

# Exams Access Arrangements Policy

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Review Cycle	Annual
Policy prepared by	Sam Wood (SENCO)
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# 1. Introductions, Purposes & Aims

## Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that Queen Elizabeth's School complies with its "...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements..." (JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.5) The policy also ensures that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publications 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.'

## The Rationale for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

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. JCQ guidance indicates that EAAs should be initiated by the school, not a body external to the school.

## Exam Access Arrangements....

- are designed for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment in its normal format due to a difficulty or disability.
- must not confer additional benefit to a student but are designed to level the playing field in terms of access.
- should reflect the usual way of working in class for which there is evidence of need, unless such arrangements would affect the integrity of the assessment.
- are intended to increase access to assessments, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- ensure credit is only given for skills demonstrated by the candidate working independently.
- will not be permitted if they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.

## Malpractice

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually every summer during the examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification for the student from one or more examinations, disqualification for a whole cohort of students, or even the centre being closed down for up to 5 years. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted EAA which are not their usual way of working
- EAA being 'suddenly' granted before examinations
- EAA being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- EAA being granted without sufficient evidence
- Students not using their EAA in a PPE (Mock) examination and still being allowed it in the real examination

## Further Information

Further information can be found at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/>  
Any questions about exam access arrangements, please phone or email the SENDCO

## What are Exam Access Arrangements?

The Exam Access Arrangements that are available and may include any combination of those listed below:

- Supervised rest breaks (to be considered before extra time, this cannot be taken within the first ten minutes nor can it last for longer than 30 minutes. )
- Separate room **only** for students that need a 1:1 scribe/reader
- Class sized small group (max 30)
- Extra time
- Computer reader/reader pen
- 1:1 Reader
- Reader on request. This is when a student raises their hand and the invigilator reads words/phrases infrequently
- Scribe
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations due to medical needs
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. coloured/enlarged paper)
- Seating at back/front/side of exams halls

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. All of the above EAA have to be a student's usual way of working with evidence provided.

**2. Scope-** This policy is applicable to all of Queen Elizabeth's School.

## 3. Legal Requirements and References

- Equality Act 2010 (updated June 2015)
- JCQ Guidelines – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-2023
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)

## 4. Policy Procedures and Responsibilities

### Staff Roles and Responsibilities

#### Examinations Officer:

- To ensure that the agreed EAA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To manage any 'on the day' questions and queries regarding EAA provision.
- To put in place (in conjunction with the SEN department) any 'on day provisions' – such as medical emergencies.
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to minimise disruption for other students also sitting exams.
- To make arrangements for students who require special consideration due to individual circumstances. For example chairs or medical equipment.
- To ensure that external invigilators, readers and scribes are fully competent with JCQ requirements.

**SENDCO:**

- To ensure there is a consistent 'whole centre' approach to all access arrangements (applied and centre delegated) it is therefore the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team and the specialist assessor(s)/SENDCO within the centre to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidance.
- The SENDCO, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within his/her centre.
- The SENDCO writes all Form 8 section 1, identifying the students' learning needs and the support given within the centre. Normal way of working will be stated on each form.
- The SENDCO writes all Form 9s, identifying the student's needs and normal way of working within the centre.
- Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENDCO in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.
- The SENDCO processes applications on-line and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE, GCE qualifications and/or BTEC
- Sign Form 8s individually
- Sign Form 9s individually
- Consider and sign centre delegated arrangements.

**Specialist Assessor:**

- To work with students at KS3/KS4 to do basic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision.
- To administer recognised psychometric testing
- Specialist teachers and SENDCO to consult each other regarding decision making process about EAA, sharing expertise.
- To ensure the agreed EAA provision is recorded in Arbor and on mark sheets and teachers are informed of trial periods and JCQ approvals.
- Specialist assessors ensure their training is up to date with current guidance with specific regard to administration of psychometric assessments and the annual update from JCQ on EAA and reasonable adjustments.
- To communicate with parents/carers regarding decisions made about EAA for an individual via a letter and ensure the parent help sheet is up to date with current advice/practice

**SEND Department EAA coordinator:**

- To timetable support staff in order to support subject based assessments and therefore provide readers/scribes in class.
- To track use of EAA on record sheets as evidence of use via the feedback sheet from each exam.
- To liaise with exams officer, teaching staff and specialist assessors/SENDCO
- To update support staff on EAA regulation prior to GCSE/GCE/BTEC exams and produce an exam pack of guidance.
- To hold student briefings concerning use of access arrangements.
- To ensure that EAA are recorded onto Arbor

**Teaching Staff:**

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties.
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENDCO.

