



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'.

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Special Educational Needs Disability Order (SENDO) 2005 require 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'.

Access Arrangements (AA):

- **Extra time:** students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% (or more in exceptional circumstances) depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher.
- **Supervised rest breaks:** where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- **A scribe:** a responsible adult who writes for the student. The student will dictate their answers. The scribe will write exactly what they say.
- **A reader:** a responsible adult who will read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of The Reading Sections of an English Language GCSE Exam: Unit 1 Section B &

Unit 4 Section B. A candidate may use a computer reader/reading pen in the section that assesses reading) for the student. The student will then write the answer/s herself.

- **ICT:** access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student will word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks will be disabled and there will be no internet access.
- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a responsible adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

When might students need to be given Exam Access Arrangements?

Extra Time	<p>Where a student’s ability to process information is slower than average. Candidates must have 2 below average scores or one below and one low average score in 2 different areas of working in timed assessments. Students with learning difficulties requiring 25% extra time will need to tell a ‘story’ through the centre based evidence why the student needs 25% extra time. In addition to Form 8 and Form 8RF there must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sample of internal tests and/or mock exam papers across the relevant subjects showing the application of 25% extra time. • Comments and observations from teaching staff in relevant subjects as to why the student needs 25% extra time and how they use the 25% extra time awarded.
Supervised Rest Breaks	<p>For students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) who experience anxiety or attention difficulties 2) with neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD, ASD 3) with a medical condition 4) with mental health needs 5) who tire easily or struggle to concentrate over an extended period <p>Supervised rest breaks will be more appropriate than 25% extra time.</p> <p>Supervised Rest Breaks MUST be trialled before 25% Extra Time. SENCOs must trial and exhaust supervised rest breaks before applying for 25% extra time when the candidate's impairment is <i>not</i> a learning difficulty.</p>
Scribe	<p>Where there is a physical disability; where their writing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time
Reader	<p>Where a student is a slow or inaccurate reader and there is a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by the specialist assessor (100 is the average). Reading assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where candidates only require occasional words or phrases to be read, they may use an examination reading pen • A reader is for a candidate with poor reading skills as opposed to someone who only needs occasional words or phrases to be read
ICT	<p>Where there is a physical disability; their writing would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time

Prompter	For a student who loses concentration/focus and is not aware of time.
Bilingual Dictionary	<p>Where the candidate's first language is not English, Irish or Welsh;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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; • 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.
Bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time	Where the three-year period from the candidate's entry into the United Kingdom falls within an examination series, the candidate is permitted to complete the exam series in full using a bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time
Separate Room/ Shared room	<p>For a student with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes/SBEW where it isn't appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Students who are agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room/shared room with a smaller number of candidates.</p> <p>In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre. It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect. 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. 1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would 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.</p>
A practical assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before an online application for a practical assistant is processed subject teachers must be consulted • This will ensure that the proposed tasks the practical assistant would perform in an examination, or a non-examination assessment, would not invalidate the published assessment objectives and the skills a candidate is independently required to demonstrate
Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes	The SENCo must complete Form 9, confirming the candidate's medical condition and the need to access their mobile phone during an examination. Formal evidence must be available to confirm the candidate's medical condition. Access Arrangements Online will approve applications where a candidate has a medical condition and, when handed their mobile phone by an invigilator to check this condition, will be individually supervised. A candidate having access to a mobile phone for medical purposes is not an automatic entitlement to 25% extra time.

A new centre delegated arrangement	A blank sheet of paper for doodling where a candidate has persistent and significant concentration difficulties is a new centre delegated arrangement. The candidate's doodling sheet must be included with their completed answer booklet.
Listening to music/white noise due to a substantial impairment	The candidate must use a device which is not connected to the internet and is not Bluetooth enabled The centre provides the device such as a CD player, a centre laptop operated by the invigilator, an MP3 player, a white noise machine The candidate may choose the music or white noise.
Question papers on coloured paper	Given the logistical challenges on exam days where question papers need to be photocopied onto coloured paper, the SENCo must ensure that a question paper on coloured paper is appropriate to the candidate's needs. Alternative ways of working such as the use of a coloured overlay, the candidate wearing coloured glasses, should be explored. The SENCo may wish to consider the provision of a single colour such as buff or grey

