Examinations Access Arrangements Policy 2023-24
Don Valley Academy

Revision History

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR
1		Policy issued.	
2	13.12.23	Revised policy published after changes approved.	A Hall
	13.12.23	Checked for accuracy	L Tyler

Centre Name	Don Valley Academy
Centre Number	36240
Date policy first created	15/3/22
Current policy reviewed by	Abigail Hall
Current policy approved by	Louise Tyler
Date of next review	01/12/2024

Role	Name
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This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Don Valley Academy is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications *General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations* and *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

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Introduction

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'.*

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
- a detailed picture of need from staff
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the code of the adjustment
- 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
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

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1. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Don Valley Academy 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 5.5)*
- has a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) and ensure that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments *(GR 5.4)*

2. General Principles

The general principles of access arrangements for Don Valley Academy to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement 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 a disabled candidate. *(AA 4.2.1)*
- The person who leads on additional learning support/special educational needs, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the candidate *(AA 4.2.1)*
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question *(AA 4.2.2)*
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements must be considered on a subject-by- subject basis. *(AA 4.2.3)*
- Access arrangements should be processed at the start of the course *(AA 4.2.4)*
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment *(AA 4.2.4)*
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre *(AA 4.2.5)*
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before their first examination *(AA 4.2.7)*

The main elements of the access arrangements process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of examinations are covered in Diversity and Equality Policy.

3. The Assessment Process

At Don Valley Academy, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements *(AA 7.3)*

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Assessor: Katy Taylor-Clarke

3.1 Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Don Valley Academy:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements *(AA 7.3.4)* • Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate *(AA7.5.3)*.
- An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENDCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENDCo *(AA7.5.3)*
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate *(AA 7.3.4)*
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) is kept on file *(AA 7.3.1)*

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

Don Valley Academy confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed *(AA 7.5, 7.6)*
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by an assessor *(AA 7.5.1)*
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. *(AA7.5.5)*
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application. *(AA7.5.6)*
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. *(AA7.3.6)*
- Relevant staff 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. *(AA7.3.6)*
- Where a student has received a private dyslexia assessment no earlier than spring term of Year 9 carried out by a qualified specialist teacher holding the approved qualification and current SpLD assessment practising certificate, in agreement with the academy, the dyslexia assessor may complete the Form 8 to support the evidence for online access arrangement applications.

3.3 Painting a 'holistic picture of need' confirming a normal way of working

Don Valley Academy 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 per Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. *(AA 7.5.2)*
- Before the candidate's assessment, if the assessment is a request, a referral form must be sent to the SENDCo, which outlines concerns and reasons for assessment.
  (Delta Teaching Staff Questionnaire Appendix 1)
- 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 will be provided with a picture of need by the SENDCo including the Delta Teaching Staff Questionnaires.
- An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the centre. *(AA 7.5.3)*

NOTE: All candidates aged 13 and over who do qualify for access arrangements need to have signed the personal data consent form.

4. Process Access Arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

The SENDCo will provide a list of eligible students and their required access arrangements to the school examination officer. It is then the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to submit the requests on behalf of the centre.

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through 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.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

4.1 Centre delegated arrangements

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by the SENDCo. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the SENDCo.

4.2 Separate invigilation within the centre

The decision to make arrangements for separate invigilation within the academy lies with the Head of the Centre.

4.3 Modified Papers

- Modified papers are ordered by the Examinations Officer.
- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned *(AA 6.1)*
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. *(AA 6.1)*
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series *(AA 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 his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

5. Access arrangements and adjustments

5.1 Supervised rest breaks

The SENDCo must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties i.e. the candidate is disabled within the definition of the Equality Act; and there is a genuine need for the arrangement. Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- cognition and learning needs;
- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;
- social, emotional, and mental health needs

5.2 25% Extra time

So as not to give an unfair advantage, Part 2 of Form 8 must confirm that the candidate has at least:

- 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 as below:

- speed of reading and speed of writing; or
- speed of reading and cognitive processing; or
- speed of writing and cognitive processing; or
- two different areas of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.

An assessment of mathematical processing may be used as one of the two required measures for 25% extra time in mathematics examinations only. The mathematical processing score must be below average. An assessment of mathematical processing cannot contribute to the evidence for 25% extra time in examinations other than mathematics.

