



Disability Policy (Exams)

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to Belmont School's (the Centre) Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan which detail how the Centre will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This includes a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the Centre provides to disabled candidates.
- 1.2 The 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,
 - good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

2. The Equality Act 2010 Definition of Disability

A definition is provided in the Appendix, as stated in the JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties "Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023"*, hitherto referred to in this policy as **AA**.

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 the General Regulations for Approved Centres, referred to in this policy as GR and AA;
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed, evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained before he/she assesses candidates and that evidence of the qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file;
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place;
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements;
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (*Access arrangements policy*);
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification.

Senior Managers

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

Exams Officer

- Provides a policy on the use of word processors in exams and assessments;
- Ensures the qualified assessor(s) has access to the assessment objectives for the relevant specification(s) a candidate is undertaking ;
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance;
- Ensures a statement is provided which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams;
- 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.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre;
- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA.
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented;
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of [AA](#);
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates;
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process;
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate is considered on a subject by subject basis;
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate;
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate;
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate;
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body.

Teaching staff

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

Support staff (for example, Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the SENCo in painting a holistic picture of need, confirming the normal way of working for a candidate.

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties

- Has detailed understanding of the JCQ publication AA

USE OF WORD PROCESSORS

The school policy on the use of word processors is as follows:

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre;
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs:
- Needs may include:
 - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
 - a medical condition
 - a physical disability
 - a sensory impairment;
 - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
 - poor handwriting
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained;
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question;
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification;
- consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidates's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment;
- provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification;
- The centre will 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.

Exceptions

The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- in the event of 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;
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

4. Requesting access arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCo)

- 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;
- Follows guidance in [AA](#) Section 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#);
- 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;

- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the form is signed (a handwritten, electronic or typed signature is acceptable) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the form is provided for processing and inspection purposes (This may be a hard copy paper version or an electronic version);

Exams Officer (EO)

- 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;
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including (where required) the completion of JCQ Form 8 (*Application for access arrangements - Profile of learning difficulties*), and/or centre based evidence including concise file note(s) on centre headed paper, signed and dated, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (Form 8 must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties who are not subject to a current EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs or those requiring a Language Modifier.);
- Ensures the names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed on page 2 of [AA](#), are entered into AAO to confirm their status including any professionals working outside 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 processed at the start of the course and at the latest by the awarding body deadline;

Maintains a file/e-folder for each candidate (the required documentation for a candidate will either be all in hard copy within the candidate's file or all in electronic format within the candidate's e-folder) that will include:

- completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms
 - 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 those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#) (where approval is required), a print out/PDF of the AAO approval and a signed candidate personal data consent form (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)
- Presents the files/e-folders when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised (In the event of an IT failure at the time of an inspection is able to access the required documentation in an alternative format, e.g. a memory stick or hard copy);
 - If the SENCo is unavailable, presents the files/e-folders of access arrangements candidates when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector and addresses any queries/questions raised;
 - Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates;

- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure arrangements are in place to either order a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or to open question paper packets in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the exam 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 (using AAO for those qualifications listed on page 74 of [AA](#); using *Form VQ/EA*), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate.

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).

Head of Centre

- Supports the SENCo, 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.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- 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);
- Liaises with the exams officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams;
- 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, Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Communication Professional);
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s);
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams;
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate;
- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues;
- 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;
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Exams Officer (EO)

- Understands and follows instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in ICE 2022-2023;
- Is familiar with the instructions for *Invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements* and *Access arrangements* in [ICE](#) 2022-2023

- 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;
- 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;
- Monitors, in internal tests/mock exams, the use of arrangements granted to a candidate and where a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage;
- Ensures a record of the content of training given to those facilitating an access arrangement for a candidate under examination conditions is kept and retained on file until the deadline for reviews of marking has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later;
- 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;
- 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 invigilators supervising access arrangement candidates are trained in their role and understand the invigilation arrangements required for access arrangement candidates and the role of any facilitator;
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators;
- Liaises with the SENCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure 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
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding the facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues
- 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 candidates with access arrangements are identified on exam room seating plans
- 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 either accesses a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper or opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the awarding body's published start time of the exam

- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early so the facilitator (Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Communication Professional **only**) may have access to the question paper 60 minutes prior to the awarding body's published starting time for the exam in order to prepare
- 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
 - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for those qualifications listed on page 2 of [AA](#)
- 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 SENCo 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;

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the SENCo and the Exams Officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams;
- Staff responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate
- Estates/site staff responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate
- Senior staff responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated.

Internal assessments

These are Non-Examination Assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally moderated by the centre and externally moderated by the awarding body.

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
- 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

- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required
- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

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

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

Internal exams

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

Exams Officer

- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate
- Provide the SENCo with internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

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

Teaching staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates

6. Facilitating access - examples

6.1 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.

6.2 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 Supervised rest breaks | <i>SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home</i> <i>Pastoral head provides written statement for file to confirm the need</i> <i>Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required</i> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p><i>Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place</i></p> <p><i>EO submits 'Alternative site form' for timetabled written exams to awarding body/bodies online through CAP</i></p> <p><i>EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam</i></p> <p><i>EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam</i></p> <p><i>Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition</i></p> <p><i>EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged)</i></p> <p><i>EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence</i></p> <p><i>Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested</i></p> |
| <p>Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text</p> | <p>Reader/computer reader</p> <p>25% Extra time</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p> | <p><i>Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010</i></p> <p><i>Papers checked for those testing reading</i></p> <p><i>Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded</i></p> <p><i>A short concise file note produced on centre headed paper, signed and dated kept on file, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre</i></p> <p><i>(25% Extra time - Form 8 completed as appropriate)</i></p> <p><i>Supporting evidence, AAO approval and signed candidate personal data consent form kept on file</i></p> |
| <p>Significant difficulty in concentrating</p> | <p>Prompter</p> <p>Separate invigilation within the centre</p> | <p><i>Gathers evidence to support substantial and long-term adverse impairment</i></p> <p><i>Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted</i></p> |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| | | <i>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)</i> |
| A wheelchair user | Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant | <i>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</i> <i>Provides height adjustable desk in exam room</i> <i>Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities</i> <i>Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access</i> <i>Seats candidate near exam room door</i> <i>Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room</i> <i>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</i> |

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Appendix

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 (<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea-guide.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, non-exhaustive list of factors in 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.

Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person’s native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- persistent distractibility or difficulty concentrating;
- difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions;
- physical impairment - for example, difficulty operating a computer because of physical restrictions in using a keyboard.

Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- minor problems with writing or spelling;
- inability to read very small or indistinct print without the aid of a magnifying glass;
- inability to converse orally in a language which is not the speaker’s native spoken language.