Infographics are available, setting out the evidence requirements for (Appendices):

- 25% extra time
- More than 25% extra time (26% to 50%)
- A computer reader/reader
- A scribe

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Mount Lourdes Grammar School fulfils *“its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements.”*

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication:

*‘Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties
Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments’*

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by the specialist assessor appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor is 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 Part 2 of Form 8; **and/or***
- *a specialist teacher assessor with a **current** SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments; **and/or***
- *an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full a diagnostic assessment.*

*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;*
- *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.*

All assessors must:

- have a thorough understanding of the **current** edition of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;
- be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 (although it is not their role to determine what is a ‘reasonable adjustment’, but rather to help identify access arrangements that might assist the candidate in examinations and assessments and are thus potentially reasonable adjustments);
- either hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties or be a HCPC registered psychologist.

(CHAPTER 7)

How the assessment process is administered

Exam Access Assessment processes are administered with regard to the Equality Act 2010, DDA, and SENDO

The school makes every attempt to identify students needing exam access as early as possible.

- At the start of each academic year, the school collects evidence from feeder schools for new students about previously held exam access arrangements.
- Teachers and the Learning Support Co-ordinator (LSC) identify students needing exam access arrangements through diagnostic assessment, class observations and from information contained in Statements, professional reports and Education Health Care Plans and other documentation. Teachers refer students to the Learning Support Department for exam access assessment via an online/paper referral system.
- The LSC works with teachers to gather further evidence. Teachers provide written evidence detailing how a candidate’s difficulties impact on teaching and learning.

Once students needing exam assessments have been identified, the specialist assessor conducts the assessments.

Students and Teachers are informed via school communication systems and verbally of the outcome of their exam access assessment.

A record of a candidate’s access arrangements are recorded on the Learning Support Register and on each pupil’s Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

Students with exam access arrangements will have these arrangements in class tests, mock examinations and assessments where reasonable.

Recording evidence of need

For candidates requiring exam access, JCQ forms (8, 8RF, 9) are used to record assessment and application information. Parts 1 and 2 are completed by the LSC. Part 3 is completed by the specialist assessor/LSC. LSC completes the AAO.

Where a candidate has complex needs, i.e. a current Statement of special educational needs (Northern Ireland) or sensory and/or physical needs or social, emotional and mental health needs, a medical condition formally diagnosed by a registered specialist; which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their speed of working, appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection. Form 8 is not required and must not be used. Standardised scores are not required.

Substantial impairment – evidence of need

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo must complete Form 9 to:

- detail the candidate's current difficulties to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in examinations, summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff;
 - confirm that 25% extra time is the candidate's normal way of working. Comments from parents cannot be recorded within Part 1 of Form 9. Form 9 will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability:
 - a letter/report from CAMHS, an HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
 - a Neurodevelopmental Specialist GP or GP with an extended role in ADHD, who must have completed an RCGP framework for developing and maintaining an extended role specifically in ADHD. Evidence must be provided of this; or
 - a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Support Service or Occupational Health Service; or
 - a current Statement of special educational needs (Northern Ireland) which confirms the candidate's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multisensory impairment.
- and
- a sample of internal school tests/mock exam papers across relevant subjects showing the application of 25% extra time;
 - comments and observations from teaching staff in relevant subjects as to why the candidate needs 25% extra time and how they use the 25% extra time awarded;
 - evidence that supervised rest breaks have been trialled and exhausted. Where the candidate has been referred to CAMHS or a local NHS Trust by their centre or GP, is on the list to be screened and/or is likely to receive a formal diagnosis, the SENCo may, in exceptional circumstances use a CAMHS/NHS Trust referral confirmation/acceptance letter agreeing to formally assess. This would be due to the length of CAMHS/NHS Trust waiting lists. However, the SENCo must produce a compelling picture of need within Part 1 of Form 9. There will be a greater reliance on centre-based evidence, such as comments and observations from teaching staff and support staff. If

the CAMHS/NHS Trust referral confirmation/acceptance letter does not state an agreement to formally assess, then the only option would be for the SENCo to complete Form 8.