(current published criteria for 25% extra time, i.e. the 2022/23 JCQ regulations)

The SENDCo must present for inspection purposes a substantial and comprehensive body of evidence, which includes evidence that extra time has been the normal way of working for examinations, assessments, and selected classwork tasks. To evidence this, whenever possible, candidates should use a different coloured pen when moving to their extra time.

The SENDCo must have considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time.

5.3 Computer Reader

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the computer used does not contain any software that the candidate can access, and which might assist him/her with the examination. **Failure to do so may constitute malpractice.**

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to ensure equipment is provided, which is in line with JCQ regulations

The SEND Team have the responsibility of making sure the students can adequately use the software/ technology provided.

5.4 Reader

A reader is a responsible adult who reads the instructions of the question paper and the questions to the candidate. This may involve reading the whole paper to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read. A reader is not a Communication Professional, a practical assistant, a prompter or a scribe.

Types of disability or access needs include:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Learning difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs (HI, MSI, PD, VI)
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (e.g. ADD, ADHD)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

The SENDCo must produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects their normal and current way of working within the centre.

5.5 Papers (or sections of papers) testing reading

Only a computer reader will be allowed in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading *(5.5.6)*

5.6 Read Aloud

A candidate who would normally be eligible for a reader but is not permitted this arrangement in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading may read aloud with up to a maximum of 50% extra time *(5.6.4)*

5.7 Reading Pen

A permitted examination reading pen will not have an in-built dictionary or thesaurus, or a data storage facility (*5.6.5*). The SENDCo should trial the use of an examination reading pen which subsequently becomes the normal way of working within the centre. It is an effective arrangement, appropriate to needs.

There is not a requirement to process an application for read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen using
Access arrangements online. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes

5.8 Scribe

A scribe is a responsible adult who, in non-examination assessments and/or in an examination but not in a Speaking Test, writes or types a candidate's dictated answers to the questions. The candidate must be present when the scribe writes or types their dictated answers

Types of disability or access needs include:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Learning difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs (HI, MSI, PD, VI)
- Social, emotional and mental health needs (e.g. ADD, ADHD)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

So as not to give an unfair advantage, a scribe will only be allowed where:

- an impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's writing; or
- a candidate cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed, because of a substantial and long-term impairment.

The use of a scribe must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre in the light of their substantial and long-term impairment. *(5.7.2)* The SENDCo must present for inspection purposes a substantial and comprehensive body of evidence, which includes a scribe has been the normal way of working for examinations, assessments and selected classwork tasks. To make this evident, the scribe should use a different coloured pen to the candidate.

5.9 Coloured or enlarged papers

Where a candidate requires a question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3, it is strongly recommended that a PDF copy of the standard question paper is downloaded from the relevant examination board website one hour before the awarding body's published starting time for the examination.
If a PDF copy of the examination paper needs ordering, this must have been actioned by the Examination Officer in good time.

Where a candidate requires a question paper on coloured paper and/or enlarged from A4 to A3, it is strongly recommended that a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper is ordered via Access arrangements online
It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to make sure coloured paper and enlarged papers are requested (*AA6.5.1)*

5.10   Modified language papers

All awarding bodies have processes in place to ensure their assessments are fit for purpose and accessible and will either use The British Association of Teachers of the Deaf (BATOD) modifiers or BATOD guidance *(AA6.6.4)*

5.11   The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy details the criteria Don Valley Academy uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments.

6. Failure to comply

Failure to comply with the regulations contained in the JCQ regulations have the potential to constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result(s).

Examples of failure to comply include:

- putting in place access arrangements/adjustments that are not approved.
- failing to consider putting in place access arrangements (which may be a failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments);
- permitting access arrangements/adjustments within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence; or
- charging a fee for providing reasonable adjustments to disabled candidates

7. Supporting access arrangements at Key Stage 3

The SENDCo will request access arrangement information from primary schools as part of the transition process. The access arrangements may not automatically roll over to secondary school; they will be reviewed during the first half term following GL testing, any SEND testing and review meetings with parents and, if needed, other professionals.

