Co-op Academy Leeds

Exams Equality Policy

2024-25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Key Staff Involved

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENDCo	David Hallam
Senior leader(s)	Ruth Strachan
Head of centre	Natalie Jones
Assessor(s)	Trust Appointed SEND Co
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Trust Appointed SEND Co

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Abbreviations
GR – General Regulations for Approved Centres
AA – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments
SENDCo – Special Educational Needs Coordinator
AAO – Access Arrangements Online
ICE – Instructions for Conducting Examinations
SLT – Senior Leadership Team
EO – Exams Officer

Purpose of the Policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the centre-wide accessibility policy/plan
which details how the centre:

> *"Recognises its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates †or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect"*

[Quote taken directly from chapter 5.4 of the current JCQ publication General Regulations for Approved Centres]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in
relation to:

- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements');
- requesting access arrangements;
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equality Act 2010 – Definition of Disability

A definition is provided in the current JCQ publication: *Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2024-2025.*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

Identifying the Need for Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA.
- Ensures the quality of the access arrangements process within the centre.
- Ensures staff roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements are clearly defined and documented.
- Ensures a policy demonstrating the centre's compliance with relevant legislation is in place.
- Ensures an appropriately qualified assessor(s) is appointed and that evidence of the
- qualification(s) of the person(s) appointed is held on file.
- Defines and documents roles, responsibilities and processes in identifying, requesting and implementing access arrangements (Access Arrangements Policy).

Senior Leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA.
- Support the SENCo in determining the need for and implementing access arrangements.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA.
- Ensures the assessment process is administered in accordance with the regulations.
- Leads on the access arrangements process to facilitate access for candidates.
- If not the appropriately qualified assessor, works with the person/persons appointed, on all matters relating to assessing candidates and the administration of the assessment process.
- Ensures that all assessments carried out and arrangements put in place comply with JCQ and awarding body regulations and guidance.
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Ensures the need for access arrangements for a candidate will be considered on a subject by subject basis.
- Presents when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector, evidence of the assessor's qualification.
- Works with teaching staff, relevant support staff and the Exams Officer to ensure centre delegated and awarding body approved access arrangements are put in place for candidates taking internal and external exams/assessments.
- Provides appropriate evidence to confirm the need(s) of a candidate.
- Completes appropriate documentation as required by the regulations of JCQ and the awarding body.

Use of word processors

- Ensures that candidates are aware to attend an exam with their word processor should they have the access arrangement in place that allows them to use one for this purpose.
- Ensure that the word processor policy is read, understood and followed.

Teaching Staff

- Inform the SENCo of any support that might be needed by a candidate.
- Ensures arrangements put in place for exams/assessments reflect a candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Provide information to evidence the normal way of working of a candidate.

Assessor of Candidates with Learning Difficulties

(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor).

- Has a detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication AA.
- Conducts appropriate assessments to identify the need(s) of a candidate.

Requesting Access Arrangements

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Determines in conjunction with the Exams Officer if the arrangements identified for a candidate require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated.
- Permission must be sought from the student to allow the access arrangement testing to take place. If permission is not granted by the student parental permission can be sought. If students are unable to sign their own permission a parent may sign on their behalf.
- Follows guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications.
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8, the original online application, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Makes an awarding body referral through AAO where the initial application for approval may not be approved by AAO, where it is deemed by the centre that the candidate does meet the criteria for the arrangement(s).
- In conjunction with the Exams Officer ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated).
- In conjunction with the Exams Officer ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline.
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates.

Exams Officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role.
- In conjunction with the SENCo follows guidance in AA Chapter 8 to process approval applications for access arrangements for GCSE and GCE qualifications.
- Applies for approval where this is required, through 'Access Arrangements Online (AAO)', or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.
- Ensures appropriate and required evidence is held on file to confirm validation responses in AAO including the completion of JCQ Form 8, where required, and a body of evidence to substantiate the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.
- Confirms by ticking the 'Confirmation' box prior to submitting the application for approval that the 'malpractice consequence statement' has been read and accepted.
- Ensures that arrangements, and approval where required, are in place before a candidate takes his/her first exam or assessment (which is externally assessed or internally assessed/externally moderated).
- Ensures that where approval is required that this is applied for by the awarding body deadline.
- Maintains a file for each candidate that will include:
    - completed JCQ/awarding body application forms and evidence forms.
    - appropriate evidence to support the need for the arrangement where required.
    - appropriate evidence to support the normal way of working within the centre.

