff receive notification of any changes highlighted during the review via email.

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’.” [JCQ AARA, page 7]*

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.*

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/candidate. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.”

[JCQ AARA, Definitions, page 7]

2. Key Nescot Staff Involved in the Assessment Process

ROLE	NAME
Exam Access Arrangements Assessor	Val Mason
Exam Access Arrangements Assessor	Kiron Patel
Exams Manager	Lorraine Richards
Assistant Principal	Lisa Moynihan

Checking the qualifications of the assessor

Assessments are carried out by assessors appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessors are appropriately qualified as required by *JCQ regulations* [JCQ AARA 7.3]

'...Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo.' [JCQ AARA 7.3.4]

Assessor qualifications

The Specialist Assessors currently employed by the Centre hold the following qualifications:

- IQ Level 7 Organisation Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements (PAPAA)
- Level 7 Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching Adults with Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia) – London Metropolitan University
- Post Graduate Certificate of Education

3. Assessment

How the assessment process is administered at Nescot

Candidates with a history of access arrangements are assessed by the Specialist Assessor in their first year of study. Further education colleges may require additional time to conduct the appropriate assessments in order to build a comprehensive record of evidence of need to satisfy regulations. The JCQ deadline for applications for access arrangements for external assessment is prioritised and strictly adhered to as laid out in JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

- Following either disclosure of learning needs at enrolment, student self-referral, or referral by teaching staff, the Exam Access Arrangements Team makes the arrangement for individual candidates to be assessed by the Specialist Assessor.
- Computerised literacy screening (GL Assessment Lucid Exact) for referred candidates is overseen by the Specialist Assessor.
- The Specialist Assessor liaises with tutors, learning support staff and Heads of Department in order to provide supplementary information and a history of need for each candidate and help paint a comprehensive picture of a candidate's needs in Section A of JCQ Form 8.
- If learning needs that meet the criteria for access arrangements are identified by testing and supported by tutor referral, the Specialist Assessor completes the JCQ Form 8 and submits it to the Exams Office.
- The Specialist Assessor personally conducts the assessments and carries out testing relevant to support the application, using recent editions of nationally standardised tests, reporting standardised scores and ensuring that the candidate's chronological age is less than the

“ceiling” of the test.

- If a learning need is not identified from testing, the Specialist Assessor completes an in centre (LS3) Record Form which is kept on file by the Exam Access Arrangements Team for Centre use only.
- The SEND Team Lead works closely with the Specialist Assessor and external agencies to arrange assessment for learners with physical and sensory needs.
- Suitable accommodation for one to one assessment is provided by the Centre.

Recording evidence of need

Evidence to paint a picture of need for Section A of Form 8 is drawn from:

- The Learner Services database (EBS) which shows self-disclosed access arrangements received by students at their previous school, and self-reported information from learners and parents. The database is updated throughout the academic year using signed student record forms from enrolment, and new or further information and documentation from students, tutors, support staff, and Student Services (which includes the College Nurse, Mental Health Advisor and Student Welfare Officer).
- Documentation evidencing Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) provided by educational and other relevant professionals who have been working with a student since Year 9 of secondary school.
- External, privately commissioned reports from Specialist Assessors for learning needs and JCQ Form 8s from secondary schools - these are used to inform a history of need for students, and to inform teaching staff.
- Computerised literacy screening test results (GL Assessment, Lucid Exact) overseen by the Specialist Assessor.
- Notes recorded by learning support staff on the Learning Support Department database (Promonitor) for individual learners; all learners with a disclosed history of need have access to regular learning support sessions through which their normal way of working is monitored and supported; student dialogue and self-reporting is also recorded by support staff.
- Centre devised evidence forms used by subject tutors to record observations and provision for learners with SEND.
- Comments from college tracking data relating to relevant difficulties.
- Notes from telephone liaison between the Exam Access Arrangements Team/SEND Team Leader and previous schools.

