

# Access Arrangements Policy

## 2023/24

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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## Contents

Purpose of the policy .....	3
Definitions .....	3
Access arrangements .....	3
Reasonable adjustments .....	3
Disability policy (Exam Access Arrangements) .....	4
The assessment process .....	4
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	4
Appointment of other assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and when using a rolled forward Form 8 .....	4
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor.....	5
Painting a <i>picture of need</i> and gathering evidence to demonstrate <i>normal way of working</i> .....	6
Processing access arrangements.....	7
Arrangements requiring awarding body approval .....	7
Centre-delegated access arrangements.....	8
Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements .....	8
Rest Breaks.....	8
Word processor policy (exams).....	9
Separate Invigilation within the Centre - Separate Room with Learning Development (RMLD) and Smaller Room (RM).....	9
Resolving Disagreements and Escalation .....	11
Appendices .....	11
References.....	11

## Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that St Brendan's Sixth Form College has a written record which shows a clear structure of how the college is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 5.4]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the Exam Access Arrangements Co-ordinator (EAA Co) within the college alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes 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.

This policy can be accessed in: Staff drive > Inclusive Learning> EAA > EAA policies. This policy can also be accessed in: SharePoint > College Strategies and Policies > College Policies

A copy of this policy is also held by the EAA Co in the Inclusive Learning office B211b

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA

## Definitions

### 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 particular 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'.*  
[AA Definitions, page 7]

### Reasonable adjustments

*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. 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 a number of 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 are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010\* to make 'reasonable adjustments'.  
 [AA Definitions, page 7]

## Disability policy (Exam Access Arrangements)

Part of the access arrangements process is referred to in the SEND Policy of St Brendan's in points 8.8, which covers a general view of the Access Arrangements process and includes: identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements for exams.

The College's SEND Policy can be found in SharePoint > College Strategies and Policies > College Policies

*The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise 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*

[GR 5.4]

The Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

## The Assessment Process

An assessor appointed by the head of centre carries out assessments. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AA 7.3.

### The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Vanesa Campillo Lopera, CPT3A, Real Training (Real Group) & University of Manchester, registered in the British Psychological Society's Register of Qualifications in Test Use (RQTU) with membership number 495990.

### Appointment of other assessors of candidates with learning difficulties and when using a rolled forward Form 8

At the point an assessor is engaged / employed in / has a working relationship with the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

### Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The Access Arrangements Co-ordinator will:

- Request copies of relevant assessor's qualifications from the assessor / school's SENCO (the latter for rolled- forward form 8s)
- Confirm assessor's qualifications via the following approved links: PATOSS, DYSLEXIA GUILD, BPS, RQTU & SASC directories of approved assessors.
- Confirm that assessor's qualifications are up-to-date and valid at the time of assessment / creation of Form 8 (if rolled forward)
- Keep a hard copy of assessor's qualifications on file which is available for inspection purposes.

The Assessment Process within the College complies with the JCQ regulations and guidance provided in GR and AA as below:

*The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... [GR 5.4]*

*The head of centre must ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.*

*Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. [AA 7.3]*

### Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Location of the evidence of the assessor's/assessors' qualification(s) is held by the EAA Co within the college in the Inclusive Learning Office, B211b. The above process follows AA 7.4 Reporting the appointment of assessors and reflects the requirements which are met by the College.

### Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Assessments for Access Arrangements are carried forward during the first term of the academic year. Candidates who are eligible for assessment are:

- Candidates identified and therefore referred by the College's teachers and or mentors as having a special educational need during the first term of the academic year.
- Candidates who have previously disclosed to us that they had access arrangements at secondary school but there is no history of need / support from the secondary school.
- Candidates who have previously disclosed to us that they had access arrangements at secondary school with a history of need / support from the secondary school but no access arrangements were granted to them.
- Candidates who already had access arrangements at secondary school but there is no working relationship between their centre and St Brendan's to be able to roll-forward their form 8.
- Candidates who get referred for assessment at any point during their two year studies at STBRN's, as long as there is sufficient evidence that supports this referral.