    - in addition, for GCSE and GCE qualifications (where approval is required), a print out of the AAO approval and a signed data protection notice (which provides candidate consent to their personal details being shared).
- Presents the files when requested by a JCQ Centre Inspector.
- Liaises with teaching staff regarding any appropriate modified paper requirements for candidates.
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure AAO approval is in place for early opening of papers where this may be required where the centre is permitted to modify a timetabled written component exam paper (copy on coloured paper, enlarge to A3 or copy to single sided print).
- Following the appropriate process (AAO for GCE and GCSE; JCQ Form 7 or Form VQ/EA), orders published modified papers, by the awarding body's deadline for the exam series, where these may be required for a candidate.

Implementing Access Arrangements and the conduct of Exams

External Assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication *'Instructions for Conducting Examinations'* (ICE).

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

- Supports the SENDCo, the Exams Officer and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.
- Is familiar with the *Checklist for Heads of Centre and Examination Officers* – The Equality Act 2010 and Conduct of Examinations provided in the current ICE.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Responsible for the centre's **emergency evacuation procedures** and the arrangements that may need to be in place for a candidate with a disability who may need assistance when an exam room is evacuated.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo)

- Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam).
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates.
- Liaises with the Exams Officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams.
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s).
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams.

- Liaises with the EO to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues.
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams.
- Liaises with the EO to ensure exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it.

Exams Officer

- Is familiar with and follows the Checklist for Heads of Centre and Examination Officers – The Equality Act 2010 and Conduct of Examinations provided in the current ICE.
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time.
- Ensures exam information (JCQ information for candidates documents, individual exam timetable etc.) is adapted where this may be required for a disabled candidate to access it.
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested.
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates.
- Liaises with other relevant centre staff regarding the provision of appropriate rooming and equipment that may be required to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.
- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter).
- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s).
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams.
- Ensures a facilitator acting as a prompter is aware of the appropriate way to prompt depending on the needs of the candidate.
- Ensures cover sheets, where these are required by the arrangement are completed as required by facilitators.
- Liaises with the SENCo regarding rooming of access arrangement candidates.
- Liaises with the SENCo to ensure that invigilators are made aware of the Equality Act 2010 and are trained in disability issues.
- Ensures appropriate seating arrangements are in place where different arrangements may need to be made for a candidate to facilitate access to his/her exams.
- Ensures invigilators are briefed prior to each exam session of the arrangements in place for a disabled candidate in their exam room.
- Checks in advance of dated exams/assessments that modified paper orders have arrived (and if not will contact the awarding body to ensure that papers are available when required).
- Makes modifications that are permitted by the centre (a question paper copied onto coloured paper, an A4 to A3 enlarged paper or a paper printed on single sheets or where a question paper may need to be scanned into PDF format where a candidate is approved the use of a computer reader) that may be required and, where approved, opens the exam question paper packet in the secure room no earlier than 90 minutes prior to the published start time of the exam.
- Understands that where permitted/approved, secure exam question paper packets may need to be opened early where preparation is required by the facilitator (Oral Language Modifier, Live Speaker, Sign Language Interpreter only).

- Ensures that the facilitator only has access to the papers one hour prior to the published start time of the exam.
- Provides cover sheets prior to the start of an exam where required for particular access arrangements and ensures that these have been fully completed before candidates' scripts are dispatched to examiners/markers.
    - prints pre-populated cover sheets from AAO where this is required for GCSE and GCE qualifications.
- Has a process in place to deal with emergency (temporary) access arrangements as they arise at the time of exams in terms of rooming and invigilation.
- Liaises with the SENDCo where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams.
- Where required for emergency (temporary) access arrangements, applies for approval through AAO or through the awarding body where qualifications sit outside the scope of AAO.

