Examinations Access Arrangements Policy

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1. What are Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements

1.1 Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working.

1.2 Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with specific needs such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

1.3 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.

1.4 A reasonable adjustment for a particular person 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 a number of 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 upon the candidate and other candidates.

1.5 An adjustment will not be approved if it:

> Involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body
> Involves unreasonable timeframes
> Affects the security and integrity of the assessment.
This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

1.6 Thomas Deacon Academy will make any decisions regarding access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect on their normal way of working. This will be in line with JCQ regulations and the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for access arrangements.

1.7 Access Arrangements / Reasonable Adjustments may include any combination of those listed below:
- Scribe
- Word Processor
- Prompter
- Practical Assistant
- Reader/Computer Reader

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- Supervised Rest Breaks
- Additional Time (up to 25% or 50% and over 50%)
- Colour naming by the invigilator
- Coloured overlays
- Low vision aid/magnifier

2. Disability Policy

2.1 A large part this policy is also covered in Section 5 of the Examinations Policy.

2.2 **Definition of disability:** Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as being 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

2.3 **Definition of special educational needs**: A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Education Act 1996 is he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for a special educational provision to be made for him/her.

2.4 Appropriate evidence of need, for awarding body inspection, will be available in the Exams Office and in the SEND Co-Ordinator office.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre supports the SEND Co-ordinator, 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

Vice Principal Wellbeing is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including *General Regulations* and *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements for candidates (including private candidates) are clearly defined and documented
- 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 the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations and that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the annually updated JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*
- Support the SEND Co-ordinator in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements

SEND Co-Ordinator has full knowledge and understand of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*

- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates
- 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 arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's *normal way of working* within the centre
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification
- 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
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body
- Ensures where form 8 is required to be completed, the original form is signed (an electronic signature is permissible) and dated as required **prior** to approval being sought and that the original form is provided for processing and inspection purposes
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates
- Appoints and appropriately trains appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (Practical Assistant, Prompter, Oral Language Modifier, Reader, Scribe or Communication Professional) ensuring they understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s) they are supporting.
- Ensures a record of all training and attendees facilitating an access arrangement is kept and retained on file until the deadline for Review of Results or any appeal/malpractice applications has been completed

Teaching/support staff inform the SEND Co-ordinator of any support that might be needed by a candidate.

- Provide comments/observations/evidence to support the SEND Co-ordinator in painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working for a candidate
- Support the SEND Co-ordinator and the Exams Officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams
- For assessments taking place in the classroom, liaise with the Send Co-ordinator to ensure appropriate access arrangements are facilitated for approved candidates.

Centre appointed assessor of candidates has detailed understanding of the annually updated JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*

- Ensures that all assessments carried out comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body

Exam Officer is familiar with the annually updated JCQ publications *General Regulations* and is aware of information contained in the *Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustments* (where relevant to the Exams Officer role)

- Processes approval applications for access arrangements via Access Arrangement Online where required
- 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)
- Understands and follows instructions for invigilation arrangements for candidates with access arrangements in the annually updated Instructions for Conducting Examinations
- 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)
- Maintains, for each candidate, completed JCQ/awarding body applications form(s) and supporting evidence as part of the JCQ Centre Inspection visit.
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates
- 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
- 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 and invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room
- When required, applies for approval through Access Arrangements Online and liaises with the SEND Co-ordinator 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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• Assessment Process

3.1 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, '*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments'* section 7.3.

3.2 The Academy's HR department will be responsible, along with SLT to ensure the qualification(s) of any appointed assessor meet the JCQ regulations. A checklist is in place as follows:

CHECKLIST	CHECKED	DATE
Qualifications of Assessor(s)		
Checked		
Photocopy of certificate(s)		
RECORDING RESULTS		
Summary sheet		
CURRENT UP TO DATE VERSIONS OF TESTS		
WRAT 5		
GORT 5		
DASH/DASH 17+		
TOMAL 2		
TOWRE 2		
CTOPP 2		
SDMT		
SECTION C OF FORM 8		
Assessor(s) to report the results of all assessments within Section C of Form 8		

• Assessment Process Administration

4.1 Administration of the assessment process works by detailing the processes in the centre which include Lucid Exact, Dyslexia Screener, Dyscalculia Screener, PATOSS and CATs test results in line with JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* policy

4.2 A qualified assessor will carry out any special assessments for access arrangements at the Thomas Deacon Academy. The documentation used to support/record the evidence is completed by the SEND Co-ordinator.

4.3 Evidence from classroom subject teachers, internal exam performance and literacy intervention strategies will be used to determine if the arrangement is the student's normal way of working.

4.4 Appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests, controlled assessments and examinations by the SEND Co-ordinator, school examination officers, specialist assessor and teaching staff.

4.5 Once the access arrangement has been processed and agreed, a letter outlining the arrangement will be sent to parents/carers. The student will be informed verbally.

- If the access arrangement ceases to be the student's 'normal way' of working, then the SEND Co-ordinator or specialist assessor reserves the right to withdraw permission of said arrangement. Written confirmation must be provided to parents/carers.

- If a student who has an exam access arrangement chooses not to use it on more than three occasions the access arrangement may be removed and the parent/carer informed.

4.6 A list of all students and their agreed access arrangement(s) is available via a SIMS report. This will be kept updated by the Exams Office.

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• Processing Access Arrangements

Access arrangements online

5.1 *Centre Admin Portal (CAP) online* is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for GCSE and GCE qualifications. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for GCSE and GCE qualifications.

> *"For GCSE and GCE qualifications, CAP enables centres to make a single on-line application for a candidate requiring access arrangements using any of the secure awarding body extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.*

5.2 The SEND Co-ordinator is responsible for submitting the completed application to the Exams office for processing.

5.3 The Exams office is responsible for submitting the application on CAP and notifying the SEND Co-ordinator of the outcome. The completed application, along with supporting evidence will be kept on file in the Exams office.

Centre Delegated Access Arrangements

5.4 The SEND Co-ordinator is responsible for submitting the completed application to the Exams Officer for processing, ensuring JCQ requirements are adhered to.

5.5 The application will be accepted and the completed applications, along with evidence to support the application will be kept on file in the Exams office.

Word Processor Policy, also see Appendix 1

5.6 An exam student may be approved to use a word processor for their exams if
- the student has a substantial and long term learning difficulty i.e. a medical, physical and/or sensory condition
- the student has illegible and incomprehensible hand writing
- is the student's normal way of working (see 4.3) and is appropriate to their needs and is not because it is the student's preferred way of working

5.7 It is the SEND Co-ordinator's decision whether a student meets the criteria listed in 5.6 and if so, to submit this as a centre delegated access arrangement as per 5.4.

Separate Invigilation

5.8 A decision where an exam student may be approved separate invigilation with the centre will be based on whether the candidate

- Has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect on other students and
- Is the student's normal way of working

5.9 It is the SEND Co-ordinator's decision whether a candidate requires separate invigilation.

• **Private Candidates**

6.1 The Academy will only accept private retake entries from former Thomas Deacon Academy students if they have been off roll for no more than 12 months and only for examinations which they have previously undertaken at the Academy; please see Section 3 of the Exams Policy.

6.2 If a private candidate has approved access arrangements that are still in date, these will be granted for the exams undertaken by the candidate.

6.3 In the event that an application has expired, or the private candidate requests a new access arrangement, then it is their responsibility to provide the necessary evidence. This will be looked at on an individual basis and, if sufficient evidence is provided, the Academy will submit a new application. If deemed necessary, the Academy may re-test the student, any fees associated with this is payable by the private candidate; please see Section 4 of the Exams Policy.

Appendix 1: Word Processor in exams

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments in an available access arrangement.

The Academy will not grant the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment objectives will be compromised by this arrangement or where a candidate prefers to type rather than write, or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The only exception will be
- in the event of a temporary injury or impairments, or a diagnosis of disability or manifestation or an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course.
- When the awarding body instructs that the examination/assessment requires all candidates to use a word processor, e.g. BTEC set tasks, Computer Studies examinations.

A candidate using a word processor will be accommodated in a designated computer room using PC's or in a room using a laptop.
- JCQ regulations apply as if the student is in the main exam venue hand writing their answers.
- The spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text will be disabled unless the student has been granted the arrangement of a Scribe.
- Students will be logged in prior to the start of exam using separate exam logins by an invigilator; these logins conform to the JCQ regulations by not granting access to other applications or the internet.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure they save their work regularly throughout the exams to the local C drive. If this is not possible a USB will be provided by the exams office which has been cleared of all previous stored data.
- The candidate must ensure the centre number, their exam name/exam number and page number/unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer.
    a. Where this needs to be handwritten, this can be done once the exam has finished and the work printed; the student must not re-read their work or make further amendments/additions to their answers in any way.

At the end of the exam time, the student will remain under exam conditions and supervised by an invigilator whilst their work is being printed.
- In the event the work cannot be printed in the exam room i.e. using a laptop in a meeting room, the student will be asked to eject the USB and will be escorted to the exams office where their work will be printed. Once this has been verified the USB will be cleared of all stored files.

The student must verify that the work is his/her own and complete the JCQ word processor cover sheet. They must not re-read their work or make further amendments/additions to their answers in any way once the exam has finished.

When the candidate hands their completed cover sheet, typed work and any handwritten answer scripts/booklets to the invigilator, they will be dismissed from the exam room.

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