



RISE COLLEGE ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Agreed by Principal and Deputy Principal

Agreed on behalf of Management Committee by
Chair of the board: Anthony Peltier

Signature:

Date: 5th May 2023



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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 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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Rise 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's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo 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.

Where the SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AA, section 4.2)



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**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

General principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AA](#) (section 4.2). These include:

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

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.

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

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

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

Assessor who possesses the following qualifications: Patoss AAA, Assessing for Access Arrangements. A postgraduate course at level 7 providing a qualification in assessing for access arrangements.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.



Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

On the first meeting with the college's SENCo, the assessor has their qualifications verified and a photocopy is made of the assessor's qualifications. (AA, section 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The evidence that the assessors are suitable qualified is held on file for inspection purposes. When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Exams Officer. AA, section 7.4

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

The assessment process is led by the specialist assessor, based on a referral by Lecturers.

- Teachers make referrals based on observations and assessments carried out in classes, and from consultations / requests made by parents/carers and support from previous provisions.
- The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the candidate. The results of this will form the basis of access arrangement applications.
- 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. (Access arrangements 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor (Access arrangements 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. (Access Arrangements 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. (Access Arrangements 7.3.6)
- 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. (Access Arrangements 7.3.6)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the Lecturer **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

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. Additionally, the independent assessor **must** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

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/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA, section 7.5)

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Parents, carers and students must declare at the time of enrolment and when completing the school application form if their child has any medical or psychological conditions, SEND needs, previous exam access arrangements at another educational provisions or any other issues that may require exam access arrangements. Failure to disclose this negates Rise College from their responsibilities.

Arrangements/adjustments 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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to [AA](#), chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

AAO is accessed within 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.

Evidence needed to apply for exam access arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam access arrangements to JCQ:

- Form 8 reports from specialist teachers carrying out exam access assessments / tests.
- Previous exam access arrangements from another school.
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams.
- Results from baseline assessments such as reading ages or writing tests.
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability.
- An Educational Psychology report which explicitly diagnoses the need for exam access arrangements.
- A Speech therapy report which diagnoses severe language impairment.
- When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.
- How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements? If a need for access arrangements have been identified, the relevant parties are informed:



- Students are informed verbally.
- This information is also added on the Rise College's internal system so it can be accessed by all relevant staff members.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by the SENCo and Exams Assessor. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENCo and Exams Officer.

- Candidates may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to: bereavement, recent physical injuries or sickness, having an identified SEND need that would be better served in a quiet venue, behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the candidate, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

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 the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre

Separate Invigilation Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect
and
- the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AA, section 5.16)