

Overview of Exams Access Arrangements

Exam Access arrangements are agreed well in advance of an assessment. They allow candidates with specific special education needs and disabilities, or temporary injuries, to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

To apply for Exam Access Arrangements, we need to be able to present clear evidence that there is a History of Need and a History of Provision for each young person. Therefore, students who qualify for Access Arrangements will already be known to the Learning Support faculty and recorded on the SEND Register as having additional educational needs.

The Exam Access Arrangements should reflect what help has to be given in the classroom and the normal way of working should reflect what is going to be available in class tests, controlled assessments and exams.

Please speak to the SENCO before arranging any assessment yourself, as the school is not obliged to automatically accept the findings of a privately commissioned report. No-one is guaranteed an arrangement simply because they have a learning difficulty. For example, extra time cannot be given on the basis of a diagnosis of dyslexia – it has to be assessed for separately.

Our exam access arrangements are dictated by the regulations of the JCQ ([Joint Council for Qualifications](#))

Decisions on which exam access arrangements are granted to each student are made by the SENCO and the Head of Centre (the Headteacher).

The types of Access Arrangements are outlined below.

For any further queries please contact: LearningSupport@smrt.bristol.sch.uk

Rest Breaks

Rest breaks must be agreed and approved in advance. Students can ask the invigilator for a rest break by raising their hand. The minutes taken will then be added on to the end of the exam for the student, so the time is not 'lost.'

Students are allowed to take a maximum of one rest break per hour and will not be allowed to take a rest break within the first 15 minutes of an exam.

Movement Breaks

Movement breaks must be agreed and approved in advance. Students can ask the invigilator for a movement break by raising their hand. The minutes taken will then be added on to the end of the exam for the student, so the time is not 'lost.'

Students are allowed to take a maximum of one movement break per hour and will not be allowed to take a movement break within the first 15 minutes of an exam. There may be a delay while they wait for an invigilator to be available to take them for a movement break. A movement break cannot be used to go to the toilet.

25% Extra Time

Students with SEND who require extra time for tests and assessments at GCSE will be assessed for this by a specialist assessor.

At year 7-9, this will be organised as an informal arrangement in line with their identified needs.

25% extra time will be added to the total time of the exam – so a student sitting a 60-minute exam would be allowed 75 minutes.

Word Processor

Students who type as their normal way of working can use a word processor in their exams. This would be a desktop PC in the smaller room, which is a classroom with other students who also have exam access arrangements, rather than being in the main hall.

Reader and Scribe

Students who have had an LSA to read and scribe for them in lessons can have this arranged for their exams – these are generally students who have this stipulated in their EHCPs. A reader cannot read the reading paper of the English Language exam for them, but a computer reader can be an alternative option for this paper.

Smaller Room

The smaller room is a classroom with up to 30 other students who also have exam access arrangements of various kinds, including word processor and movement breaks.

Many students in the smaller room will have access to laptops, movement breaks, rest breaks, meaning there are likely to be more interruptions, noise and movement than there is in the main exam hall.

Due to being apart from the main hall, there may be a delay before we can accommodate a movement, rest or toilet break.

Many students in the smaller room have more complex needs and vulnerabilities, which can lead to interruptions while these are supported. As the smaller rooms will be in normal classrooms, there will be the noise of students moving around the building, which creates background noise.

We will require written professional evidence in order to be able to provide a smaller room for most students.

Separate Room

Separate room is a room with an invigilator and no other students present. This is a rare and exceptional arrangement which is reserved for students who have readers or scribes, or very complex disabilities or a diagnosis such as Tourette Syndrome.

Main Exam Hall

There will be up to 260 students in the exam hall.

There is likely to be less distraction from other students needing toilet breaks or movement breaks, as they will not need to leave the room by desks so frequently.

The main exam hall tends to be much cooler in summer and is in the quietest part of the school site.

Students are less likely to need to wait for rest breaks, as there will be a greater number of invigilators.

It is perfectly normal and natural to be anxious about exams and to find them stressful. Whilst it is understandable to try and look for something that will make this go away, there is no magic solution to this. There are some students for whom the larger numbers or venue-size is likely to increase the stress of the exam, but this is quite rare, and for other reasons outlined below being in the larger room can sometimes be a calmer and less stressful experience.