


## ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

<b>RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>HEAD OF CENTRE</b>
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<b>PROPOSED BY:</b>	<b>EXAMS OFFICER &amp; SENCo</b>
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<b>TYPE OF POLICY:</b>	<b>NON-STATUTORY</b>
<b>ON WEBSITE:</b>	<b>YES</b>

<b>DATE AGREED:</b>	<b>OCTOBER 2025</b>
<b>FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:</b>	<b>ANNUALLY</b>
<b>NEXT REVIEW:</b>	<b>OCTOBER 2026</b>

<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>PAUL PHILLIPS</b>
<b>DATE APPROVED AND ISSUED:</b>	<b>OCTOBER 2025</b>
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	 <b>DEPUTY HEAD TEACHER</b>

**This document is reviewed and updated annually on the publication of updated JCQ regulations.**

References in this document to GR, ICE and AARA refer to the JCQ documents General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

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

## Introduction

### 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'. (AARA 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'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

## Purpose of the procedure policy

The purpose of this procedure policy is to confirm that Vandyke Upper 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

### 1. General principles

The Head of Centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, **those** whom English is an additional language **and** those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AARA 4.2)

The principles for Vandyke Upper School to consider 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 them 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 a disabled candidate (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate.
- The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2)
- **Applications** should be processed at the start of **or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working**. (AARA 4.2)
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AARA 4.2)
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AARA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in:

- Equality in Exams

## **2. The assessment process**

At Vandyke Upper School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the Head of Centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AARA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

<b>Name of current assessor:</b>	Malika Ogun
<b>Qualifications held:</b>	Level 7 postgraduate award of proficiency in assessment for access arrangements (PAPAA)
<b>Awarding Body:</b>	Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors
<b>Qualification Updates:</b>	24 August 2023

### **Appointment of assessors**

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Vandyke Upper School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified (AARA 7.3, 7.4)

### **Reporting the appointment of assessors**

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AARA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by:

- Head of Centre, Human Resources, or Achievement & Inclusion department (A&I) from the access arrangement files
- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. (AARA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status (AARA 7.4)

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

Vandyke Upper School confirms:

- 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 (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)

- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- **A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online (AARA 7.3)**
- Relevant staff working within the centre should always carefully consider 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 (AARA 7.3)

### 3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

#### Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place

### 4. Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

#### Reader

In addition to the published evidence criteria for a reader (AARA), candidates will require a reading assessment score below SAS 84 to confirm the presence of a significant impairment giving rise to a substantial and persistent reading difficulty. Assessment will take place in accordance with section 'Assessment of candidates who may require access arrangements' of this document.

#### The use of a word processor

Candidates may use a word processor for examinations where this is appropriate to their needs and **not simply because this is their preferred or normal way of working, they can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a word processor at home**. Please see the word processor policy procedure.

#### Alternative rooming arrangement within the Centre

Decisions regarding separate invigilation within the Centre are made by the SENCo in collaboration with the Exams Officer. Candidate's difficulties should be **"substantial and long term"**, **"well established within the centre"** and known to key members of staff.

**Arrangements should reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the Centre as a consequence of "a long term medical condition or social, mental or emotional needs" Furthermore, "nervousness, low level anxiety, or being worried about exams is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre". [AARA 5.16]**

### **Candidates eligible for alternative rooming within the Centre**

Candidates may be considered for small room invigilation or specific seating arrangements where:

- there is a history of extreme or chronic exam related anxiety, and/or a mental health difficulty, where they receive specialist support and/or intervention from professional services (e.g.: **CAMHS, and NHS counsellor or other specialist**).
- their 'normal way of working' involves specific seating arrangements in lessons, and this can be sufficiently evidenced by teachers, the SENCo or Head of Year.
- there are other, long term difficulties where specific arrangements are considered to be an appropriate and reasonable adjustment, and where evidence has been collected over a period of time by the SENCo and/or Examination Officer.

In rare and extenuating circumstances, any case that does not fall clearly within the above guidance will be considered on an individual basis, with a final decision being made collaboratively by the SENCo in consultation with the Exams Officer.

