

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Effective Date: 1 September 2023

Author: Head of Learner Support

Review Date: October 2025

Approved by Policy and Procedures Committee March 2023

Contents

Introduction	1
Process	2
Deadline for submitting applications for access arrangements	3
Core and supplementary evidence	4
Assessment	5
Literacy difficulty referrals	6
Core evidence for a candidate with a medical/health condition	7
Supplementary evidence for all access arrangements	8
Special consideration	9
Temporary injury	10
Word Processor Principles	11

1. Introduction

1.1 Hugh Baird College will ensure that access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are made prior to and during all examinations for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2010.

1.2 Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment or examination and they allow students with special educational needs, disability or temporary injuries to:

- Access the assessment/examination
- Show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment

1.3 The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment/examination. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

1.4 The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a student 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. Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- Persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material in the person's native language.
- Persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions
- Physical impairment

1.5 Available Access Arrangements include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Computer reader/reader
- Extra time
- Read aloud and/or use of an examination reading pen
- Word Processor
- Scribe/Speech recognition technology
- Language Modifier
- Practical Assistant
- Communication professional for candidates using sign language
- Modified Papers
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Coloured papers

- Braille transcript
- Prompter

2. Process

2.1 Prior to examinations the Learner Support Team will be responsible for identifying students who may be eligible to access arrangements. The access arrangement assessor working within the centre will need to evidence a history of support and provision.

2.2 Once relevant evidence is gathered and consent for data sharing is agreed, this will be sent to the examinations officer along with a request to apply for Access Arrangements. The Examinations Officer is responsible for applying to the exam boards.

2.3 The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. This is commonly known as 'normal way of working'.

2.4 The candidate must have appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s) before his/her examination.

2.5 If the candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is not his/her normal way of working. In these specific circumstances, the arrangement may be rescinded at our discretion.

3. Deadline for submitting applications for access arrangements

3.1 Applications for access arrangements must be processed by the exam boards published deadline. This will allow centres to make provision for access arrangements from the perspective of timetabling logistics, accommodation and staffing. If a referral to an awarding body becomes necessary, there may not be sufficient time to process the application if it is made after the respective deadline.

4. Core and supplementary evidence

4.1 Core evidence for candidates with a Learning Difficulty

In order to award extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the college must assess the needs of the candidate based on one of the following documents:

- A statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which confirms the candidate's disability
- An assessment carried out no earlier than the start of year 9 by a specialist assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

5. Assessment

5.1 We re-assess all students with a history of access arrangements to check that the arrangement is still appropriate to their needs. A series of psychometric tests (recommended by PATOSS and acceptable to JCQ) are administered to determine processing, reading and writing speeds using standardised scores.

5.2 The assessment will be conducted by an Access Arrangements Assessor qualified to administer the tests, which compare the literacy of an individual student against a standardised set of peer results.

6. Literacy difficulty referrals

6.1 The college must provide evidence of how a literacy difficulty significantly and persistently impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom. Information is gathered from the student, those who work with the student (teachers and/or support staff), progress grades and screening assessment results. Those students who require extra support will be referred to the Learner Support Department who will aim to establish a picture of need. If a picture of need is established, the student will be referred for assessment to ascertain if there is a need for access arrangements in future examinations.

6.2 The tests are undertaken purely for educational purposes and in no respect indicate a diagnosis of any underlying Specific Learning Difficulty.

7. Core evidence for a candidate with a medical/health condition

7.1 Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making a request for extra time, since they may be more appropriate for candidates with a medical condition, a physical disability or a psychological condition.

7.2 In addition to the supplementary evidence collated by the college, the file note is supported with, for example:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist; or
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- a letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care plan which confirms the candidate's disability.

7.3 Please note that a letter from a G.P. is acceptable for supervised rest breaks or request for a small room, though all other access arrangements (including extra time) require an up-to-date letter from one of the above.

8. Supplementary evidence for all access arrangements

8.1 In all cases, in addition to the core evidence, the college must paint a picture of the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo or the Specialist Assessor working within the centre must have available evidence which clearly shows that an access arrangement is (still) needed for GCSE AS and A-level examinations which;

- confirms that the candidate continues to have persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- includes evidence of the candidate's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- confirms that without the application of extra time/reader/scribe, etc. the candidate would continue to be at a substantial disadvantage when taking GCE AS/A-level examinations compared to other non-disabled candidates;
- confirms that extra time/reader/scribe, etc. continues to be the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

9. Special consideration

9.1 Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination or assessment. This will be processed by the examinations office.

10. Temporary Injury

10.1 Access Arrangement Online (AAO) is used for a candidate with a temporary injury or impairment, such as a broken arm during the examination period. These arrangements are processed as the need arises. Medical evidence is retained within the department, together with a file note detailing the circumstances, a signed data protection form and a copy of the AAO approval.

11. Word Processing

Based on JCQ Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties
JCQ principles:

4.2.1 The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

4.2.2 Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives.

4.2.3 Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification.

4.2.4 Access arrangements should be processed at the start of the course... having established a need and normal way of working.

4.2.5 The arrangements put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre, for example: in class; intervention; internal tests; mocks... commonly referred to as the 'normal way of working'.

A student may benefit from using a word processor during some or all of their examinations if:

- They have a learning difference which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment

- Poor handwriting
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- It is the candidate's normal way of working

The use of a WP will not be granted to a candidate because they prefer to type rather than write, or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home.

Candidates will not be allowed to use their own laptop. WPs will be provided for GCE and GCSE exams with the spelling and grammar check facilities/predictive text disabled (switched off). If any student is found trying to get around the settings this will be interpreted by the college as malpractice and reported to the Awarding Body.

The centre provides a template and ensures that all pages are numbered; each page has the centre number, candidate number and unit/component code as either a header/footer. The detail will need completing by the candidate at the start of the exam: the invigilator will guide all WP candidates.

The script will be typed in a 12pt font and doubled spaced; as set up in the template.

The candidate is advised to name and save their document at the start of the exam. Thereafter the student is responsible for frequently saving their work.

An exam log-in will be set up by the IT technicians before the start of the exam: this ensures there is no access to email, internet or other documents.

The invigilator will print out the script and ask the candidate to verify it is all there. A JCQ word processor cover sheet (form 4) must be completed and attached to the candidate's script.

Hugh Baird College

Balliol Road
Bootle
Liverpool
L20 7EW

Telephone
0151 353 4444

Email
enquiries@hughbaird.ac.uk

www.hughbaird.ac.uk