

An Introduction to Access Arrangements for Exams for Parents/Carers



Access Arrangements for exams

Access arrangements are 'reasonable adjustments' for students who have a disability, a temporary injury or a special educational need **that significantly affects them in exams.**

Access Arrangements -

- **do not change** the skills or knowledge being tested
- **must not give an unfair advantage**, but..
- **do give a level playing field** so that students can show their skills and knowledge

Assessments, to establish Access Arrangement applications, are carried out by Specialist teachers in school. They usually take place at the start of GCSEs or A levels.

Once a student's application for Access Arrangements has been successfully processed, the arrangements should be available in school based 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.

There are a range of Access Arrangements that can be put in place, most commonly students will qualify for only one of these, however where appropriate, some students may qualify for more. **Student needs**, the **type of exam** and the **current regulations** all affect whether or not a student is entitled to Access Arrangements. This means different arrangements might be allowed in different exams (for example extra time is not appropriate when practical skills are being assessed). When Access Arrangements are put place these are generally not altered, however, in exceptional circumstances amendments can be made if this still meets current regulations and that staff, parents and the student are all in agreement.

The most commonly used arrangements are:

- **Extra Time** – for candidates who read, write or process information at a below average speed
- **Rest Breaks** – a short break from the exam to help those with very poor concentration, extreme stress or who might need a break for medical reason
- **Reading Aloud** - for those who work more effectively if they hear themselves read
- **Word Processors** – for candidates with poor handwriting who use a word processor in class and for school assessments and exams. The spellcheck facility is disabled
- **Readers** – for those with below average reading scores. For most students this will be a shared reader who can read the occasional word to them. For a very few students this may be an individual reader
- **Scribes** – for those who have severe writing difficulties – perhaps they write extremely slowly, or their handwriting is illegible. Very few students qualify for this arrangement
- **Prompters** – for those who lose concentration very easily

If you have any questions about access arrangements, then please contact Mr Rowland in the Learning Support Faculty.

Acknowledgements:

Joint Council for Qualifications

Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties