Access Arrangements Policy

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This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
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Senior leader(s)	**Deanna Cappella**
Head of centre	**Lydia Kyle**
Exams officer	**Nat Sitko**
Assessor(s)	**Hannah Tracey (contracted)**
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	**Catherine Hill**

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Introduction

Queen's Gate School is an inclusive learning community and will take all practical steps to ensure its facilities allow our students to succeed. Wherever possible, and in line with the JCQ guidance, reasonable steps are taken to allow equal opportunity. They are only available to students with substantial, long-term difficulties that are known to have an adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities in school. In some cases, where there is a substantial, but short-term difficulties (e.g. Broken arm), the Exams Officer and the centre may choose to make access arrangements available (e.g. a scribe). The aim of identifying and applying access arrangements are to meet student's specific needs in collaboration with teaching staff. 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'.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage because of persistent and significant difficulties (AARA, 4.2.1). The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

It is also to confirm that Queen's Gate 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, 5.4 – further referred to in this policy as GR).

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**' (further referred to in this policy as AARA).

This policy is maintained and held by SENDCo alongside the individual e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations (AARA, 4.2.13)

Access arrangements for the 11+ are agreed by the London 11+ Consortium and published on their website.

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' (AARA, 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'.

The centre **must** ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates (AARA Definitions).

General principles

The Head of Centre/Senior Management Team will appoint a SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury (GR, 5.4).

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA (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 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.
- The SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- 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 the responsibility of the SENDCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.
- However, 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, access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable.
- 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 – referred to as their 'normal way of working', for example:
    - in the classroom (where appropriate);
    - working in small groups for reading and/or writing;
    - support lessons;
    - intervention strategies;
    - in internal tests/examinations;
    - mock examinations.

- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.
- If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to them, e.g. 25% extra time or supervised rest breaks, then it is not their normal way of working. The SENDCo may consider withdrawing the arrangement, provided the candidate will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage (The SENDCo would have monitored the use of the arrangement in internal school tests and mock examinations.)
- **Failure to comply with the regulations set out by JCQ has the potential to constitute malpractice, which may impact on the candidate's result(s).**

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.

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

This policy is available separately.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the SENDCo. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA 7.3.

Appointment of assessors

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 AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

Bear in mind **all** relevant JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR (5.4) and AARA (Chapter 7.3) including:

The head of centre/senior leadership team will:

- have a **written** process in place to check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.
- **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.
- have evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENDCo (AARA 7.3)
- make full reference to AARA 7.3 (Appointment of assessors) and record the process that reflects the requirements.

Hannah Tracey, our primary assessor, along with other school appointed Educational Psychologists, have had their certificates checked annually by the JCQ inspectors. These certificates are held in an online folder along with all candidate access arrangements files for ease of access (AARA 7.4)

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

Process at Queen's Gate School, with reference to AARA 7.5 (Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor) and 7.6 (Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties):

- All candidates are screened at the start of Year 7, and again in Year 9 for possible learning difficulties.
- Prior to assessment, the SENDCo completes Part 1 of Form 8 to provide a picture of need and normal way of working. Additionally, evidence is collated as a picture of the candidate's normal way of working from teacher feedback and scanned completed internal assessments.
- The SENDCo appoints a contracted assessor for the majority of candidates requiring assessment – Hannah Tracey (Postgraduate Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy, University of York) to conduct the assessments and completes Part 2 of Form 8. Her qualifications are held on the school system.
- Should a more in-depth assessment be required, the school has an established relationship with an Educational Psychologist – Dr Nina Elliot and assessors at Fairley House – to which we refer the students with a completed Part 1 of Form 8. The qualifications of these assessors are also held on file.
- Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores are used in assessments.
- Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85–89 are described as 'low average'. To qualify for 25% extra time, a candidate must score:
    - two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
    - one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89).
- In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working (AARA 5.2.2).
- For medical needs a Form 9 is completed by the SENDCo and an assessment may not need to be carried out if there is specialist evidence confirming the candidate's condition (AARA 5.2.3). However supervised rest breaks **must** have been trialled and exhausted before considering an application for 25% extra time (AARA 5.2.3)
- A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, **cannot** be used to award access arrangements and **cannot** be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. This would be where the assessor has not contacted the centre, has not liaised with the centre, has not been approved by the head of centre and has not received a completed Part 1 of Form 8 from the SENDCo (AARA 7.3.6)
- SENDCos and assessors working within the centre should always carefully consider any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the candidate themselves should be instigated (AARA 7.3.6)

- For any private candidate the centre will refer to the requirements as set out in the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

