

Access Arrangements

Information for Parents
2023/24

CYPS: SEND Implementation & Development Team

“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best they can be”



What are Access Arrangements?

- ▶ Access arrangements are made for students who have a disability, a special educational need or a temporary injury that ***significantly*** affects them in assessments.
- ▶ They are the principal way that the awarding bodies make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a candidate who is disabled is not substantially disadvantaged compared to a candidate who is not disabled.
- ▶ The process is usually managed in school by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO/LSC).



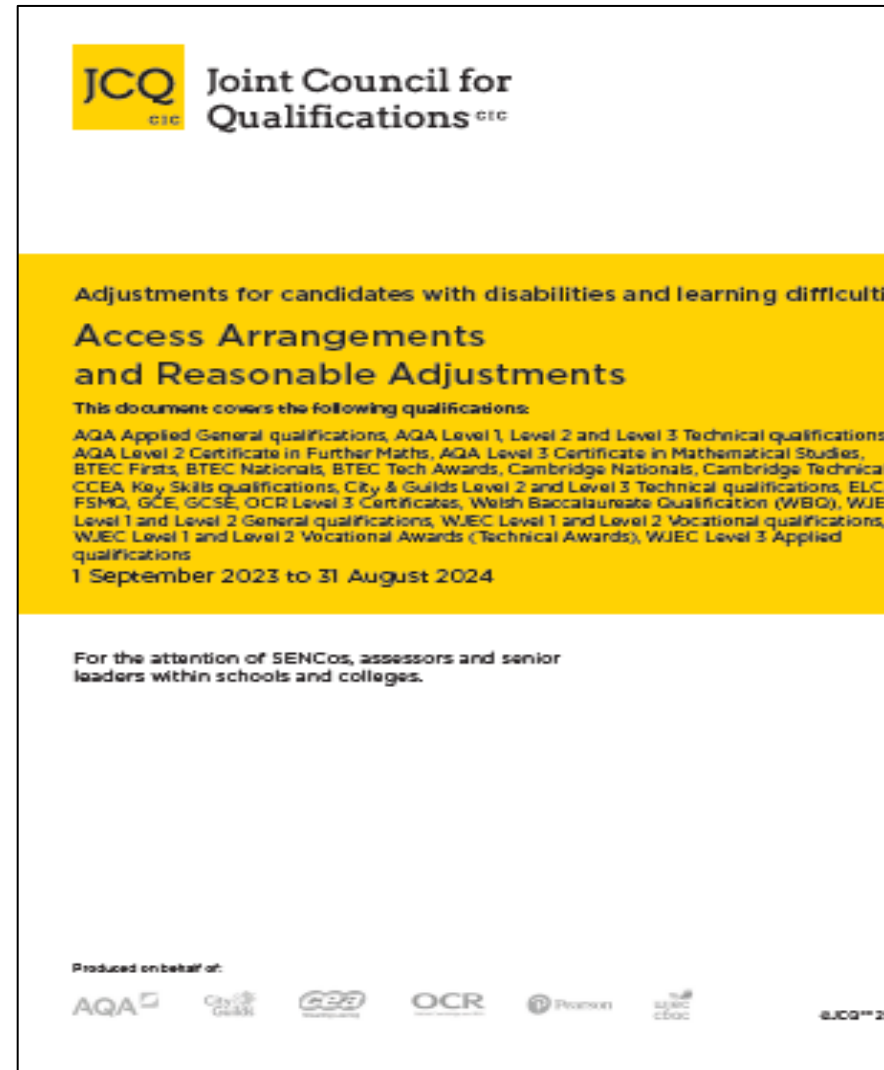
How are Access Arrangements allocated for External Exams?

- ▶ The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) publish regulations every year, for schools and colleges, to make sure that access arrangements are appropriate and consistent.
- ▶ Pupils identified as having significant learning difficulties are normally assessed by the SENCO/LSC in school to determine if an application can be made for access arrangements.
- ▶ SENCOs/LSC's who can conduct assessments have undergone rigorous specialist training and are qualified to carry out the required JCQ assessments.
- ▶ Test evidence is needed for some access arrangements that need to be applied for and approved before they can be used in external exams (GCSE & A Levels).

