



Examination Access Arrangements Procedures 2026/27

Date Policy due to be reviewed: September 2027

Committee Responsible for Policy: Full Academy Trust

Examination Access Arrangements Procedures

Key staff involved in the examination access arrangements process:

Role	Name(s)
SENDCo	Ms N Birmingham
Deputy Headteacher	Mrs. S Palmer
Head of Centre	Mr. S Abbotts
Assessor(s)	Language, Learning and Strategic Support Team (LLSS) – Birmingham City Council
Examination access arrangement facilitator(s)	Invigilation team – appointed by Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre’s Examinations officer
Examinations Officer	Mr. D Key

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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 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'.

[AA Definitions, 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. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage, where possible. 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
- 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'. 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, page 7]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre has a written record which, clearly demonstrates that 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 - This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR]

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.

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

Disability Procedures (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements process is covered in the document, *Disability Procedures (Exams)* which, covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams. A copy of the Disability Procedures (Exams) is available on Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre's website.

The Access Arrangements Procedures further cover the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are conducted by an assessor, appointed by the SENDCo, under the direction of by the Head of Centre. Hillcrest School and Sixth Form Centre appoint Assessors from Birmingham City Council's Language, Learning and Strategic Support Team (LLSS), Access to Education Team.

The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

The qualification of the current assessor(s)

The appointed assessor for 2025-26 is Mr. D Hill and his qualification is *Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements (CPTA3 equivalent to Level 7)*.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged by the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained by the SENDCo and checked against the current requirements in AA Chapter 7. A copy of the qualification will also be provided to the Examinations Officer and kept on file for inspection purposes. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence provided by the assessor will be retained on file for inspection purposes by the SENDCo, in the Learner Support Office. The name(s) of the assessor who assesses candidates studying qualifications (listed on page 2 of AA) will be entered into Access Arrangements Online, to confirm their status.

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

Following the detailed collation of required evidence - as outlined in JCQ regulations, 2025-26 - the SENDCo will arrange for candidates to be assessed by an assessor.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo will provide the assessor with background information by *painting a picture of need*. The SENDCo will accurately populate Part 1 of the Form 8, with the necessary evidence for assessment, as outlined in JCQ regulations 2025-26 – evidence collated using the graduated approach and contributed to by professionals working with the candidate. The SENDCo will work with the assessor and Examinations Officer to ensure a cohesive and consistent approach, to this process.

In the event of an independent assessment being commissioned, the independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's *normal way of working* and relevant background information, prior to the candidate being assessed. The independent assessment process must then be approved by the SENDCo, under the direction of the Head of Centre.

Candidates must be assessed in light of the *picture of need* and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures detailed in AA 7.5. The SENDCo must have completed Part 1 of Form 8 before the candidate is assessed. Part 1 of Form 8 must include teacher feedback and evidence of normal way of working. [AA 5.2]

An independent assessor must be known to the centre prior to assessment and a working relationship established. The independent assessor must discuss suggested access arrangements with the SENDCo. The responsibility to request and apply for access arrangements, for candidates enrolled in examinations at the centre, specifically lies with the SENDCo.

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. This would be where the assessor has not contacted the centre, has not liaised with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received a completed Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENDCo. (AA 7.3.6)

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current Education, Health and Care Plan, the SENDCo will collate evidence to *paint a picture of need* and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working. This evidence will be used to complete Part 1 of Form 8 [or Form 9] prior to the candidate being assessed/applications being submitted online.

Access Arrangements cannot be transferred to a different centre without the new centre re-assessing the candidate's needs. Candidates in receipt of arrangements according to a previous centre, must provide all evidence and supporting documentation to the SENDCo at the point of transition into Hillcrest Sixth Form Centre. The SENDCo may use this historical information to consider the process of a new assessment, should assessment be required. As with all exam assessments, there must be a *compelling picture of need*, accurate to the current centre and in line with the candidate's *normal way of working*.

A Form 9 cannot roll forward from GCSE qualifications to GCE AS, A level and/or other Level 3 qualifications. A new Form 9 must be completed and a new online application processed for GCE and/or other Level 3 qualifications – if the centre deem the necessity.

Please note: Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty, the SENDCo must have **trialled and exhausted** the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and/ or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time. Supervised rest breaks are often more effective and appropriate than 25% extra time for candidates who experience anxiety or attention difficulties. They may better address the needs of neurodivergent candidates, such as those with ADHD or ASD, as well as candidates with medical conditions or mental health needs. For a

candidate who tires easily or struggles to concentrate over an extended period, supervised rest breaks will be more appropriate than 25% extra time. [AA 5.1]

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements 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 listed on page 92 of AA. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 74.

AAO is accessed by logging in to any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Following assessment, the SENDCo will submit either the completed JCQ Form 8 or Form 9 to the Examinations Officer. The Examinations Officer working together with the SENDCo will submit applications on-line before the published deadline.

A copy of the outcome of the AAO will be printed out and kept on file by the SENDCo together with the Form 8 or Form 9 and copies of the appropriate evidence of need (where required) for inspection purposes. Please note that the data protection form is no longer required for inspection purposes, however, all candidates must have agreed to the process of AAO.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

The SENDCo - where appropriate - may authorise the following *local* centre-delegated access arrangements:

- Supervised Rest Breaks
- Use of a Word Processor
- Use of a Reading Pen
- Use of a Prompt
- Use of a Practical Assistant
- Smaller [alternative] room to complete examinations

Please note:

In the case of *alternative rooming* arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENDCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. Alternative rooming arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. [JCQ Regulations 2023/24, Page 70]

The SENDCo will submit to the Examinations Officer, a written request [Form 9] for any of the above arrangements, together with appropriate evidence of need – *normal way of working* -

A copy of the request statement will be held on file by the SENDCo for inspection purposes.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word processor policy (exams) (Appendix 2)

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working, during enrolment at the centre.