Picture of need/normal way of working

- Before an assessment for access arrangement takes place the SENDCo collects data to establish the candidate's normal way of working. Feedback is gathered from current teachers and pastoral staff. A holistic picture of need is created. Information from previous internal examinations and or mocks are used as well as scanned evidence of use of extra time in these assessments (if relevant). For candidates coming into the 6th Form, their previous Form 8 or 9, along with assessor qualifications if relevant, are collected. The candidates also contribute to this by completing a self-report questionnaire.
- For private candidates the centre follows the guidance as set out in the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments guidance (GR 5.4).
- For any candidate having an assessment with an external assessor, before the candidate's assessment, the SENDCo **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 SENDCo and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. (AARA 7.5.2)

Queen's Gate School Access Arrangements Process



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 AARA Chapter 6 (Modified papers) and 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) 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.

The only exception is the Cambridge International Education exam board which GCSE students are entered for in certain subjects. An alternative online application is made therefore for any students sitting GCSE exams. Although the same criteria as the JCQ guidance applies, the deadlines vary (see below).

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.

The SENDCo will gather the file of evidence, including assessment and/or medical information, along with teacher and candidate feedback on 'normal way of working' and evidence of the use of access arrangements in internal assessments. The SENDCo will then complete all paperwork and inform the candidate that an online application will be processed to gain approval for access arrangements which require JCQ approval. This approval is added to the candidate's file.

AARA 8.6: The SENDCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes:

- a copy of the candidate's approved application;
- appropriate evidence of need (where required);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required).

The following access arrangements **must** be applied for online (AARA 8.5):

- Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes
- Bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time (solely for those qualifications listed within Chapter 5, paragraph 5.18.2).
- Computer reader/reader
- 25% extra time
- Extra time over 25%
- Exemption
- Listening to music/white noise due to a substantial impairment
- Practical Assistant
- Remote invigilation
- Scribe/speech recognition technology
- Timetable variation on the day of the exam for a candidate with a disability
- Timetable variation requiring overnight supervision for a candidate with a disability

Deadlines for 2026-27 (JCQ and CIE):

Exam series	Access arrangement	Final deadline
November 2026	Modified papers	20 September 2026 (JCQ)
November 2026	All other access arrangements	1 November 2026 (JCQ)
January 2027	Modified papers	4 October 2026 (JCQ)
January 2027	All other access arrangements	21 October 2026 (JCQ)
June 2027	Modified papers	21 January 2027 (CIE) 31 January 2027 (JCQ)
June 2027	All other access arrangements	21 February 2027 (CIE) 21 March 2027 (JCQ)

The Centre will follow all guidance as set out in the AARA 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments), 6 (Modified papers) at all times.

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For Centre designated Access Arrangements, these are logged on the school system and relevant appropriate evidence/paperwork, where necessary is also place in the candidate files.

The following arrangements **do not** need to be processed online:

- Alternative rooming arrangements – sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates
- Amplification equipment
- Bilingual dictionary
- Blank sheet of paper for doodling, where a candidate has persistent and significant concentration difficulties (This must be included with the candidate's completed answer booklet.)
- Braille transcript
- Braillers
- Colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are colour blind
- Coloured overlays
- Examination question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3
- Fidget toys and stress balls
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs
- Non-electronic headphones
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners
- Prompter
- Read aloud (which can include an examination reading pen)
- Sign Language Professional
- Squared paper for a candidate with visual-spatial difficulties
- Supervised rest breaks
- Timer on a candidate's desk – a small countdown clock, a small analogue or digital clock, digital timer, sand timer, stopwatch (The candidate must have an established difficulty and control the device themselves.)
- Word processor.

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.

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a word processor policy, specific to the centre, which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments. This policy must be available for inspection. (AARA 5.8)

This policy is available separately.

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 will be made by the SENDCo.

AARA 5.16: 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

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.

The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation must only apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room (AARA 5.16)

Supervised Rest Breaks Policy

Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty, the SENDCo **must** have trialled and exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and/ or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time (AARA 5.1).

Supervised rest breaks allow the candidate to step away from the exam setting, use structured self-regulation strategies and return when they are calm and better able to focus (AARA 5.1).

AARA 5.1.1: The SENDCo is allowed to provide a supervised rest break to a candidate where it is their **normal way of working within the centre**.

The SENDCo **must** be satisfied that:

- the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term Instructions for conducting examinations adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act); and
- there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

AARA 5.1.2: The timing of the examination should be paused and restarted when the candidate is ready to continue.

During the supervised rest break, the candidate **must not** have access to the question paper/answer booklet. The purpose of a supervised rest break is to provide a break from the examination and **must not** be used as 'thinking time'.

