



Exam: Access Arrangements Policy

Policy agreed by Head of Centre (Exams) on:	Spring 2024
Ratified by Local Advisory Board on:	Spring 2024
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Allocated Group / Person to Review:	LAB can delegate to committee or individual member or HT
Signed by Chair:	
Signed by Headteacher:	



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Linked Policies

This document should be read in conjunction with the following Bradford AP Academy (BAPA) policies:

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Equality Policy

Introduction

BAPA is committed to providing equal opportunities for all students in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (2015), the Equality Act 2010, and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations. Where students have needs that prevent them from accessing examinations in the standard way, appropriate and proportionate provision will be made.

What Are Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are adjustments made to remove barriers caused by physical, learning, sensory or psychological difficulties, ensuring that students are not placed at a disadvantage when accessing examinations. These arrangements do not create an unfair advantage or compromise the integrity of the assessment.

Access arrangements are agreed prior to an assessment and must reflect the student's **normal way of working** within BAPA.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who meets the statutory definition of disability, would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to a non-disabled peer.

A candidate with a difficulty or disability that has a substantial and long-term impact on examination performance may be eligible for access arrangements. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable where it would:

- Involve disproportionate costs
- Require unreasonable timeframes
- Compromise the security or integrity of the assessment

Available Examination Access Arrangements

Available access arrangements may include:

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Reader or computer reader
- Scribe
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative examination site
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (for example, enlarged or adapted papers)
- Language modifier

Extra Time / Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks are considered before permission to allocate extra time is requested from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). In some cases, supervised rest breaks may be more appropriate than additional time, particularly for pupils with certain medical or psychological needs.

Formal assessment by a BAPA Access Arrangements Assessor, along with appropriate supporting evidence as outlined in JCQ guidance, is required before supervised rest breaks can be approved.

Applications for Extra Time

In order for an application for extra time to be approved—and to ensure that no unfair advantage is created—the school must be able to demonstrate that:

- The candidate has persistent and significant difficulties with accessing and processing information and meets the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010.
- Evidence is provided outlining the candidate's current difficulties and how these have a substantial impact on teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Teaching staff have been involved in identifying and supporting the need for 25% extra time.
- Without the provision of 25% extra time, the candidate would be placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared with non-disabled candidates undertaking the same assessment.
- The award of 25% extra time reflects the candidate's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

Evidence Requirements

Learning Difficulties

Where extra time is requested due to a learning difficulty, the application must be supported by an approved assessment demonstrating below-average scores in one or more of the following areas:

- Reading speed
- Writing speed or handwriting
- Cognitive processing speed

Other Disabilities or Impairments

Requests for extra time relating to other impairments or disabilities, including social, emotional or mental health needs, must be supported by one or more of the following forms of evidence:

- A letter from CAMHS, a HCPC-registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, or a psychiatrist
(A GP letter alone does not constitute sufficient evidence)
- A letter from a Local Authority Specialist Service, Sensory Impairment Service, or Occupational Health Service
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)
- A Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) confirming the candidate's disability

Normal Way of Working

Where a candidate has not consistently accessed the adjustments granted to them during normal classroom practice, the arrangement will not be considered to be their normal way of working. In such cases, the access arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.

Word Processors

The use of a word processor cannot be granted solely because a candidate prefers typing to writing, can work faster on a keyboard, or uses a laptop at home.

Use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to their identified needs. In accordance with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations, spelling and grammar checks must be disabled on all word processors used during public examinations.

Formal assessment by the BAPA Access Arrangements Assessor, together with appropriate supporting evidence as outlined by JCQ, is required before the use of a word processor can be approved.

Scribe

Where a word processor (with spelling and grammar checks disabled) represents the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, it should be used in examinations to promote independence and enable access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A scribe should only be used where:

- A candidate is unable to use a word processor with spelling and grammar checks disabled; or
- The candidate is not competent in using a word processor.

Reader

In rare and exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be eligible for the use of a reader during examinations.

A reader may not:

- Read aloud any text that forms part of what the candidate is being assessed on (for example extracts, poems, or texts in English Language or Literature examinations).
- Explain questions to the candidate.

A reader may:

- Read examination questions aloud; and
- Repeat questions where requested.

In some cases, it may be appropriate to award 25% extra time alongside a reader, as the use of a reader can slow processing and response time.

Awarding Access Arrangements

When considering access arrangements, BAPA will review evidence from a candidate's previous educational settings. This may include:

- Evidence of access arrangements or identified needs from Key Stage 2 assessments in primary school.
 - Access arrangements documentation or working evidence provided by previous schools.
 - Evidence relating to substantial and long-term impairments, including physical disabilities, sensory impairments, or medical conditions.
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- Confirmation that Key Stage 4 access arrangements are already in place and used consistently as the candidate's normal way of working.

- Ongoing monitoring by teachers, with additional evidence gathered where required to support applications for access arrangements.

Private Assessments and Medical Letters

Letters from medical professionals may trigger further investigation; however, any request for an access arrangement must also be supported by evidence from within the centre and/or from previous schools.

Private assessments or reports produced by a private Educational Psychologist will only be accepted as supporting evidence for access arrangements where they are corroborated by evidence from the centre and/or previous educational settings. Such supporting evidence must be submitted to the Access Arrangements Assessor in advance of the assessment.

BAPA reserves the right not to accept a private assessment report where it conflicts with evidence gathered within the centre and by the BAPA Access Arrangements Assessor.

Temporary Arrangements

Candidates who are affected by injury or illness may require temporary access arrangements. All BAPA sites are accessible for students with disabilities, and appropriate arrangements may be put in place to support candidates who require additional consideration.

Where an illness or injury has a direct impact on a candidate's ability to access an examination, the candidate must provide a letter from a GP, consultant or other relevant professional. This letter should briefly outline the condition and specify the access arrangements deemed necessary.

For example:

- A right-handed candidate with a broken right arm may require a scribe and extra time, as dictation may be more difficult and this is not their normal way of working.
- A candidate experiencing acute back pain may require supervised rest breaks to allow movement or standing.

In all cases where an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment is required, the centre is entitled to reasonable notice to enable it to meet its responsibilities. Where a need for access arrangements is identified prior to an examination, the centre and the Examinations Officer must be provided with appropriate medical evidence in good time.

Temporary arrangements apply to one examination session only. If the condition continues, a further letter may be required for subsequent examination sessions.

Evidence Held and Malpractice

Examination centres are subject to regular inspections to ensure compliance with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations, most commonly during the summer examination period. The school is required to retain evidence that may be requested for inspection at short notice.

For this reason, the school will securely retain copies of:

- Evidence of need for access arrangements.
- Letters or reports from external professionals or agencies.
- Records of access arrangements used in examinations.
- Any Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- A signed data protection notice from the candidate.

Malpractice

The consequences of malpractice are serious and may include:

- Disqualification of a candidate from one or more examinations.
- Disqualification of Bradford AP Academy from acting as an examination centre.

Examples of malpractice include:

- Granting access arrangements that do not reflect a candidate's normal way of working.
- Granting access arrangements where there is no established history of need or provision.
- Granting access arrangements without sufficient supporting evidence.

Bradford AP Academy will operate at all times within the framework of JCQ Regulations to ensure fairness, integrity and compliance in all examination processes.