

Access Arrangements Policy

Policy/Procedure creator: Pam Thompson

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Current policy reviewed by	Pam Thompson
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Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Exams officer	Pam Thompson
ALS lead/SENCo	Luke Baker
Senior leader(s)	George Chatzakis
Head of centre	Mandy Wilton
Other staff (if applicable)	Becky Clarke

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Hamilton School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

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'.

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'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Hamilton School 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 (GR 5.5)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for Hamilton School to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement 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. (AA 4.2.1)
- The person who leads on additional learning support/special educational needs, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate (AA 4.2.1)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements must be considered on a subject-by- subject basis. (AA 4.2.3)

- Access arrangements should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2.5)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination (AA 4.2.7)

The main elements of the access arrangements process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of examinations are covered in Exam Disability Policy.

2. The assessment process

At Hamilton School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Becky Clarke, Associate SENDCo

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Hamilton School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3.4)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3.4)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) is kept on file (AA 7.3.1)

Additional information:

Not applicable

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4.1)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by Mandy Wilton.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AA 4.4.2)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status. This will include all other professionals working outside the centre. (AA 7.4.3)

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

Hamilton School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor (AA 7.5.1)
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. (AA 7.5.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. (AA 7.5.6)

- 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**. (AA7.3.6)
- Relevant staff working within the centre should 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 centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated. (AA7.3.6)

Additional information:

Not applicable

Painting a 'holistic picture of need' confirming normal way of working

Hamilton School confirms

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AA 7.5.2)
- 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 candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5.3)

Additional information:

Not applicable

3. Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Centre delegated arrangements

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by Luke Baker, SEN Manger. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Luke Baker, SEN Manager.

- **The use of a word processor**

The Word Processor Policy details the criteria Hamilton School uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments.

- **Separate invigilation within the centre**

The Invigilation Policy details the criteria Hamilton School uses to award separate invigilation within the centre.

Additional information:

Not applicable

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered through AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2.13)

Where access arrangements documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2.13)

It is the responsibility of:

- Luke Baker, SEN Manager to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- Examinations Officer to submit applications for approval through AAO
- Luke Baker to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6)
- Examinations Officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Examinations Officer to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Not applicable