For candidates who meet the criteria for applications for ‘*rare and exceptional*’ reasons, a very detailed picture of need is evidenced, in close liaison with subject tutors; evidenced from analysis of mock examinations, formal assessments and progression examinations in each subject.

“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. [JCQ AARA 7.3.6]

Where a privately commissioned report, or a report from an external professional, is rejected by a Centre, the Director of Learning Support or a member of the senior leadership team should provide a written rationale supporting their decision to the parent/carer. [JCQ AARA 7.3.6]

Gathering evidence to support normal way of working

“The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example:

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

This is commonly referred to as ‘normal way of working’ and comprises the background information recorded within Section A of Form 8...” [JCQ AARA 4.2.5]

4. Processing Access Arrangements Requiring Awarding Body Approval

- The Exams Office is responsible for processing applications for access arrangements. The resulting approval or rejection notice for the candidate is retained with the original Form 8.
- The Exams Office records application approval on the college database (EBS) where it can be accessed by course tutors.
- The Exams Office is responsible for completing awarding body referrals where necessary, and for explaining the outcomes of a referral to the tutor and Specialist Assessor when a referral has not been approved.

5. Centre Delegated Access Arrangements (CDAA)

There is not a requirement to process an application using Access Arrangements Online for JCQ/Awarding Body approval for the following arrangements. The college must be satisfied:

- The student has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.
- Or the student has a need on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury.
- That there is a genuine need and that there is written evidence available confirming the student has established difficulties, and that the arrangement reflects the student’s normal way of working within the Centre. This must be available to a JCQ Inspector on request. In the case of a temporary arrangement due to temporary injury, the evidence should take the form of a medical note on the database from the college nurse or a letter from a GP or treatment centre.
- The Specialist Assessor completes an internal form (LS11) based on relevant tutor evidence and testing where required. The LS11 is submitted to the Exams Office.

Use of a word processor

'..a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home'.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team **must** produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments." [JCQ AARA 5.8.4]

- This arrangement will be subject to approval by the Specialist Support Team.

Alternative rooming arrangements – Quiet room/Separate room

A decision where a candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre **must** be based on 'the candidate's normal way of working in within the centre, as a consequence of a long-term impairment which has an adverse effect'. [JCQ AARA 5.16]

- The candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities, and documented accordingly
- These difficulties are a consequence of a documented long-term medical condition or long-term social, mental or emotional needs.
- This arrangement will be subject to approval by the Specialist Support Team.

Supervised rest breaks

'The SENCo/ assessor **must** have considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time'. [JCQ AARA 5.1]

'.. There will be some constraints on timing if the candidate has more than one examination to take each day. [JCQ AARA 5.1.3]

'Centres must seek medical advice in cases of serious illness on whether the candidate is fit to take the examination.' [JCQ AARA 5.1.3]

- This arrangement will be subject to approval by the Specialist Support Team.

Appendix 1

Use of a Word Processor in Examinations

Use of a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text either switched off/switched on (where permitted) must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

Nescot College must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties.

Candidates who may use a word processor are those with:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor/illegible handwriting
- Slow speed of handwriting

Use of a word processor will be granted providing the candidate meets at least one of the above criteria. Evidence could include an example of the candidate's written work; a completed Tutor evidence form or results from a speed of handwriting test.

The use of a word processor will not be granted to a candidate due to a personal preference, the ability to work faster when using a keyboard or because a laptop/PC is used at home.

Use of a word processor will be granted on a subject-by-subject basis and may not be required for every examination taken by the candidate. The Specialist Assessor will submit an application for this arrangement that clearly identifies the applicable examination/s.

The Specialist Assessor will submit an application for this access arrangement that clearly identifies whether the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text is switched on/off.

The candidate must sign a Nescot waiver form if the word processor arrangement is no longer required or declined. The waiver form will be kept on file by the Exam Access Arrangements Team for the duration of the candidate's studies at the College.