### **Evidence requirements for alternative rooming arrangements within the Centre**

In all cases of chronic examination related stress/anxiety, and/or a mental health difficulty, professional evidence must be received from **a CAMHS professional, NHS psychiatrist or other specialist, which includes details relating specifically to;**

- the **significant** and persistent nature of the difficulty over a period of time;
- how this affects the candidate in examination situations;
- the interventions in place to support the management of, and/or recovery from, the difficulty (Care/Support Plan).

This should be further supported by school based evidence that, in the months prior to the examination period, alternative seating arrangements were the candidate's normal way of working, in lessons and exams, as a direct consequence of their difficulties.

For other difficulties, professional evidence in support of the arrangement is required where there is a lack of evidence available within the Centre. **All professional evidence should be provided on headed paper and received by 31st March prior to the summer examination period.**

### **Alternative rooming arrangements will not be awarded on the basis of:**

- **a GP letter;**
- **a privately commissioned (paid for) report or letter;**
- **letters or reports from professionals providing privately funded interventions, unless specifically authorised by the Centre.**

Allocations of alternative rooming arrangements are reviewed periodically and further professional evidence may be requested to substantiate the continuation of the arrangement, ensuring it remains appropriate and relevant to the candidate's needs.

## **Students not using Access Arrangement**

Candidates' use of access arrangements in internal and formal assessments is monitored and recorded. Candidates who do not use their arrangements will be encouraged to do so, however if arrangements are never used consideration will be given to withdrawal of the arrangement in accordance with AARA section 4.2.8.

## **Modified papers**

During formal examinations, the Exams Officer is responsible for requesting modified papers via AAO by the published deadlines. Teachers are aware of students requiring modified papers and take steps to procure them for internal assessments.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AARA 6.1)

## **Roles and responsibilities**

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- The Assessor to submit applications for approval using AAO
- The Assessor to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. appropriate evidence of need (where required) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
- The Assessor to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer to order modified papers

### THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Generally, impairments have to meet the statutory requirements set out in section 6 and Schedule 1 to the Equality Act 2010 and associated regulations.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is usually considered cumulatively in terms of:

- identifying a physical or mental impairment;
- looking into adverse effects and assessing which are substantial;
- considering if substantial adverse effects are long term;
- judging the impact of long-term adverse effects on normal day-to-day activities.

Statutory guidance on the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability has been produced by the Office for Disability Issues (within the Department for Work and Pensions) to help better understand and apply this definition: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/570382/Equality\\_Act\\_2010disability\\_definition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/570382/Equality_Act_2010disability_definition.pdf)

The clear starting point in the statutory guidance is that disability means **‘limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people’**.

**‘Substantial’** means ‘more than minor or trivial’. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.

**‘Long term’** means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months or is likely to do so.

**‘Normal day-to-day activities’** could be determined by reference to the illustrative, nonexhaustive list of factors on pages 47 to 51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010. **(Study and education related activities are included in the meaning of ‘day-to-day’ activities.)**

The guidance from the Office for Disability Issues referred to above illustrates the factors which might reasonably be regarded as having a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities. Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect are also provided.

**Name:**

**Candidate number:**

**You are allowed the following arrangements in your exams:**

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- 
- 

**Valid until:** End of Year 11

The attached information explains what the arrangements mean and how to use them. You may keep it for future reference.

**Candidate declaration:**

- I have read the attached information and it has been explained to me.
- I understand that an application for access arrangements will be processed using 'Access arrangements online', complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- I understand that in some exams these arrangements are not allowed. \*
- I understand that if I do not use my arrangements they may be withdrawn. \*\*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Arrangement(s) are applied to all examinations in accordance with JCQ regulations and examination specifications. Papers, or parts of papers, may prohibit some elements of support (e.g.: readers or additional time) where this undermines the integrity or purpose of the examination.

\*\* Candidates who do not use their arrangements they may have them withdrawn in accordance with section 4.2.8 of the JCQ regulations for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.