



THE ECCLESBOURNE SCHOOL

Learning Together for the Future

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

November 2025

This policy is updated annually

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1 Introduction

1.1 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'.

1.2 Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustment 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.

2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Ecclesbourne 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 check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

3 General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or 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 responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations (AA 4.2).

The principles for The Ecclesbourne 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/adjustments 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 for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments 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 a 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)

4 The assessment process

At The Ecclesbourne 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)
- These members of staff are: Cathy James and Lisa F Smith. Evidence of their successful completion of their qualifications for this responsibility are kept on file for inspection purposes (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)

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

The Ecclesbourne School confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 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 assessment carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)

4.2 Picture of need/normal way of working

The Ecclesbourne School confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre 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 centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5)

5 Processing access arrangements and adjustments

5.1 Arrangements/adjustment requiring awarding body approval

- *Access arrangements online* (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications list 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.
- Appropriate evidence is held on file by Cathy James, the Access Arrangements Coordinator.

5.2 The use of a word processor

- The Exams Word Processing Policy details the criteria The Ecclesbourne School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examination and assessments.

5.3 Alternative rooming arrangements

- The Exams Policy details the criteria The Ecclesbourne School specifically uses to award alternative rooming arrangements

5.4 Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- 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)

5.5 Roles and responsibilities

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

It is the responsibility of Cathy James, the Access Arrangements Coordinator, to:

- inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangement online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018;
- to submit application for approval using AAO
- to keep detailed records for inspection purposes
- to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO

It is the responsibility of Clare Vincent, the Exams Officer, to:

- order modified papers