



Buile Hill Visual Arts College Exam Access Arrangements Policy 2017/18

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

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 pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on **evidence of need** and **normal way of working**. JCQ specify that normal way of working is priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ (Joint Council of Qualifications) awarding body approval.

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 alternative question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

In order to qualify for an Access Arrangement a student must have a disability. According to the Equality Act 2010 a disability is 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'. The impairment must have lasted, or be likely to last, for 12 months or more.

Buile Hill Visual Arts College's Policy for Access Arrangements is written in line with the JCQ Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' – with effect from 1st September 2017 to 31st August 2018. Schools have to comply with JCQ regulations otherwise this is considered Malpractice, which has potentially severe consequences for all our students.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body (Exam board) to make reasonable adjustments where a learner would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. 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. How reasonable the adjustment is

will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

Definition of disability: Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as 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'.

Definition of Special Educational Needs: A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Education Act 1996 if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

Access arrangements may include:

- Extra time of up to 25%
- Extra time of up to 50%
- Extra time of over 50%
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe/Voice Activated software
- Supervised rest breaks
- Read aloud
- Word processor/laptop
- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components e.g. French listening
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Practical Assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: amplification equipment; Braille papers; closed circuit TV; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind; Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.
- In line with JCQ regulations, Buile Hill Visual Arts College will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement.

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 are usually identified early (during KS3). At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to Quality first teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in delivering and monitoring the adjustments.

These arrangements require that the learner achieves specific results in standardised tests

Formal Assessment for Access Arrangements:

- The examination officers, specialist assessors, SENCO and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.
- For those students potentially requiring access arrangements formal assessment and application to JCQ is usually carried out in Year 9 (summer term) and / or 10 and Year 11 as standard. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted, access arrangements are valid for 26 months.
- Any student with scores that indicate a substantial impairment (usually a score of 84 or less) will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent Access arrangements.
- An appropriately qualified assessor will carry out specialist assessments for access arrangements. This person must:

1 hold a post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7

AND

All specialist assessors must:

2 have a thorough understanding of the current edition of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and the principles, procedures and accountabilities involved;

3 be familiar with the Equality Act 2010

4 hold an appropriate qualification to teach and make recommendations for secondary aged or adult learners who have learning difficulties.

- Parents may request an independent assessment. However, at Buile Hill Visual Arts College **the school cannot accept privately commissioned assessment reports as they will not be based on evidence of need from the teachers who know the student's work.** Should you choose to provide the college with a privately commissioned report from an educational psychologist or specialist teacher assessor you need to be aware of the following:

Before a private assessment is undertaken, the independent educational psychologist or specialist teacher assessor must contact the SEND Department in school/centre and ask for evidence of a student's normal way of working and relevant background information.

This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

The student must be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Section A of Form 8.

(JCQ Regulations 2017-18)

Whilst we will read private reports, we will not automatically award an Access Arrangement based on it. It will trigger an internal investigation into the normal way of working for the student. This is also school's policy due to the cost of private psychologist assessments and reports. Private assessments are extremely expensive and as a result, not all parents/carers can afford to have their child privately assessed. So, to make the process fair, school have their own internal testing process.

- If school receive a letter from a medical specialist requesting access arrangements for a student, JCQ regulations state that in order for such an access arrangement to be awarded, the school has to have evidence that the student has historically received the extra support. The access arrangement should not 'suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations.' If the said student has shown no signs of requiring said support, and has successfully sat their exams independently it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement. The only exceptions are temporary injuries, e.g. if a student breaks their arm and is unable to write as a result of the injury they have sustained. Also, letters from a GP cannot be used as evidence for an Access Arrangement; a specialist doctor must provide medical evidence.
- 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. JCQ regulations state that 'If a candidate has never made use of the arrangement granted to him/her, then it is not his/her normal way of working. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.' Therefore, if a student does not use an AA in any of their examinations we will withdraw the access arrangement. If we continued with the AA we would be in breach of regulations, which is considered malpractice.
- If the SENCO and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/carers.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has Access Arrangements?

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded

Students are informed verbally - a list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.

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