Gathering evidence of *normal way of working*

The school gathers evidence of normal way of working as defined by JCQ in the following ways:

- Class tests, mock examinations, internal and external examinations including: KS3, GCSE, AS & A2.
- Candidates self-reported difficulties.
- Information from feeder schools.
- Comments on teacher questionnaires about candidate's difficulties.
- Information contained in Statements, EHCP, Educational Psychologist reports/ PLPs or other documents.

The arrangement(s) put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre

- in the classroom
- working in small groups for reading and/or writing
- support lessons
- intervention strategies
- in internal tests/examinations
- mock examinations.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

The tests that the specialist assessor uses are replaced/upgraded periodically in line with current practice.

(A definition of normal way of working is provided within CHAPTER 4)

The test that the specialist assessor uses depends upon the type of barrier to learning that the student may have. Should the student need further testing to assess for other learning issues or further AA, the specialist assessor will arrange this. Following a report produced by the Specialist Teacher an application is made to the Exam Boards for permission to implement the specified arrangement/s. Students are tested formally in Term 1 of Year 10; so that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 11 and 12.

What support is given to students with AA?

- Students with AA are encouraged to use their AA during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using it effectively.
- Students who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the reader/scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.
- Students who have a reader can be supported by the teacher supervising the test. Learning Support can provide a separate room, access to ICT and a scribe. Learning Support require advance notice so that classroom assistants can be redeployed if necessary to other students.
- Students with AA are monitored regularly through the use of data from School Reports, IEP/PLP Reviews, SEN Annual Reviews, SIMS Tracking and exam results.

What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the assessor for AA, the LSC then applies to the exam boards. The feedback is instant and at this point the AA is added to the list of students and the parents are informed of the AA.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre will need to hold evidence on file that can be inspected by JCQ at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational Psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors, ASD services, Sensory services.
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need
- Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s
- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- **Removal of Candidate Data Consent Forms. JCQ has withdrawn:**
- *Candidate Personal Data Consent Form*
- *Data Protection Confirmation by the Exams Officer/SENCo*
- Centres must now **inform candidates** that access arrangement applications will be processed online using AAO, under UK GDPR requirements.
- A record of all occasions when a student has been supported by AA
- For Extra Time – history of evidence of need in the form of copies of work completed under timed conditions where a student has regularly used more than the allotted time.

There is now **greater emphasis on robust evidence**, particularly from teachers, showing a student's *normal way of working*.

Key updates: (1) Evidence must include teacher feedback and documented normal working practice.

(2) Teacher comments and sample mock papers demonstrating need for arrangements must accompany applications.

Accepting privately commissioned psychological reports

In accordance with JCQ regulations 2025-26 the school cannot accept privately commissioned psychological reports for the purpose of processing access arrangements, unless prior permission has been granted from the school and the psychologist has an established relationship with the school.

SENCOs 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.

Processing applications for access arrangements

Access arrangements online enables centres to make a single online application for a candidate requiring access arrangements/reasonable adjustments using any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. Access arrangements online will provide an instant response and will only allow a maximum of 26 months for any arrangement.

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.

Extra time of more than 25% (26% to 50%) and/or a Language Modifier must have tests recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 dated within 26 months of the final examination(s).

A Form 8 cannot roll forward from GCSE qualifications to GCE AS, A level and/or other Level 3 qualifications where a candidate will continue to require extra time of more than 25% (26% to 50%) and/or a Language Modifier. A new Form 8 must be completed and candidate must be reassessed.

A Form 9 cannot roll forward from GCSE qualifications to GCE AS, A level and/or other Level 3 qualifications. A new Form 9 must be completed and a new online application processed for GCE and/or other Level 3 qualifications.