JCQ does not accept the scores of private reports, solely to apply for access arrangements.

When are Access Arrangements organised?

- ▶ Access Arrangements must be agreed before assessments and exams.
- ▶ JCQ issues deadlines for schools having arrangements processed and approved.



The image shows the cover of a document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The top left features the JCQ logo, which consists of the letters 'JCQ' in a yellow square above the text 'Joint Council for Qualifications etc'. The main title of the document is 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments', with a subtitle 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties'. Below the title, it states 'This document covers the following qualifications:' followed by a list of various qualifications including AQA Applied General qualifications, AQA Level 1, 2, and 3 Technical qualifications, AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths, AQA Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies, BTEC Firsts, BTEC Nationals, BTEC Tech Awards, Cambridge Nationals, Cambridge Technicals, CCEA Key Skills qualifications, City & Guilds Level 2 and Level 3 Technical qualifications, ELC, FSMQ, GCE, GCSE, OCR Level 3 Certificates, Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBCQ), WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 General qualifications, WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational qualifications, WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational Awards (Technical Awards), and WJEC Level 3 Applied qualifications. The document is valid from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. At the bottom, it is intended for the attention of SENCOs, assessors, and senior leaders within schools and colleges. The footer includes the text 'Produced on behalf of:' followed by logos for AQA, City & Guilds, CCEA, OCR, Pearson, and WJEC. The document number 'JCQ 2023' is also visible.

Guidance that governs Access Arrangements for schools

- ▶ Access arrangements do not change the skills or knowledge being tested.
- ▶ Access arrangements must not give an unfair advantage to those who receive them.
- ▶ There are a variety of access arrangements that can be provided.
- ▶ Any access arrangements that are used in exams are based on need and must *reflect the pupil's normal way of working* in the classroom on a regular basis and/ or in tests and exams as observed during their time in school to date.

Year 8 tests and exams

- ▶ P7 SEAG Transfer Tests are not regarded as regulated exams, so access arrangements given to a child during these exams do not automatically continue to apply in post primary.
- ▶ A private educational psychologist's report submitted for transfer purposes cannot be used as evidence to support access arrangements in post primary.
- ▶ Schools employ a robust method of identifying children who require access arrangements, and this documentation is inspected.

Accountability

- ▶ JCQ state that schools must be able to demonstrate a detailed history of need and consistent use of reasonable adjustments to support a formal application for a pupil's access arrangements.
- ▶ Teachers observe the pupil's normal way of working in class and note any difficulties, putting in support strategies as required.
- ▶ Both data and teacher observation helps to inform the SENCO/LSC of pupils who may have a special educational need (SEN) and need to be placed on the school's SEN register and/or pupils who may require access arrangements.
- ▶ The SENCO/LSC may then conduct further assessments to provide evidence to support an application for access arrangements.

Specialist evidence

In order to apply for some access arrangements:

- ▶ The SENCO/LSC's detailed information will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability.
- ▶ The specialist evidence is not required to recommend the access arrangement e.g. 25% extra time but to simply confirm the candidate's disability.

Exam Stress

- ▶ It is normal for most children to feel nervous or anxious about exams.
- ▶ Solely having “exam nerves” would not be an appropriate justification for applying for access arrangements.
- ▶ School may provide advice and support to all children prior to exams on how to cope with stress and use it positively.
- ▶ As parents, please endorse your child’s sense of resilience and support their use of taught strategies to limit exam anxiety.
- ▶ Encourage a “can do” attitude and a positive mind set in your child.



Useful websites for exam stress

- ▶ [AQA—Student and parent support: managing exam stress](#)
- ▶ [Childline UK— Preparing for exams](#)
- ▶ [NHS—Coping with exam stress](#)