- Detail the candidate's usual way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct EAA is in place for controlled assessments.
- To liaise with the SEN department to ensure EAA can be provided for subject based assessments throughout the academic year.

## Procedures for assessment of EAA

### Processes towards having an EAA approved Year 9-11

1. Year 8 – The feeder schools and parents provide the SENDCO with any history of need/provision in transition meetings.
2. EAA information is added to Arbor and provision map, shared with staff.
3. Dyslexia and Dyscalculia screening
4. SPARKS Reading
5. External baseline assessment
6. KS3 – Teachers monitor students closely and gather evidence of need for EAA. EAA are trialed in tests/exams and subject based assessments.
7. Form 8s are started for students in KS3 and evidence is added as a student moves through the school.
8. Year 9 summer term – Form 8 part 1 and 2 are completed by the SENDCO. Form 9 is completed by the SENDCO. Assessments are identified to support reasonable adjustments for assessments and examinations completed based on evidence supplied by teachers. Specialist Assessor/SENDCO then tests students, applies online and informs the examinations officer.
9. Respond to emerging needs as curriculum demands increase.
10. Year 10 Specialist assessments and collection of teacher evidence
11. KS4 – EAA in place and being used regularly.
12. Teachers to submit evidence to support regular use of EAA. PPE examinations in November are the last chance to trial EAA in a formal examination setting. **Students must use them then or lose them.**
13. If EAAs are not being used they will be withdrawn and a letter will be sent home to the parents/carers explaining the reasons behind this decision.
14. Summer Year 11 – exams completed with correct EAA in place as 'usual way of working'.

### Deadlines for making EAA applications

#### Year 11

The deadline to raise concerns about a student is the **30<sup>th</sup> September of Year 11**. This allows the SENDCO and the Examinations Officer time to assess any student prior to PPE in November. NO applications for EAA will be made after the Year 11 Mocks in November.

JCQ set a deadline for applications in their annual published update to schools. Year 13 is generally too late to make requests for EAA as no history of need or provision is in place. The deadline for sixth form EAA requests is **30<sup>th</sup> November of Year 12**, as long as a body of evidence has been collected by teachers. Year 11 student's applications need to be updated if they stay in the Sixth Form. This will be submitted in a Form 8R.

#### Years 12-13

1. Students declare EAA they had at KS4 when they apply to Queen Elizabeth's School or in the first half term of attending.
2. For students new to Queen Elizabeth's the 6th Form office will inform the SENDCO of students with SEN need.

The SENDCO requires the student to collate and share their evidence of EAA at KS4 from their previous school. Students who have come up through Queen Elizabeth's School should already have EAA in place.

3. SENDCO to reapply to JCQ for EAAs if the student's needs require.
4. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENDCO.
5. Students are required to gather evidence of extra time from their teachers in October and November via the EAA evidence card. (See Appendix page 8) This is reviewed by specialist assessors.
6. In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Specialist Assessor carries out any testing necessary during December.
7. Respond to emerging needs as curriculum demands increase
8. Trial EAA are put in place for subject based assessments. Teachers give feedback from assessments to the SENDCO (Did students use them? Were they effective?). If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should contact the SENDCO or Specialist Assessor by December of Year 12. We accept that students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A' level, but the majority will have been picked up and processed by this stage.

### **Procedure for medical letters**

Letters from a Consultant Paediatrician and CAMHs are required to trigger an investigation, but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.

### **Private assessments/Ed Psych reports**

We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. A student's 'usual way of working' in school is paramount. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a private assessment/Ed Psych report. JCQ guidance indicates that EAAs should be initiated by the school, not a body external to the school.

### **Appendices**

Help sheet for parents

Specialist Assessor tracking sheet

EAA evidence sheet to be completed by teaching staff and returned to SEND

Help sheet for students to go on back of their exam timetable

# Queen Elizabeth's School Parent Exams Help Sheet

## Parent/Carer Guide to Examination Access Arrangements

In years 9-13, exam arrangements are approved by the exam board, JCQ, in cases where students have a genuine need and history of support in examinations. As a school we complete certain tests to measure whether those students' abilities in key skills fall below a set benchmark. If they do not, then the exam board will not grant exam access arrangements. This is their decision and not ours!

