



26 June 2024

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

WHAT ARE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

Access arrangements are special concessions in external examinations, which can be applied for by the school. They enable a level playing field for students who would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage. They are usually considered for students who have special and/or additional educational needs and/or a disability and who usually receive additional help or support in class or in support groups. They must also reflect the normal support provided on a day-to-day basis.

There are several different types of concessions which can be applied for to reflect the different types of need. The process of application for access arrangements is rigorous and must follow a set procedure, which is outlined in the JCQ (Joint Council of Qualifications) Regulations. Evidence of need must be collated by the setting before an application can be made, which is obtained from the candidate's teachers, internal exams, and specialist services involved, and, where necessary, a specialist assessment.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN TYPES OF ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS?

There are a wide range of access arrangements which must reflect the student's normal way of working. The main types of arrangements are as follows:

- Extra time (usually 25%): for slow rate of working, processing, reading or writing.
- Separate invigilation or small group room: for candidates who are easily distracted, poor concentration or high anxiety.
- Word processor: for illegible or slow handwriting, where typing is proficient.
- Read aloud software on computer or a reading pen: for candidates with weak reading comprehension.
- Rest breaks: for candidates with concentration difficulties or extreme stress. A student will indicate to an invigilator when they need a rest break. This might be 5 minutes every 30 minutes (for instance) and the 'clock stops' for the rest break.
- Prompt: for candidates who struggle to stay on task or with poor time concepts. The invigilator will tap the table when they notice a student has lost concentration.
- Coloured overlay or colour modified papers to reduce visual stress.

OTHER AREAS TO CONSIDER:

The process of applying for access arrangements varies according to the need of the candidate. For some candidates, a specialist assessment is required, by the school's assessor. This is usually where the candidate's difficulties relates to specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia.



In some instances, further information from medical specialists is required, for instance, where there is a diagnosis of ADHD or Autism Spectrum Conditions. Where there is clinical or multiagency involvement, evidence is usually required from those specialists who work closely with the candidate, such as a speech and language.

FAQS:

- 1 Does an EHC Plan automatically qualify for access arrangements?
No. The access arrangement must be outlined in the EHCP, and evidence of need must be collated before an application online is made.
- 2 Do all candidates require a specialist assessment?
No, only those with specific learning needs require an assessment. Where there is a medical or physical condition, there is a requirement to obtain evidence from the appropriately qualified professional involved.
- 3 When is the best time for the application to be made?
The specialist assessment must occur after the start of Year 9.
- 4 Can I have my child independently assessed?
Parents are advised that settings cannot accept independent assessments and reports. The JCQ stipulate that only specialist assessors who are either employed by or work closely with the setting, are allowed to conduct the specialist assessments.
- 5 Does a diagnosis automatically qualify for access arrangements?
No. There must always be evidence of need and normal way of working. There is often a requirement for a specialist assessment, or the professional opinion of specialist agencies; equally, a diagnosis is not necessary.