



# Exam Access Arrangements

## Essential Information for Parents/Carers

This document is intended to provide essential information to parent and carers on the processes and regulations involved in assessing and providing exam access arrangements.

### Key contacts

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## What are exam access arrangements?

Access Arrangements allow access to examinations without changing the demands of the assessment and are available to candidates with physical difficulties, sensory difficulties, learning difficulties and social, mental and emotional needs.

Access arrangements for candidates are based on:

- evidence of need; and
- candidates' normal way of working; and
- must reflect the normal practice/support the candidate has had in the centre.

They allow candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to:

- Access the assessment
- Show what they can do

The intention of an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of the candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements must be agreed before an assessment.

## Why do some students get access arrangements?

Awarding bodies have a duty under Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disability.

The process often involves an assessment by a specialist assessor which will provide the Centre with evidence which they can use to decide on the most appropriate exam access arrangements.

## JCQ Definitions

The JCQ represents the seven largest national awarding bodies in the UK offering GCSEs, A Levels and vocational qualifications. Applications for exam access arrangements must be agreed by the JCQ and their regulations are updated annually in the autumn.

JCQ access arrangements guidance uses the definition of disability as per the Equality Act 2010; this applies to mental or physical impairment.

A disability needs to be:

- Substantial
- Long term; existed for 12 months +
- Having an adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities

Definition of Special Educational Needs as per the SEND code of practice:

- Candidate who needs special educational provision made for them

## How does a student get an access arrangement?

Some access arrangements need to be applied for whilst others can be awarded by the school (centre) without a formal application. An application for exam access arrangements must be accompanied by the following teacher evidence:

- Documentary evidence showing the nature and extent of the candidate's difficulty;
- Evidence of the candidate's normal way of working - in class/in support lessons/in mock exams;
- Evidence of the Involvement of teaching staff, including feedback on regular working practice in classwork and tests/exams, and raising concerns about candidates.

Before an application for exam access arrangements is submitted, the candidate must sign an agreement for their data to be shared with the JCQ online system.

## What arrangements are possible?

A range of access arrangements are allowed by the JCQ. What arrangement(s) a candidate may be awarded will be decided by the SENDCo and external assessor (if applicable). Arrangements must be the candidate's normal way of working. Students may have more than one access arrangement awarded, depending on their need(s).

Access arrangements could include:

- **Extra time:** the candidate must have **two** below average scores in different areas for: speed of reading, reading comprehension, writing speed or have below average processing measure.
- **Human Scribe;** used in exceptional circumstances: preference will usually be given to dictation software. NB: This is only allowed in modern foreign languages if every word is spelt out. An approved scribe allows the Centre to grant 25% extra time, but only if the need is evidenced.
- **Word processor with spell checker;** careful consideration is needed by the candidate as full marks cannot be gained for spelling and grammar with this arrangement. Discussions with individual subject teachers are needed to decide whether more marks could be gained without the use of a word processor. The outcome of these discussions could vary between subjects.
- **Human Reader:** a responsible adult reads the instructions of the paper and the questions to the candidate. Used in exceptional circumstances only. With approved reader and/or scribe, the Centre can award 25% extra time without processing an application for it, but this is **not** automatic, the need must be evidenced. Where a candidate may only need occasional phrases or words read, the reader can be shared with up to four candidates. Candidates raise their hand to request help.
- **Oral language modifier:** this is used where no other arrangement would help – e.g., a deaf candidate would use BSL.
- **Practical assistant:** this is used where there are physical or visual needs e.g. help given to use equipment.

- **Modified papers:** specialist modified papers such as Braille require applications by very strict deadlines. For standard modifications such as A4 enlarged to A3, or coloured paper, the Centre is allowed to do these modifications an hour before the start of an exam, but a **prior** application must have been made to JCQ.
- **Controlled assessments and extra time:** Students begin their controlled assessment with their peers in the class context. If their teacher advises the use of their extra time access arrangement, this is accommodated in individual subject settings.

Exam centres (schools) also have the option to award some arrangements without external approval. This would include use of a word processor (a laptop which does not allow for spell or grammar checking), rest breaks or a prompt. The SENDCo will review candidates for these arrangements internally and parents/carers and students will be notified of their award in due course.

## Exam Access Arrangements process at King's:

### Timeframe

The earliest that students can be assessed for access arrangements are Years 9 and 10. JCQ make it very clear that assessment scores used by the Centre should be from this year and no earlier.

By end of Year 10, all students identified as likely needing exam access arrangements will have:

- the reason for the assessment and the process explained to pupil;
- a specialist assessment completed;
- confirmation of exam access arrangements from JCQ .

### Assessments

Where staff have identified that a student has additional needs which could qualify them for an access arrangement letters are sent to parents informing and requesting permission to assess candidates.

Assessments are then carried out on an individual basis with the literacy support service. These assessment scores will be carried right the way through to Year 13 examinations.

Candidates are assessed on their:

- Reading accuracy
- Spelling accuracy
- Speed of reading/writing/processing
- Processing ability e.g., working memory

**Please note that a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements.** Please speak

with the SENDCo before pursuing an external assessment with the intention of securing access arrangements.

### **Standard scores**

Access arrangement testing will use 'standard scores'. Most educational and psychological test results are reported in standard scores. Standard scores (SS) enable us to make comparisons with the scores of others, both of the same age and different ages. They allow us to identify if the score is within the average range. A standard score in the range 85-115 is seen as being in the average range; 68% of students fall in this range.

In most cases, for an application for an access arrangement, two scores must be used, one that is below 85 and one below 90.

### After assessment

If the specialist assessor's results substantiate need and normal way of working, then all information relating to a candidate will be collated to complete a Form 8. A Form 8 is the JCQ exam access record keeping form. The application process is done online, and applications will be processed. Assessments conducted by private assessors cannot be used as part of a Form 8. **Please note that a student with an EHCP does not require a form 8.**

### **Feedback to Student**

Students will be informed of their access arrangements and will be invited to a session to explain and practice their arrangements. This must become their normal way of working in lessons and during assessments. If the access arrangements are not used the candidate may not have enough evidence of need and the arrangement could be removed.

### **Feedback to Parent/Carer**

A letter will be sent to parents/carers detailing the outcome of the assessment regarding Exam Access Arrangements.

### Medical Grounds:

All applications for exam access arrangements on medical grounds are made by the Examinations Officer on a case-by-case basis. If your child has a long term medical condition that you believe may require an access arrangement please contact Mrs Lancaster via [exams@kingsschoolhove.org.uk](mailto:exams@kingsschoolhove.org.uk).

### A Level

Students **do not** need to be formally re-assessed; however, a **reapplication** must be made to JCQ. The Centre must establish continuing need and gather appropriate evidence.

## Further information

JCQ introduction to access arrangements and special considerations:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>

Information on Exams at King's:

<https://www.kingsschoolhove.org.uk/exams>

Information on SEND at King's:

<https://www.kingsschoolhove.org.uk/send>