



Lady Margaret School

2022/2023

- Access Arrangements Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Word Processing Policy

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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)

Equalities Act and 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)

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.

Lady Margaret School is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with a disability achieve their potential and that they are successful. We recognise that we have a duty towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. We will explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with a disability are not disadvantaged.

See Appendix 1 – Equalities Policy (exams)

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Lady Margaret 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.

(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/Exams Officer 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.

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 **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 their first examination.

Responsibility for Access Arrangements

Making Access Arrangements for candidates to take examinations is the responsibility of the SENCO in conjunction with the Examinations Officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCO in conjunction with the Examinations Officer.

Alternative accommodation outside the main examinations room for Access Arrangement candidates, where necessary and if possible operationally, will be arranged by the Examinations Officer.

Invigilation and support for Access Arrangement candidates will be organised by the Examinations Officer with the SENCO.

Access Arrangement Assessor Information

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.

Qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Name of Assessor: Kim Walsh

Qualification Held: Master of Arts in Specific Learning Difficulties (dyslexia)

A copy of the assessor(s) certification can be found in the AA folder for both Year 11 and Year 13 candidates and a copy is also held by the Exams Officer 'exams folder'.

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. The head of centre has processes in place to not only check the qualifications of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR, section 5.4). The assessor is

responsible to complete training as required and update professional development. School to support professional development as required.

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

Processes to check that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ Access arrangements booklet:

- Appoint a qualified Assessor as per JCQ instructions (Chapter 7 AA book)
- The SENCO must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor
- The SENCO must provide the assessor with background information on the candidate, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Section A of Form 8.
- The candidate must be assessed in light of the picture of need
- The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. For example, if the candidate requires a reader but does not have writing difficulties, there is no requirement to carry out tests of writing skills
- Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores must be used
- Results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15

Picture of need/normal way of working

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO **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. To apply for access arrangements the student needs to be on the schools SEN register under SEN support or has an EHCP. **Private educational psychology reports do not automatically guarantee students to receive access arrangements.** If suitable we will use the evidence of a private educational psychology report to help build the picture of need but we will use our exams assessor to finalise the 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

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. A new application will be applied for when students move from GCSE to GCE.

Processing the applications is the responsibility of the SENCO in conjunction with the Exams Officer.

Extra Time

25% Extra time can be awarded to students with a EHCP, a Form 8 or complex medical needs. **Please refer to JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022/2023 for up to date information.**

To support the SENCO's application, up to date detailed information will be **required** by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability, such as:

- Frequent letter/reports from CAMHS, HCPC registered psychologist, medical consultants, psychiatrists

Anxiety, ADHD, ASD do not automatically qualify for extra time as the medical condition/disability has to substantially hinder the students speed of working.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Medical evidence will be required for the following centre delegated adjustments:

- Rest breaks – rest breaks are taken in the exam room where the time freezes. Students will need to raise their hand during the examination to get the invigilator’s attention. Rest breaks require substantial medical evidence which needs to be updated regularly.
- Ear plugs – non digital, foam plugs maybe requested by a candidate with suitable medical evidence

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

The use of a word processor in public examinations is a Centre-assessed Access Arrangement. Decisions regarding their allocation to students will be made by the SENCO in consultation with teaching staff, and SLT where appropriate.

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. Word processor use will not be granted to students solely because they would prefer to type, are faster using a word processor than handwriting or because they use a laptop, Chromebook or other word processing device in lessons.

Please see **Appendix 2** for the **Policy on Word Processor use for Examinations**. A signed copy of this statement by the Head of Centre is kept by the Examinations Officer.

Separate/small room 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 school is able to facilitate the requirement
- whether the candidate has substantial, professional evidence of need.
- 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)

In the case of separate/small room invigilation, the candidate’s disability is **established within the centre** (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). They must be known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCO or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. **For** example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.

Separate/small room invigilation must reflect the candidate’s normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate/small room invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equalities Policy (Exams)

The Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs

The Equality Act 2010 extends the application of the special needs and Access Arrangements to general qualifications. All examination centre staff must ensure that the Access Arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the Act, always taking into account the need to protect the integrity of the examination as an overarching principle.

Lady Margaret School is committed to ensuring that all students, including those with a disability achieve their potential and that they are successful. We recognise that we have a duty towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. We will explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with a disability are not disadvantaged.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to detail how the school facilitates access to exams and assessments for SEND candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This will be carried out 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

Definition of Disability: The Equality Act 2010

Disability is a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal daily activities’.

Policy

- The Equality Act 2010 (previously Disability Discrimination Act, DDA), Special Needs and Access Arrangements extends the application to general qualifications.
- All exam Centre staff must ensure that the Access Arrangements and special consideration regulations and guidance are consistent with the law.
- A candidate’s special needs requirements are determined by the SENCO. The SENCO will inform the Exams Officer of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam.
- Access Arrangements - identifying the candidates eligible for Access Arrangements is the responsibility of the SENCO. Submitting completed Access Arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the joint responsibility of the SENCO and the Exams Officer.
- Rooming for Access Arrangement candidates will be arranged by the Exams Officer.
- Invigilation and support for Access Arrangement candidates will be organised by the Exams Officer.

Equality Legislation

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of any equality legislation.

