

Parental Guidance for Access Arrangements

Date to be reviewed: September 2027

Responsibility of:

- Vice Principal
- SENCO
- Access Arrangement Coordinator

Introduction

Chelsea Academy receives several requests each year regarding Access Arrangements for students in public examinations. Over the last few years, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has changed both the requirements for, and the evidence needed, to grant Access Arrangements.

We have created this document to try to give parents a useful brief outline as to what is required for Access Arrangements and the evidence the school needs to provide to the Examination boards to support this claim.

Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are non-standard arrangements approved before the examinations take place to enable candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments. The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

The JCQ regulations are very complex. The current guidance for 2025–2026 can be viewed on the [JCQ website](#)

The Examination boards will not consider applications in respect of long-term conditions that are submitted only weeks before the exams. It is essential therefore, that we are informed of existing circumstances that might justify Access Arrangements as soon as possible, preferably on joining the school.

When applying for Access Arrangements we are obliged to work within the framework laid down by the JCQ. Non-compliance with the JCQ regulations is considered malpractice, which has potentially severe consequences for all our students.

JCQ regulations state that “if a candidate has never made use of the arrangement, then it is not his/her normal way of working. The arrangement should not be awarded for examinations.” The JCQ specify that a normal way of working is a priority when considering awarding an Access Arrangement to a student.

Therefore, whilst we will accept a private report from an educational psychologist and/or letter from a GP or other professional, we will not automatically award an Access Arrangement based upon it. It will trigger an internal investigation into the normal way of working for that student.

To clarify: An independent report on its own is not a guarantee that a student will receive the Access Arrangements.

Evidence required for most Access Arrangements

To maintain the credibility of GCSE and GCE qualifications, the JCQ defines the parameters as to what constitutes a 'substantial disadvantage'. This would be where a candidate has been formally diagnosed as having a significant learning difficulty or disability which has a clear, measurable and substantial long-term adverse effect on performance and speed of processing or working. In all cases, supplementary compelling evidence will be required for inspection by the awarding bodies.

JCQ guidance states that for any student's needs, the school **must** always consider granting Supervised Rest Breaks before making a request for extra time, as the former will often be a more appropriate response. The JCQ lay down similar guidance for each of the other possible arrangements.

Where a student has been awarded extra time for his/her GCSEs, there is not an automatic right for eligibility to continue to GCE. New applications for GCE examinations must be made to the awarding bodies and standardised scores must meet the above criteria to be approved. This will mean that some students who were awarded extra time in Year 11 may not now qualify for extra time in the Sixth Form.

Any private report will only form part of the school's evidence, and the Academy will still have to assess the student. Results of the testing undertaken by the Academy will be used in the application with private report as supplementary evidence.

A letter from a GP on its own is not sufficient. In addition to the evidence listed above, the school must also be able to show at least one of the following:

- A letter from CAMHS, a clinical psychologist, a hospital consultant or a psychiatrist
- A letter from the Local Authority Educational Psychology Service or Local Authority sensory impairment service.
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)
- A Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidate's secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.

All the Access Arrangements that may be applied for, are governed by the rules/guidelines set out by the JCQ. In all cases Academy's decision will be final.

Access Arrangements Testing

The Access Arrangement Coordinator carries out assessment of students in consideration for Access Arrangements (referred by their subject teacher / learning coach/head of year/SENCO). Age appropriate and up to date nationally standardised assessments are used that provide robust, relevant and reliable results which will be part of the evidence base for Access Arrangements.

If parents wish to submit an EP report as part of their request for the Academy to consider their child for Access Arrangements, parents should be aware that the Academy will require to see - A full copy of the report and original copies of all the tests completed. This will enable the Academy (who under JCQ guidelines, can be the sole referrer for Access Arrangements) to have full confidence in the testing that has been undertaken and ensure that testing has been robust and valid and fits the testing criteria.

Please note that even in this instance, the report will only form part of the Academy's evidence when applying for Access Arrangements and may not guarantee that concessions will be awarded.

Processing applications for Access Arrangements

For GCSE and GCE qualifications, Access Arrangements Online enables the Centre to make a single online application for a candidate requiring Access Arrangements. The result of the application will be shared with the parents.