Each candidate's referral will be considered on an individual basis and assessment will be carried out at the College's discretion on the basis of evidence. The assessor will check that the candidate referred for assessment has support needs and as such, support must have been provided. The assessor will also check which normal way of working is in place before carrying out an assessment.

Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* or *Statement of Special Educational Needs*, the SENCO or equivalent staff will paint a picture of need and demonstrate the candidate's normal way of working. This is done via completion of Part 1 of Form 8, as per AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties.

In the case of a rolled forward Form 8, there will be no need to assess the candidate and the SENCO / equivalent staff will then issue a Form 8RF ('rolled forward') confirming that the access arrangements already granted are still the candidate's way of working.

#### **Note**

... 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.

[AA 7.3]

In the case of private and / or home / hospital educated candidates, we will roll-forward any existing Form 8 if possible and within the JCQ requirements (refer to the requirement in GR 5.4)

### **Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working**

Teachers will be asked to provide evidence in support of the candidate's application for AA. This evidence will be a document called 'Teacher Assessment Form' (TAF) in which they confirm the candidate's needs in their subject and which support they provide to the student as their normal way of working. In addition, teachers are asked to show samples of the candidate's work where applicable and necessary, a copy of which will be kept together with the teacher assessment form in the candidate's EAA folder, which is digitalised.

In the case of private and / or home / hospital educated candidates, we will ask the candidates and / or their representatives to provide this evidence.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCO and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process...

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the SENCO. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCO...

[AA 7.5]

AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor and 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties and record your process that reflects the requirements.

## Processing Access Arrangements

**4.2.4** Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course. Schools, for example, should be able to process applications at the start of or during the first year of a two-year GCSE course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working during Years 7 to 9.

However, in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course, access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be applied for as soon as is practicable. Centres **must** process applications as detailed in Chapter 8, section 8.3 using *Access arrangements online* where required.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

### Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

**Access arrangements online** (AAO / PAAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications listed on section 8.6 of AA. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page chapter 6.1.

AAO / PAAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Data Protection Forms are requested from EAA candidates upon enrolment and during the first two months of the academic year (September – October). Applications are submitted by 1<sup>st</sup> November for the GCSE November re-sits, the BTEC and Other vocational qualifications such as OCR or WJEC vocational qualifications during the Winter Series and then by the 21<sup>st</sup> March for GCE qualifications during the Summer Series. Applications are processed by the Access Arrangements Co-ordinator.

Applications are processed once the form 8s are completed and signed (in rolled-forward cases, once enough evidence is in place to support the continuity of exam access arrangements and once the SENCO / or equivalent member has written and signed the Form 8RF). Evidence must be in place and supporting evidence must have also been submitted by teachers.

In the case of medical evidence, applications will also be processed when medical evidence has been received, teachers have provided evidence for the candidate's needs and support given and a 'Form 9' have been written up and signed.

All applications are then saved on the candidate's digital file in the Inclusive Learning drive.

Any non-approved / rejected applications will be dealt with promptly as per the JCQ regulations and contact will be made with the respective board. Often further evidence will be provided directly to the exam board and a copy of the referral will be kept in the candidate's EAA folder.

**The SENCO must keep detailed records, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file.** This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) **and** a signed candidate personal data consent form for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. [AA 8.6]

### Centre-delegated access arrangements

This section applies to arrangements, which are delegated by our centre and as per JCQ regulations (including those arrangements, which may be granted by the centre and appropriate evidence, held on file or those arrangements that do not need to be recorded).

[AA Chapter 5]

### Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

#### Rest Breaks

Candidates who qualify for rest breaks will be automatically granted a smaller room, unless it is specified otherwise. The most usual request of evidence the college asks will be based on medical grounds unless there are specific and robust college records evidencing the support needs and support provided without medical evidence. This will normally be shown by college record systems such as Promonitor and the Senco or an equivalent member will support this concession by producing a Form 9.

The SENCo / equivalent member will provide the supervised rest breaks concession to a candidate where it is his/her normal way of working within the centre.

The SENCo / equivalent member must be satisfied that:

- the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act); and
- there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

Supervised rest breaks will be awarded on account of:

- cognition and learning needs;
- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;



- social, mental and emotional needs.