It is the responsibility of the teaching staff to make sure students who have access arrangements in their KS3 classes when assessments are planned have the opportunity to use them.

Subject leaders will need to plan for KS3 assessments, so that students who have extra time can sit the assessment in a venue where the extra time can be included. It is not acceptable to allocate the extra time at a later date for "finishing off".

8. Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. *(AA 4.2.13)*

Where access arrangements documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. *(AA 4.2.13)*

It is the responsibility of:

- The SENDCO to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- The Examinations Officer to submit applications online for approval through AAO
- The SENDCo to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6)
- The Examinations Officer to order modified papers

This policy links to the following documents:

> Examinations policy
>
> Word Processor Policy

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

NEED & NORMAL WAY OF WORKING – TEACHING STAFF REFERRAL FORM

Subject: **Teacher:**

Student Name: **Year Group:**

Information processing & responding	YES	NO
Always finishes tasks after others		
Needs extra time for assignments		
Needs time to formulate an answer to a verbal question (slow responding)		
Needs careful explanations in straightforward language of tasks & assignments		
Needs to have instructions repeated		
Needs to have instructions written down		
Reading and comprehension		
Needs support with reading in class		
Avoids reading out loud		
Can decode text accurately but has difficulties with understanding		
Reads more slowly than peers		
Needs to reread to aid understanding		
Finds it hard to remember what s/he has read		
Written work		
Writing is very difficult to read (poor handwriting)		
Writing is very difficult to read (unrecognisable spelling)		
Writes more slowly than peers		
Uses laptop/computer rather than writing		
Uses scribe rather than writing themselves		
Needs support with planning written work		
Can explain verbally without problems but struggles to write anything down		
Needs support / difficulties with spelling		
Grammar and punctuation insecure		
Memory and concentration		
Poor organisational skills – loses things, forgets items they need to bring		
Finds it hard to remember and follow oral instructions		
Needs a lot of repetition to remember key facts		
Finds it hard to meet deadlines		

Finds it hard to concentrate for long periods		
Needs timely reminders to stay focused on task		
Finds test/exam revision hard		
Needs to take frequent rest breaks		
Vision		
Uses coloured overlay when reading		
Benefits from handouts on coloured paper		
Benefits from larger print		
Other		
Panics/gets very stressed when faced with tests		

What adjustments are made in lessons?

Any other relevant information or additional evidence in support of exam access arrangements:

Please attach/email additional evidence such as mock papers, timed classroom assessments etc.

Please return to SENDCo

Thank you

10. Appendix 2 – Staff Record EAA

Staff Record – Access Arrangements

Please complete this form after each exam/assessment during which you have supported a candidate with access arrangements and please retain a copy to be stored with any assessment papers.

Your comments will help to support the student effectively and provide evidence for moderation and inspection.

Student Name:	Date of Exam:
Exam/Assessment:	Type of Exam/Assessment: (please tick) Mock External exam Controlled Assessment Other (specify)

The student was allowed: (please tick)
    25% extra time (ensure change of colour)
    Exam reading pen
    Computer reader
    Human Reader
    Word processor
    Scribe
    Bilingual dictionary
    Prompter
    Practical assistant
    Supervised Rest Breaks
    Other (specify)
	They used the arrangements:
	    Fully
	    Frequently
	    Infrequently
	    Not at all
	
	They appeared:
	    Calm & on task
	    Anxious
	    Other (specify)

Any comments?	
Your name:	Job Role:

11. Appendix 3 – EAA Timetable

	Half Term 1	Half Term 2	Half Term 3	Half Term 4	Half Term 5	Half Term 6
KS3	Specialist Assessor to ensure up to date with new JCQ guidance issued in August.	Refresher Access Arrangements training delivered to all staff.			Request for Year 9 referrals and evidence from teaching staff.	
KS4	Year 10 assessments for Access Arrangements completed. Confirmation letter sent to parent / carers. All Form 8s for Year 10 written and filed with evidence. Access Arrangements spreadsheet updated and shared with staff.	All Access Arrangements Online to be completed for Year 10. Final deadline for KS4 testing (NB: only in exceptional circumstances in Year 11)		All Access Arrangements Online to be online for Year 11 by March 21st.		