If the candidate needs to leave the examination room, an invigilator must accompany them.

A single supervised rest break should normally be no more than 30 minutes in duration. A supervised rest break will often be shorter than this. Candidates **cannot** be given as many

supervised rest breaks as they like for as long as they like. A supervised rest break will not normally be required within the first 10 minutes of an examination but may be thereafter.

The duration of the supervised rest break **must** be determined by the SENDCo based on their knowledge of the candidate's needs and the candidate's normal way of working when placed under timed conditions. It may be helpful to consider in advance of the examination(s) how many breaks a candidate might need and the approximate duration of each supervised rest break. This will allow sufficient staff to be available to facilitate each rest break.

At Queen's Gate School, the following guidance on supervised rest breaks applies to ensure a reasonable approach to enabling adjustments:

- Most rest breaks will be taken at their seat. The candidate should raise their hand to let the invigilator know they want to use their break. The candidate will turn over the paper and take some time to physically rest from actively working on the examination. Their exam papers will be closed, and a short period of around 5minutes will be provided. For students with medical needs please see next section for further details.
- In exceptional circumstances, based on need, the candidate may require movement breaks, and this will be noted on their Form 8/9 and invigilators informed.
- A rest break should not be taken in the first 15 or last 15 minutes of the examination, unless there is a medical emergency.
- The invigilator will record the length of time taken so that the rest periods do not detract from their assessment time and a record is kept of their usage.
- Recommendations for use of rest breaks are provided below in the table:

Length of exam	< 60mins	60-89mins	90-119mins	120-149mins	149-179mins	180mins+
Maximum **recommended** length of rest break	5mins	10mins	15mins	20mins	25mins	30mins
Maximum **recommended** number of rest breaks	1	2	3	4	5	6

Medical Needs

Students with medical needs such as diabetes should inform the SENDCo as soon as possible to ensure appropriate planning, preparation and training can be addressed.

Exam access arrangements for a medical need such as diabetes will require detailed plans and online applications to consider 'use of a mobile phone,' 'supervised rest breaks;' 'alternative rooming'.

A formal letter from the GP or a consultant should be shared with details of the individual's care plan. Current technology for Blood Glucose monitoring may require use of a mobile phone to access. These devices may alarm or disrupt other candidates so an alternative room may be necessary.

Some examples of access arrangements are:

- Being allowed to take drinks and snacks into an exam to prevent or treat a hypo or hyper.
- Being allowed to bring in their blood sugar monitor and insulin treatment into an exam.
- Taking a supervised rest break to treat a hypo or hyper. Supervised rest breaks are where the clock is paused while a student treats themselves. The clock restarts when they've recovered.

Clock should be stopped during exam if:

- If they are feeling unwell or looking unwell.
- To check or monitor their blood glucose level.
- If recorded blood glucose level is below 5 or above 14mmol/L
- To treat a hypo and wait until BG is back in range – this might take 15 – 30min. Please be mindful that depending on a high or low blood sugar it may take longer to address and will need adequate time to get back into the exam.
- To treat a high blood sugar reading with insulin might take a while. The insulin will only reach its peak performance 2 hours after being administered. If levels are very high they should administer dose and monitor their levels throughout the exam period.
- If there is a need to perform a set change and fill the insulin pump's pod with fresh insulin, **someone must accompany them to the medical room or suitable space** where their insulin, pump equipment etc. are or will be stored.

Emergency

- If the candidate's condition is concerning, please immediately alert emergency services and the school's first aider
- If a student needs to be taken to hospital, a member of staff will remain with the child until a parent arrives.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

AARA 5.18.6: An online application for a bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time must only be applied for by the EAL Co-ordinator or the SENDCo where all of the following exist:

- the candidate's first language **is not** English, Irish or Welsh;
- the candidate entered the United Kingdom within three years of the examination(s), is new to learning in English and does not have sufficient prior and current knowledge of academic English;
- the candidate may have been assessed on arrival as being new to English (Band A on the DfE scales) or in the early acquisition stages of language development (Band B on the DfE scales);
- English **is not** one of the languages spoken in the family home;
- **prior to their arrival in the United Kingdom the candidate was not:**
  - educated in an international school where some or the entire curriculum was delivered in English;
  - prepared for or entered for IGCSE qualifications where the question papers were set in English;
  - prepared in English for other qualifications, e.g. IELTS qualifications, Preliminary English Tests;
- the candidate has to refer to the bilingual translation dictionary **so often** that examination time is used for this purpose, delaying the answering of questions;
- the provision of 25% extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working with the dictionary.

Associated Policies

Admissions Policy

Word Processing Policy

Equalities Policy (Exams)

Accessibility Plan