In addition, the candidate's difficulties must be established within the centre and thus known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or equivalent member and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

### **Word Processor Policy (exams)**

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre. This will need to be evidenced by the student's teacher/s together with samples of the candidate's work, when applicable, that demonstrate that the use of a word processor is the candidate's normal way and they would be placed at a disadvantage without it.

Any candidates awarded a word processor in examinations will automatically be granted a smaller room (RM). Please refer to the section below 'Separate Invigilation within the Centre' for more information about this concession.

Our Word processor policy is available on SharePoint > College Strategies and Policies > College Policies

**Centres** are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet.  
[ICE 14.20]

A centre must have a policy on the use of word processors. A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates.

The centre may wish to set out the particular types of candidates which it considers would benefit from the use of a word processor. For example, a candidate with...

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.

[AA 5.8]

### **Separate Invigilation within the Centre - Separate Room with Inclusive Learning (RMLD) and Smaller Room (RM), also known as 'Alternative Rooming Arrangements'**

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCO or an equivalent member of staff within the college, in this case the Exam Access Arrangements Co-ordinator.

The decision 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** [AA 4.2.5]

**1. Candidates with very substantial needs will be granted a RMLD within the Inclusive Learning department and this will be given on a 1:1 basis on the following cases:**

- Candidates with a scribe / speech tech and a reader
- Candidates with a scribe / speech tech
- Candidates with a practical assistant
- Candidates with very substantial physical or intellectual impairments or very substantial Mental Health needs.

**2. Candidates with substantial needs who require reader support will be granted a RMLD within the Inclusive Learning department on a 4:1 maximum basis\*\*\* where candidates only require occasional words or phrases to be read (4 candidates with a reader : 1 invigilator), as per section 5.5.9 from the JCQ AA regs. 2021.**

**3. Candidates with substantial needs who need a separate venue will be granted a shared RMLD on a 10:1 maximum basis within the Inclusive Learning department or elsewhere managed by the Exam Access Arrangement Co-ordinator.**

\*\*\* It may be that candidates with a reader are allocated a RMLD which may hold up to 10 candidates maximum however the limit of candidates with a reader will be 4 and the room allocated will usually be a classroom size to allow distance between candidates and to mitigate noise/distraction.

**4. Candidates with substantial needs such as mental health difficulties, rest breaks and or word processors who need a separate venue away from the main hall but not a RMLD will be granted a RM on a higher ratio basis, i.e. 20: 2 invigilator. This allocation will be managed by the Exams Officer and the exams office / MIS office.**

Allocation of separate venues will be decided at the discretion of the Exam Access Arrangements co-ordinator and SENCO and will be based on **each individual candidate's needs** and their **normal way of working**.

## 5.16 Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities\*

\*For the arrangements detailed below, there is **not** a requirement to process an application using *Access arrangements online*. No evidence is needed to support the arrangement for inspection purposes.

- **Alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation)**

## Withdrawal of Access Arrangements

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed. If the Specialist Assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the students' 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/carers.

## Resolving Disagreements and Escalation

Please refer to the St Brendan's Sixth Form College: Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy.

## Appendices

### Exams Policy

<https://stbrn.sharepoint.com/sites/CollegeStrategiesandPolicies/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?ga=1&id=%2Fsites%2FCollegeStrategiesandPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FCollege%20Policies%2FEXAMS%20POLICY%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FCollegeStrategiesandPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FCollege%20Policies>

### SEND Policy

<https://stbrn.sharepoint.com/sites/CollegeStrategiesandPolicies/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?ga=1&id=%2Fsites%2FCollegeStrategiesandPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FCollege%20Policies%2FSEND%20Policy%202024%2D25%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FCollegeStrategiesandPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FCollege%20Policies>

### Compliments Concerns and Complaints Policy

<https://stbrn.sharepoint.com/sites/CollegeStrategiesandPolicies/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FCollegeStrategiesandPolicies%2FShared%20Documents%2FCollege%20Policies&p=true&ga=1>

## References

- Joint Council For Qualifications, JCQ 2023-24, *Instructions for Conducting Examinations*, accessed 23.05.24, [[https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ICE\\_23-24\\_Final-March-2024.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ICE_23-24_Final-March-2024.pdf)]
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