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. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ^{CIC} awarding body approval.

1.2 Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with 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 disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

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.

1.5 How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

1.6 There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

1.7 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.

1.8 Access Arrangements / Reasonable Adjustments may include any combination of those listed below:
- Scribe
- Word Processor
- Prompter
- Practical Assistant
- Reader/Computer Reader
- 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 inspection, will be available in the Exams Office and in the SEND Co-Ordinator office.

3. 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 in JCQ regulations as follows:

- *an access arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment. An access arrangements assessor may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8; and/or*
- *an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments; and/or*
- *a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, as awarded by Patoss, Dyslexia Action or BDA and listed on the SASC website, who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments.*

and

An access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment, which must include training in all of the following:

- *the theoretical basis underlying psychometric tests, such as the concepts of validity and reliability; standard deviations and the normal curve; raw scores, standard scores, quotients, percentiles and age equivalent scores; the concept of statistically significant discrepancies between scores; standard error of measurement and confidence intervals;*
- *the appropriate use of nationally standardised tests for the age group being tested;*

- *the objective administration of attainment tests which can be administered individually. This must include tests of reading accuracy, reading speed, reading comprehension and spelling. Appropriate methods of assessing writing skills, including speed, must also be covered;*
- *the appropriate selection and objective use of tests of cognitive skills, **see paragraph 7.5.12, page 86**;*
- *the ethical administration of testing including the ability to understand the limitation of their own skills and experience, and to define when it is necessary to refer the candidate to an alternative professional...*

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.

4. Assessment Process Administration

4.1 Administration of the assessment process works by detailing the processes in the centre which include Lucid Exact, PATOSS and CATs test results.

4.2 An appropriately 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 JCQ/AA/LD which 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 or 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 on the Thomas Deacon Academy's VLE. This will be kept updated by the Exams Office.

5. Processing Access Arrangements

Access arrangements online

5.1 *Access arrangements 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, Access arrangements online 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.*
>
> *Further information on Access arrangements online is available from:* http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/aao-access-arrangements-online*"*

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 Access Arrangements Online 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.

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

5.6 An exam student may be approved to use a word processor for their exams where it is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because it is the student's preferred way of working.

5.7 An application will be submitted to the Exams Officer, as a centre delegated arrangement, where the student has a substantial and long term learning difficulty i.e. a

medical, physical and/or sensory condition or where the student has illegible and incomprehensible hand writing and poor organisation skills.

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
- The student's normal way of working.

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

6. 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; 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.