The centre will comply with the legislation, including making reasonable adjustments to the service that that they provide candidates in accordance with requirements defined by the legislation, awarding bodies, and JCQ. This is the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

The School will take every available step to ensure that students with a disability are afforded the best possible opportunities for the completion of their exams. This will include the following:

- Students who suffer injury just before, or during, the exam period will be offered appropriate exam rooms where necessary and will comply with exam regulations
- The Exams Officer should be notified if there are any exceptional health issues.
- Any specialised equipment will be provided.
- Invigilators will be briefed of any exceptional issues concerning communication or other factors which may affect the candidate.
- All invigilators will be briefed on the Equality Act 2010 and trained in any necessary disability issues
- Should the student require any Access Arrangements this will be processed by the SENCO and supported by the Exams Officer as soon as they are made aware of the need and by the deadlines set by the relevant Awarding Body.
- Specialist equipment will be provided by the School should there be a need, for example, use of a word processor or modified papers.
- Should the disability require the aid of a scribe or a reader, this will be provided by the school. Invigilators will be trained on the requirements of a scribe or a reader.
- Ensure Invigilators are aware of any emergency evacuation procedures that may need to be in place for candidates with a disability who may need assistance.

Possible Disabilities and Centre Solutions.

Type of Disability or Disadvantage	Centre Solution
Use of crutches for broken leg or other lower limb complaint	The Gym is used as the main exam hall which is on the ground floor. Students will be sat close to the entry/exit doors.
Broken arm / collar bone / finger or other such complaint	The Centre will arrange for candidates to have a Scribe, laptop and/or extra time for the exam.
Generally feeling unwell	The Centre may be able to arrange for the candidate to sit the exam in a room on their own (invigilation staff permitting) and candidates will be allowed rest breaks without penalty to the overall exam duration. If an alternative room is unavailable then it is advisable to sit the candidate near the exit.
Visual disability	All exam rooms in the Centre are well lit. Candidates are permitted the use of their coloured film overlays as required or may have their exam script photocopied onto designated coloured paper before the start of the exam. Candidates with a visual impairment may wish to receive large print exam scripts. These candidates would be given 2 desks in order to accommodate the additional exam material.
Hearing disability	Candidates may have the use of a live speaker for pre-recorded exam components, or a sign language interpreter. Candidates will be accommodated in a room on their own.
Learning disabilities	Candidates within the Centre are assessed and permitted the use of a Scribe, Reader and/or Extra Time as recommended by the Centre's SENCO.
Physical disability	Ensure that the exams hall is accessible. If entering and exiting an exams room would be an issue then an alternative room will be sourced. The school will aim to ensure that the seating is both appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects sitting and posture.
Medication	Candidates that need to take medication during an exam, should liaise with the Examination Officer in advance. All medication should be bagged and labelled with the name of the person for whom it is intended. This will be placed on the invigilator's desk and can be requested in need.
Diabetes	A list of candidates that have diabetes is on the invigilator's desk in all locations. If a student requires a mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar levels. The use of the phone will need to be applied as an access arrangement, via AAO under 'other'. Should a candidate need to test their sugar levels during an exam, they should be allowed to do so. A bag of food, glucose tablets etc. is supplied. Rest breaks and sugar levels should be recorded.

Appendix 2 - Policy for Word Processor use for Examinations

Statement: Word Processor use for Examinations:

The use of a word processor in public examinations is a Centre-assessed Access Arrangement. Decisions regarding their allocation to students will be made by the SENCO in consultation with teaching staff, and SLT where appropriate.

Word processor use will not be granted to students solely because they would prefer to type, are faster using a word processor than handwriting or because they use a laptop, Chromebook or other word processing device in lessons.

Word processing arrangements will be granted to students where it is their normal way of working in lessons.

The purpose of this policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors in examinations and assessments.

A signed copy of this policy is kept in the red exams folder held by the Exams Officer.

Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for conducting examinations.

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023* and ICE to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2022-2023*.

Principles for using a word processor

Lady Margaret School complies with AA chapter 4 *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)

- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed to do so in order to remove barriers for disabled candidates which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties
- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate

(AA 4.2.2)

- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question

(AA 4.2.3)

- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis

(AA 4.2.4)

- The use of a word processor is normally considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course providing the centre has firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working for a candidate
- Candidates are made aware when they will have the use of a word processor for timetabled examinations and non-examination assessments

(AA 4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor for candidates is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their '**normal way of working**', which is defined as support:
- in the classroom (where appropriate); or
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or
- literacy support lessons; or
- literacy intervention strategies; and/or
- in internal school tests/examinations
- mock examinations

The only exceptions to the above would be a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.

The use of a word processor

Lady Margaret School complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)

- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled. The program we use is 'Word pad'.
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre
- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs

(AA 5.8.2)

- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification

(AA 5.8.3)

- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers
- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen

(AA 5.8.4)

- In all cases, ensures that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with each candidate's typed script (according to the instructions issued by the individual awarding body)
- Does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home

Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets)

Lady Margaret School complies with ICE *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

A Word Processor:

- must be used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used. **An unauthorised memory stick must not be used by a candidate.** Where needed, the centre must provide a memory stick, which is cleared on any previously stored data, to the candidate;
- must be in good working order at the time of the examination;
- must be accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen. Where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator will be required;

- must either be connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. **This must be done after the examination is over. The candidate must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own.** Word processed scripts must be attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- must be used to produce scripts under secure conditions, otherwise they may be refused;
- must not be used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- must not be connected to an intranet or any other means of communication.
- must not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.;
- must not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these;
- must not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;
- must not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- must not be used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

During the Examination

- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer
- candidates using Trelson assessment software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own