Appendix 2

Alternative Rooming Arrangements - Separate or Quiet (Shared) Room Invigilation

Separate or quiet (shared) room invigilation at Nescot should reflect the candidate's normal way of working in internal tests and mock examinations, as a consequence of a long-term medical condition, or long-term social, mental or emotional need.

Separate or quiet (shared) room accommodation must reflect the candidate's normal way of working during lessons at Nescot and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

The College must be satisfied that the candidate is at a substantial disadvantage when compared with other candidates undertaking the assessment and it would be reasonable in all the circumstances to provide the access arrangement. (The only exception to this would be a temporary illness, a temporary injury or other temporary indisposition that is clearly evidenced.)

Candidates who present on or near to the day of an exam, will be treated with emergency measures that may or may not include separate invigilation, within the limitations of available resources at Nescot.

The Exam Access Arrangements Team will gather supporting information for separate or quiet (shared) room invigilation at Nescot from, if available, but not limited to:

- Documentation provided by qualified external specialists currently treating a candidate for a medical or mental health condition.
- Subject Tutors
- Learning Support and Teaching Assistants
- Head of SEN
- Learning Support Coordinators
- College Mentors/Counsellors
- Student Welfare Officer
- Personal Development Coach
- College Nurse
- Social, emotional and mental health information logged on the Learning Support database

The information is considered by the Exam Access Arrangements Team and if need is evidenced, an application is written by the Exam Access Arrangements Team to evidence the application of the access arrangement.

Appendix 3

Supervised Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks will be centre approved at Nescot once a for a candidate where it is their normal way of working and there is a genuine need for the access arrangement.

Nescot College must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.

Supervised rest breaks will be centre approved on account of:

- Cognition and learning needs;
- Communication and interaction needs;
- A medical condition;
- Sensory and physical needs;
- Social, mental and emotional needs.

In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established and evidenced at Nescot and thus known to the relevant staff at Nescot, e.g. subject tutor, Personal Development Coach, the Exam Access Arrangements Team and/or learning support and teaching assistant staff.

The supporting information is collated by the Specialist Assessor and an application is submitted to the Exams Office to evidence the request of the access arrangement.

There is no maximum time set for supervised rest breaks at Nescot.

Rest breaks, taken either inside or outside of the examination room, will be supervised by the lead invigilator.

Exam Access Arrangements Nescot: Roles & Responsibilities

	Which people are responsible for carrying out each of these tasks?	Director of Learning Support	Exams Officer	Heads of Departments	Head of SEN	EAA Assessors	Tutors and LSAs	Candidate & Parents/Carers
1	Draw up and implement a Centre Access Arrangements Policy to include the correct implementation of current JCQ regulations and guidance					✓		
2	Identify candidates who may need Access Arrangements and provide evidence of a student's current difficulties in class	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Ensure candidates receive appropriate arrangements					✓		
4	Ensure SEN students are following the most appropriate courses			✓				
5	Alert the SEND Lead to any concerns about a particular candidate			✓			✓	
6	Carry out a formal diagnostic assessment and present a report on each candidate (where appropriate using Section C of Form JCQ/AA/LD Form 8) * Tutors must provide evidence of a learner's normal way of working in class.					✓	✓*	
7	Make applications for arrangements and modified papers through the Access Arrangements Online system		✓					
8	Liaise with Awarding Bodies where applications are not approved and a referral is needed		✓					
9	Maintain information on students to provide evidence of need for JCQ inspectors		✓			✓		
10	Organise Access Arrangements timetable for candidates and 'supporting adults'		✓					
11	Arrange training on the regulations for Access Arrangements for supporting adults and invigilators - external = Exams Officer, Internal = Learning Support		✓			✓		
12	Implement Access Arrangements, complete relevant cover sheets with and complete feedback sheets for SEND officer where required (Scribes, Word Processor, Special Considerations)		✓					
13	Agree a system for the collection and return of exam papers of candidates having Access Arrangements		✓					
14	Keep up-to-date with JCQ regulations and guidance and understand their implications, e.g. know current range of Access Arrangements	✓	✓		✓	✓		

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