



CAMPBELL
COLLEGE

EST 1894

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Revised: Sept 2023
Next Revision: June 2025

THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN IN LINE WITH THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR QUALIFICATION (JCQ) GUIDANCE.

The JCQ is a membership organisation comprising the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK. The JCQ provides a single voice on issues of examination administration and, when appropriate, qualification and wider education policy. These regulations for schools can be accessed on the JCQ website.

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified.

Access Arrangements allow candidates with **special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries** to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

These include:

- **Extra time:** students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% (or more in exceptional circumstances) depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher.
- **A reader:** a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of the 'Reading Section' of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would write the answers themselves but can ask for them to be read back to them.
- **A scribe:** a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers, or may type on a computer themselves with the spell and grammar check on.
- **Word processor:** for exceptional reasons, a student may be given access to a computer for an exam so they can word process their answers (without the spell and grammar check facility). This **cannot** be because a student types faster than they write or because they prefer it, but must be to account for significant disadvantage. See appendix A.
- **Rest breaks:** where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

What evidence is needed to apply for Extra Time?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that are needed to apply for Access Arrangements to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)¹:

Firstly, and most importantly, a report from the school's Specialist Assessor (Mrs Sheppard) which notes

- Evidence of persistent and significant difficulties, which would usually have been identified in Primary school and during Key Stage 3
- Evidence from teachers that this difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Evidence that the access arrangement is the student's normal way of working in school i.e. that they always need more time to complete work, or that they always need a scribe to complete written work

It should be noted that it is not necessary to have a diagnosis, nor does a diagnosis guarantee Access Arrangements.

And

If the student has Learning Difficulties:

Significant difficulties must be identified through Educational Assessments conducted by Mrs Sheppard, as the College's Specialist Assessor. So as not to give an unfair advantage, tests must confirm that the candidate has at least

- two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
- one below average standardised score of 84 or less, and one low average standardised score 85-89.

In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- speed of reading and speed of writing; or
- speed of reading and cognitive processing; or
- speed of writing and cognitive processing; or
- two different areas of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.

If the student has long term Medical issues (and this includes ADHD and ASD)

the SENCo's detailed information, as above, will be supported by confirmation of the candidate's disability:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs which confirms the candidate's disability.

¹ 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' Joint Council for Qualifications (updated annually)

If applying for Reader –. Centre based evidence confirming the nature of the pupil's impairment and that the use of a computer reader/reader reflects his normal and current way of working within the school.

If applying for Scribe - Significant difficulties must be identified through Educational Assessments conducted by Mrs Sheppard, as the College's Specialist Assessor. So as not to give an unfair advantage, tests must confirm that the candidate cannot produce written work through any other means due to:

- spelling in the below average range (a spelling accuracy standardised score of 84 or less) with unrecognisable spellings; or
- below average writing speed (a standardised score of 84 or less).

If applying for Use of word processor – see Appendix A for school policy

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private Educational Psychologists and submitting the reports to Learning Support as evidence that their child should be awarded Access Arrangements.

Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive Access Arrangements which can be in conflict with what the school feels are appropriate. JCQ do not permit the school to accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist report unless they are working for or on behalf of the school, but will instead follow the recommendations made by the school's Specialist Assessor Mrs Sheppard.

JCQ regulations state : 'a *privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process and application*'

Private reports can be helpful in the case of concerns that cannot be identified by school testing, or if a diagnosis is required. If this is the case, Mrs Sheppard will speak to the Psychologist before the consultation in order to complete the report on the student's background, provide the evidence from teachers and the student's normal way of working in school.

How would students be identified for Exam Access Arrangements?

Information from Primary schools

Reports and IEPs from Primary school are very useful to give evidence of the persistent nature of the difficulty however it should be noted that even if a student received Access Arrangements for the Transfer test, this does not guarantee that they will receive it at GCSE or A level because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had Extra Time in the Transfer test may not qualify for Extra Time at GCSE because their speed of working has improved to the extent it does not meet JCQ criteria.

Baseline testing completed in KS2

All students in Year 8 are tested at the start of the year and again in Year 9 and 10. We use computerised Cognitive Ability Tests to baseline general ability, and Progress Test in English/ Progress Test in Maths to look at attainment in these two core pillars of education. These tests are primarily to look at progress through school but can also help identify learning difficulties. Learning Support will use this information to put appropriate interventions into place.

Evidence of need gathered during internal examinations and assessments

JCQ states that:

“if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time.”

Close attention is paid to the use of Extra Time during internal examinations in Years 8 -10, and to comply with JCQ regulations we can not process applications where there has been no need for it in past exams.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the Tutor to ask for advice if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the Tutor will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

Teachers can refer a student to Learning Support where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student.

