



# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

## 2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	

## Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	<b>Jack Davey, Emily Stevens</b>
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	<b>Claire Greatbanks</b>
Head of centre	<b>Emma Gundry</b>
Assessor(s)	
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	

## Contents

Key staff involved in the policy.....	2
What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	4
Access arrangements.....	4
Reasonable adjustments .....	4
Purpose of the policy .....	4
General principles .....	4
Equalities Policy (Exams).....	5
The assessment process.....	5
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	5
Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties .....	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor .....	6
Picture of need/normal way of working .....	6
Processing access arrangements and adjustments.....	6
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	7
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments .....	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams).....	7
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy .....	7
Appendices .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## 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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, 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'. (<sup>1</sup>AA, Definitions)

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

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Altus 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 ALS lead/SENCo 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.

Where the ALS lead/SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (<sup>1</sup>AA, section 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication 'Adjustments t for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

<sup>1</sup>This 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, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **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 his/her first examination.

## Equalities Policy (Exams)

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.

The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## The assessment process

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.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

The Altus School does not currently have an appointed assessor
--

## 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.

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

The Head of Centre will be responsible for the quality of the Access Arrangements / Reasonable Adjustment process and will ensure any assessor is suitably qualified. The head of Centre will satisfy themselves that the professional does have the required level of competence and training. The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7. The Head of Centre will refer to Section 7.3 Appointment of Assessors in the most current JCQ Access Arrangements document when appointing an Assessor.

## Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Following the appointment of an Assessor, the SENDCO will hold on file a copy of the evidence that the Assessor is suitably qualified. The evidence will be current where required and fully compliant with section 7.4 Reporting the appointment of assessors in the most current JCQ Access arrangements document.

The names of all assessors will be recorded in Access Arrangements Online, confirming their status.

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

### 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
- 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
- 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 appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8 (Application for access arrangements – Profile of learning difficulties), where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed by hand and dated as required prior to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- 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 applied for by the awarding body deadline

Maintains a file for each candidate 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 of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared)

### 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 per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

The independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. All candidates must be assessed considering the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCo. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCo. (AA 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.

Applications for all EAA are made by the SENCo via the AOO online portal. Detailed records, of all the essential information are kept on file in the schools information hub by the SENCO and the EO, and in hard copy form when required. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. (AA, section 8.6)

## Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved Supervised rest breaks, use of a word processor, use of coloured overlays, TLC within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- 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 5.16)

## Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

### Word Processor Policy (Exams)

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.

Please see the Word processor (Exams) Policy

### Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the ALS lead/SENCo.

The decision will be based on:

- 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 alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is **established within the centre**. It is 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.

Alternative rooming arrangements **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 invigilation within the centre.