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENDCo and the Exams Officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.
- Ensures a candidate is involved in any decisions about arrangements, adjustments and/or adaptations that may be put in place for him/her and ensures the candidate understands what will happen at exam time.
- Ensures that prior to any arrangements being put in place checks are made that arrangements do not impact on any assessment criteria/competence standards being tested.
- Ensures that any arrangements put in place do not unfairly disadvantage or advantage disabled candidates.
- Liaises with the Exams Officer (EO) regarding facilitation and invigilation of access arrangement candidates in exams.
- Ensures the facilitator is known by or introduced to the candidate prior to exams.
- Liaises with the EO where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of exams.
- Liaises with the SENDCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.

Teacher Responsible for Planning

- Appoints appropriate centre staff as facilitators to support candidates (practical assistant, prompter, Oral Language Modifier, reader, scribe or Sign Language Interpreter).
- Liaises with the SENDCo and other relevant centre staff to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.

Maintenance (MITE site manager/staff)

- Responsible for **rooms and non-specialist equipment** (chairs, tables, clocks etc.) used for exams that may need to be adapted for a candidate.

RM (I.T.)

- Responsible for **IT or other specialist equipment** that may need to be provided or adapted for a candidate.

Internal Assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/ awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

"Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as 'NEA'."

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments – Foreword]

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.
- Ensures centre-delegated and awarding body approved arrangements are in place prior to a candidate taking his/her first formal supervised assessment.
- Ensures candidates are aware of the access arrangements that are in place for their
- assessments.
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators.
- Provide the SENCo with assessment schedules to ensure arrangements are put in place when required.
- Liaise with the SENCo regarding assessment materials that may need to be modified for a candidate.

Exams Officer

- Ensures facilitators supporting candidates are appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement(s).
- Ensures cover sheets are completed as required by facilitators.
- Liaises with the teacher where a facilitator may be required to support a candidate requiring an emergency (temporary) access arrangement at the time of his/her formal supervised assessment.

Internal Exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a precursor to external assessments.

Roles and Responsibilities

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

Teaching Staff

- Support the SENDCo in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.
- Provide the SENDCo with an internal exam timetable to ensure arrangements are put in place when required.

Exams Officer

- Provide exam materials that may need to be modified for a candidate.

Facility Access – Examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate by candidate basis, consideration is given to:

- adapting assessment arrangements;
- adapting assessment materials;
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment;
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes.

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of Candidate Need	Arrangements Explored	Centre Actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre.	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations. Supervised rest breaks.	• SENCo gathers evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home. • SLT provides written statement for file to confirm the need. • Approval confirmed by SENCo; AAO approval for both arrangements not required. • SLT discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place. • EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form'. • EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates. • SLT confirms with candidate the information is understood. • SLT agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam. • EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials. • Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log. • Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam. • Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition. • EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged). • EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence. • SLT informs candidate that special consideration has been requested.

Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text**.**	Reader/computer reader. 25% Extra time. Separate invigilation within the centre.	● Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. ● Papers checked for those testing reading. ● Computer reader sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded. ● Form 8, signed and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice.
Significant difficulty in concentrating.	Prompter. Separate Invigilation within the centre.	● Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment. ● Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted. ● Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room).
A wheelchair user.	Desk. Rooms. Facilities. Seating arrangements. Practical assistant.	● Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed. ● Provides height adjustable desk in exam room. ● Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities. ● Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access. ● Seats candidate near exam room door. ● Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room. ● Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment.
A Blind / Partially sighted Candidate	Reader/Computer Scribe Separate invigilation within the centre 25% extra time	● Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. ● Papers checked for those testing reading. ● Computer reader sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded. ● Form 8, signed and dated, with Sections A, B and C completed; kept on file with a body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO and signed data protection notice. ● Modified papers applied from the awarding bodies within the correct time frame
A Hearing Impaired candidate	Sound cancelling headphones Separate room for invigilators Print out of exam instructions Sign language interpreter	● Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. ● Using sound cancelling headphones for listening exams to ensure that no background noise or interference with the sound of the exam ● Separate room for invigilation if required with an invigilator that is able to communicate through sign language with candidate ● Giving the candidate a print out of the exam procedures, rules and regulations to ensure that they adhere to them