JCQ REGULATIONS AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS ONLINE

Access arrangements online does not give details of the JCQ regulations or how the JCQ regulations are to be applied. Centres must use the JCQ regulations in conjunction with Access arrangements online. Once an arrangement has been approved online, it must be put into effect in accordance with these regulations and without affecting the integrity of the qualification.

LATE DIAGNOSIS OF A DISABILITY, LATE MANIFESTATION OF AN IMPAIRMENT OR A TEMPORARY INJURY/IMPAIRMENT

Arrangements for a late diagnosis of a disability (a medical condition, a sensory impairment, social, emotional and mental health needs) or late manifestation of an impairment may be processed as the need arises even where this is after the published deadline. Evidence of need is still required to the same standard as if it was an application being processed by the published deadline.

It is important that the appropriate evidence is produced and processed with the application. Appropriate documentation must be kept on file to support arrangement(s) and be available for inspection.

Access arrangements online must also be used for candidates with a temporary injury or temporary impairment, such as a broken arm. These arrangements can be processed as the need arises. Appropriate documentation must be held on file to support any temporary access arrangement made.

CASES THAT DO NOT GAIN APPROVAL

Access arrangements online approves around 90% of all applications made by centres in the United Kingdom, providing a single automated response. It is inevitable that some individual needs will not be accommodated by a computer system, which cannot deal with every reasonable adjustment which may be required in specific cases.

If a candidate has very substantial needs which are not accommodated by the online system, it may be because they relate to reasonable adjustments which are not listed. Alternatively, the arrangement(s) may require further exploration in relation to the competence being tested in the specification(s).

These cases should be discussed with the relevant awarding body. SENCOs should keep a written record of such discussions. Additional paperwork may be required to justify the request being made.

If an application is not approved, the SENCO or the assessor working within the centre must consider whether this is because the candidate does not meet the published criteria for one of the arrangements requested and does not have a substantial and long-term impairment for the required arrangement.

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 following arrangements must be applied for online:

- Access to a mobile phone for medical purposes
- Bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time
- 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

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
- Braille
- 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.

CHAPTER 8

Centre-delegated access arrangements

The school follows JCQ guidance when providing centre delegated access arrangements.

The LSC allocates candidates a prompter or rest breaks if;

- the need is a result of substantial and long-term impairment and it is their normal way of working
- there is medical evidence to substantiate this arrangement and it is their normal way of working.

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre 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.*

Word Processor Policy

The use of a word processor is to address an identified need following a formal assessment and candidates may not simply elect to type out of preference.

- The use of a word processor may be an appropriate access arrangement for students who:
 - Have a physical disability or medical condition which impacts on handwriting
 - Have a sensory impairment
 - Write slowly as evidenced by a below average standardised score for handwriting speed
 - Have illegible handwriting
 - Have substantial difficulty in planning and organising work when writing by hand.
- The use of a word processor will not be granted to a candidate because they prefer to type or they can work faster on a keyboard or because they use a word processor at home.
- Candidates will not be allowed to use their own laptop. Word Processors will be provided for GCE and GCSE exams and students will not have access to spelling and grammar check facilities unless they meet the published criteria for a scribe as detailed in JCQ Guidelines.
- It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.
- The candidate is advised to name and save their document at the start of the exam. Thereafter the student is responsible for frequently saving their work.
- The invigilator will print out the script and ask the candidate to verify that it is all there.
- An awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet to be completed.

CHAPTER 5

The school requires students who claim a need for a separate room to provide medical evidence to confirm their need for this arrangement.

This must be given to the LSC or SLT Teacher in charge of student well-being.

The evidence can take the form of a letter from the GP, CAMHS or an EHCP.

In line with JCQ regulations the LSC makes the online applications by the published deadline of the **21st March 2026.**

The LSC keeps a record of the printed online application, letters from awarding bodies, Form 8s/Form 9s, assessments and any additional forms or documents for inspection.

The files for inspection are locked away and stored confidentially. They can be located in **Castle Coole Room.**

This policy is reviewed annually by Mrs Mary Keaney (LSC) to ensure compliance with current JCQ regulations.

17th February 2026