Individual Educational Tests conducted at staff or parental request

Once the decision to test has been made, the student will attend Learning Support to meet with the Specialist Assessor. They usually complete a self-evaluation form and the appropriate Psychometric tests are selected.

If the nature of the difficulty is proven ‘*significant*’ and meets the strict criteria, **and** if the Specialist Assessor can confirm the persistent nature of the problem, the student’s normal way of working using evidence from teachers, then an application to JCQ can be made. The student must sign a Data Protection Notice to give consent for some of their personal data to be shared with JCQ and the Exam awarding bodies.

How do staff and students know whether Exam Access Arrangements have been approved?

- Students who are approved for Access Arrangements are identified to teachers via SIMS, and their name appears on an 'Access List' on the school network. The information is kept confidentially in line with school policy, are shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- Students who are approved for Access Arrangements will either be informed at the time, or through Firefly.

• What support is given to students with Access Arrangements?

Students with Access Arrangements are encouraged to use their Access Arrangements during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using them effectively.

Students who have access to a Reader or Scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can't do with the Reader/Scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.

All teachers can see the list of students with Access Arrangements, and they are asked to give Learning Support notice before they do tests or Controlled Assessments so that support can be provided. Students who have a Reader can be supported by the teacher supervising the test or may have individual support if necessary. Learning Support can provide a separate room, Reader, access to ICT and a Scribe with the required amount of notice.

Students with Access Arrangements are monitored regularly through the use of data from Progress Reports, Trackers and exam results, and twice yearly IEP review where appropriate.

AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

This policy is published on the College website (and the Firefly Parent App); however, a hard-copy can be collected from the College by request.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed every two years; however, when necessary the College may update the policy when it deems it necessary. The latest version may be obtained by contacting the College.

Appendix A – Use of word processor

The use of a word processor with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text switched off is a school-delegated access arrangement.

This policy was developed using references from the most recent publication of JCQ's [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) (AARA) booklet (2021/22) and JCQ's [Instructions for Conducting Examinations](#) (ICE) (2021/22) document. Both of these documents set out the regulations and guidance that schools must adhere to when making access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities and learning difficulties to remove the barriers that they may experience when trying to access an assessment.

Purpose of the policy

Pupils with access to word processors are allowed to type in order to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for disabled candidates preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties (AARA, 4.2.1).

The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course. Access arrangements are based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidates' needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests, exams, mock exams etc. and confirmed arrangements are in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AARA, 4.24).

Word Processing in written examinations

The school will allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate as an access arrangement for the purpose of an assessment where it is their normal way of working and appropriate to their needs within the school; unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (AARA, 5.8.1; ICE, 14.20).

Word processors will only be permitted where the integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled pupil.

Pupils may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the pupil. The School SENCo will consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA, 4.2.3).

Mrs Karen Sheppard, who is a member of the school's senior leadership team, has produced this statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the school uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations.

Pupils who may benefit from the use of a word processor during written examinations

The school considers that pupils with the following needs may benefit from the use of a word processor during examinations (AARA 5.8.4):

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory impairment;
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand; and
- poor handwriting.

An awarding body may require that a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) must be completed (AARA 5.8.4).

The use of a word processor is granted for pupils only if it appropriate to their needs and reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working' (AARA, 4.2.5), which may include using a word processor in the classroom, in internal school tests and exams, and during mock examinations. The school will not simply grant the use of a word processor to a pupil because they prefer to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home (AARA 5.8.4).

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A pupil using a word processor is normally accommodated in a different room with other candidates who are typing.

The Use of a Word Processor

The school:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) for pupils where it is their normal way of working (AARA 5.8.1);
- only grants the use of a word processor to a pupil if it is appropriate to their needs (for example the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand) (AARA 5.8.1);
- provides access to word processors to pupils in non-examination assessment components (including controlled assessments or coursework) as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AARA 5.8.2);
- allows pupils to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions i.e. those requiring extended writing, and to hand-write shorter answers (AARA 5.8.3);
- is also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where pupils will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to hand-write within the answer booklet. The pupil avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen (AARA 5.8.3);
- does not simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home (AARA 5.8.4).
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the pupil has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking; and
- voice recognition technology is not included unless the pupil has permission to use a scribe or relevant software.

On 27th January 2024 you will receive your son's SEAG Outcomes. When you have had a chance to study those you will be in a better position to judge whether or not you feel that the distraction of the mobile phone ringing in the Assessment Centre on 25th November has affected his SEAG Outcomes or whether he has achieved in line with or exceeded expectations.