# Equalities Policy – Exams

Magna Academy

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Please also refer to the Access Arrangement Policy

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## 1. Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how Magna Academy

> *"recognises its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates,ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, particularly Section 20 (7) This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangement process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.*
>
> *†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect"*
>
> [Quote taken directly from chapter 5.4 of the current JCQ publication *General regulations for approved centres*]
>
> This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements')
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

## 2. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the current JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023*

> This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA. General Regulations as GR

## 3. Identifying the need for access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

**Head of centre**

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

**Senior Leadership Team**

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

**Special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo)**

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA

**Teaching staff**

- Inform the SENDCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate

**Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties**

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication AA

**SENDCo/SLT**

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined and documented
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the exams officer to ensure centre-delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments

**SENDCo**

- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (*Access arrangements policy*)
- Works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with **JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance**
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

**SENDCo/Exams Officer**

- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations

**Head Of Year/SLT**

- Support the SENDCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

**Teachers**

- Provide information to evidence the '*normal way of working'* of a candidate
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate

## 4. Requesting access arrangements

### Roles and responsibilities

**Exams officer**

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure AAO approval is in place for early opening of papers where this may be required where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print)
- Following the appropriate process, orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate

**SENDCo**

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated, the SENDCo will provide the relevant evidence of need on centre headed paper.
- Follows guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8, where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Confirms by ticking the *'Confirmation'* box prior to submitting the application for approval that the *'malpractice consequence statement'* has been read and accepted
- Makes an *awarding body referral* through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s)
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated)
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline

Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:

- appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required
- appropriate evidence to support normal way of working within the centre
- in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate's consent to their personal details being shared)
- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector

**SENDCo/EO** - Applies for approval where this is required, through *Access arrangements online* (AAO), or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

## 5. Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

### Roles and responsibilities

### External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations* (ICE 2026-2027).

**Head of centre**

- Supports the SENDCo, the exams officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for **disabled candidates** to exams

**SENDCo**

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are **disabled** within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam)

**Other relevant centre staff**

- Support the SENDCo and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for **disabled candidates** to exams

**SENDCo/Exams Officer/Head Of House**

- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time

**Exams Officer**

- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates' documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a **disabled candidate** to access it
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage **disabled candidates**
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for **disabled candidates** to exams
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter)
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate
- Ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues

- Liaises with the SENDCo to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidate's documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it
- Liaises with the SENDCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a **disabled candidate** in their exam room
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required)
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early where preparation is required by the facilitator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter only)
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation
- Liaises with the SENDCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO

**SENDCo/Exams Officer**

- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams
- Ensures where a facilitator is allocated to support a candidate under exam conditions that they will not be a relative, friend, peer or private tutor of the candidate
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter will not normally be the candidate's own subject teacher and must not be a relative, friend or peer of the candidate (understanding that a private tutor cannot act as a prompter for the candidate.
- Ensures where the candidate's own subject teacher will be used (in exceptional circumstances) as a facilitator, an invigilator will be present at all times

**SENDCo/Head Of House** - Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams

**Exams Officer/Site team** - Liaises with the SENDCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates

**Head Of House/Exams Officer** - Liaises with the SENDCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for **disabled candidates** to exams

## Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

> *"Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as 'NEA'."*

**Special educational needs coordinator (SENDCo)**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

**Teaching staff**

- Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

**SENDCo/Exams Officer**

- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their assessments

**Exams Officer**

- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s)
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment

**Teacher/Head Of House**

- Provide the SENDCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

## Internal exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a precursor to external assessments.

**SENDCo**

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates

**Teaching staff**

- Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

**Teacher** - Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

**Head Of House/teacher** - Provide the SENDCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

# 6. Facilitating access – examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

| Example of candidate need(s) | Arrangements explored | Centre actions |
|---|---|---|
| A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre | Alternative site for the conduct of examinations<br><br>Supervised rest breaks | *SENDCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home*<br><br>*HOH provides written statement for file to confirm the need*<br><br>*Approval confirmed by SENDCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required*<br><br>*HOH discussion with candidate/parent/carer to confirm the arrangements should be put in place*<br><br>*EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'*<br><br>*EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates*<br><br>*HOH confirms with candidate the information is understood*<br><br>*HOH agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam*<br><br>*EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials*<br><br>*Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log*<br><br>*Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam*<br><br>*Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition*<br><br>*EO discusses with HOH if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)*<br><br>*EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence*<br><br>*HOH informs candidate that special consideration has been requested* |
| Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text | Reader/computer reader<br><br>25% Extra time<br><br>Separate invigilation within the centre | *Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010*<br><br>*Papers checked for those testing reading*<br><br>*Computer reader sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded*<br><br>*Form 8, signed and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice* |

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|---|---|---|
| Significant difficulty in concentrating | Prompter<br>Separate invigilation within the centre | *Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment*<br>*Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted*<br>*Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room)* |
| A wheelchair user | Desk<br>Rooms<br>Facilities<br>Seating arrangements<br>Practical assistant | *Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed*<br>*Provides height adjustable desk in exam room*<br>*Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities*<br>*Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access*<br>*Seats candidate near exam room door*<br>*Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room*<br>*Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment* |