### What support is available?

Exam arrangements are usually; rest breaks, extra time (up to 25%), an electronic reader, a scribe or use of a word processor. Students may have one or a combination of these things. Some less common arrangements are also available and we use our discretion to judge whether these may be appropriate for a student.

### When do they use the support?

The regulations say that whatever support they have been granted, it must be the student's 'usual way of working.' This means that wherever possible in school, students should have this support.

### Why might my child not have support for an assessment?

There are a range of different assessments in school from years 9-13 and in all subjects.

These include:

1. Formal national examinations such as GCSE or A level or Btec in years 10-13.
2. Other tests which may be part of a GCSE or A level such as controlled assessments in year 10-13.
3. Mock examinations in year 11-13 which are an 'in-school' measure but are an important part of the preparation for the real process.
4. 'In-school' tests which measure a student's progress within the subject, and are used as a measure within the school only. These are for years 9-13.

Priority is given in the order above. Clearly candidates sitting a GCSE or A level must have precedence over those sitting an 'in school' subject based assessment.

On other occasions there may be times where unfortunately support is not given for in school assessment for a variety of reasons, although we do our very best to avoid this.

We are currently working with students to encourage them to be proactive in reminding staff of the support they require when they are told an assessment is coming up. Students who have an access arrangement should remind staff of the support they need.

As a school we recognise that many students find exams cause them to get nervous and a few may suffer anxiety when exams are approaching. For students who find this is the case we run an Exam Preparation Workshop to offer help and advice for dealing with exam stress. However exams access arrangements (EAA) cannot be put in place without a letter from a Consultant Paediatrician or CAMHS, but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice. **EAA's cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.**

Should you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact the school.

# Queen Elizabeth's School Student Exams Check List

This will be on the back of students' exam timetable....

	<p>Check your timetable. Are all your exams there? Are they correct? Check where you are seated. <b>Any problems see the Exams Office now.</b> They will not be able to help you on the day of the exam. <b>Read the Notice to Candidates.</b></p>	<p>Check</p>
	<p>Aim to <b>arrive at school in plenty of time</b> to be outside the exam room 15 minutes before the exam starts. It is much better to leave yourself a safety margin on timings in case of problems with your journey.</p>	
	<p><b>Bags</b> should not be taken into the exam venue. It is your responsibility to find somewhere safe to leave it. You can leave it in your tutor room or your locker.</p>	
	<p><b>Phones</b> cannot be taken into the exam room. This is very important if a phone is found in the exam room there is a good chance that you will be disqualified from this exam, and potentially all exams.</p>	
	<p>You must not <b>have notes, analogue watches, smart watches, ipods, MP3 players</b> or any item with internet connection or data storage in your possession.</p>	
	<p>You should have all the standard equipment for your exam. This includes a <b>black biro, pencil, ruler and rubber.</b> All equipment should be stored in a clear plastic pencil case. You must write in black ink.</p>	
	<p>You may require other equipment for specific exams (Maths, Physics, Chemistry, DT) including a <b>geometry set and scientific calculator.</b> If you do not have these on the day of your exam please go to reception where equipment can be loaned.</p>	
	<p>There is absolutely <b>no talking or communicating</b> between students once you enter the exam room. If you have any questions, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator to come to you.</p>	
	<p>If the <b>Fire Alarm</b> sounds, stay seated and wait for instructions from the invigilators. There must be no communication between students.</p>	
	<p>You must come to school in <b>full and correct school uniform.</b> Incorrect uniform may delay the start of your exam for you.</p>	
	<p><b>Water bottles</b> are allowed in the exam room. These should be a clear bottle with a spill proof cap. There must not be a label on the bottle. They must be kept on the floor.</p>	
	<p><b>No food or gum</b> is allowed in the exam room. If you have a special requirement for medical reasons, please see the Exams Officer.</p>	
	<p><b>Toilet breaks</b> are permitted if you have a known medical condition or in exceptional circumstances. Please make sure you visit the toilet before your exam.</p>	
<p>Do not leave the room until the test is over</p> 	<p><b>You cannot leave the exam room until the end of the exam.</b></p>	

## Exam Access Arrangements – EAA

### Single Point of Entry via SENDCO

