

Examination policies and procedures



Access Arrangements Policy

2024/25

Access Arrangements Policy

Centre name	Bankside School
Centre number	
Date policy first created	04/09/2024
Current policy approved by	Kate Jasper
Current policy reviewed by	Kate Jasper & Chloe Boothman
Date of next review	30/09/2025

Key staff involved in the procedures

Role	Name
Head of centre	Kate Jasper
Senior leader(s)	Kate Jasper: Headteacher
Exams Officer	Chloe Boothman
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Sian Ackerley
Other staff (if applicable)	

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Bankside School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Bankside School has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and:

- is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AA 4.2)

The principles for Bankside School to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (AA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in Equalities Policy (Exams).

2. The assessment process

At Bankside School, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professions Council who may conduct assessments to be recorded within Section C of Form 8 and where necessary full diagnostic assessments (AA 7.3)

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Bankside School:

- The Schools HR Officer checks all required qualifications as part of the organisations' recruitment process
- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the examinations officer, SENCo or head of centre.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within Access arrangements online. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

Process for the assessment of a candidate's difficulties by an assessor

Bankside School confirms:

- A detailed history of need is collected for each student on their entry to Bankside School. At the start of their time with us, all students are assessed in literacy to determine the level of support that is appropriate and required for each individual - this is completed by the transitions team and supervised by the school SENCo. Assessments conducted are York Assessment of Reading Comprehension, Single Word Spelling Test, Single Word Reading Test, and in the case of Post16 students, Edinburgh Reading Test and Graded Spelling Test, supplemented by GL Assessment Progress English Test.
- On admission all students are assessed for access arrangements by the Transition Team. Those who demonstrate persistent difficulties are individually flagged to the SENCo for a picture of need to be developed and assessment can be undertaken by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5), and the most appropriate support is applied for from the awarding bodies. The student's normal way of working is reflected in the Access Arrangement which has been put in place.
- Form 9's are completed, signed and dated by our SENCo or where required, an appropriately qualified psychologist from our on-site multi-disciplinary clinical team
- Parents / carers and students are asked advised of the access arrangement process and the candidate is asked to complete the Personal Data Consent Form to submit an application to the relevant body, often the JCQ.
- Once access arrangements are fully processed and confirmed, a letter is sent home to explain to parents/carers the nature of the arrangement(s) that have been made.

Recording Evidence of Need

Bankside School confirms:

- All assessment evidence is retained and kept on individual files for each student who have Access Arrangements in place. All tests used are approved by the awarding body and marked against Standardised Scores. All tests and scoring are administered by an appropriately qualified psychologist from our on-site multi-disciplinary clinical team.
- Information regarding scores is recorded on the JCQ Form 9 by the assessor.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Bankside School confirms:

- Teachers and support staff are asked to make individual comments with regards to those students who have been identified as having specific difficulties. They are asked to respond to the following:
 - How has this student's difficulty impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom?
 - What support is regularly provided for this student?
 - Provide evidence of examples such as unfinished timed tests or handwriting samples, which are then kept on file.

- Information collected in Year 7 and a record of the support that was put in place, such as in class support, small group or one-to-one support are kept on file.
- Information regarding students specific circumstances or learning difficulties are kept on file along with reports from outside agencies, parents or students own concerns.
- Those students who have been awarded an access arrangements will continue to receive that provision routinely in the classroom as their normal way of working. The support given in the centre reflects the arrangement put in place for the examination series.

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place.

The assessor retains all original test papers, work samples and other supporting evidence along with a copy of the form and correspondence with parents/carers/outside agencies within each student's clinical file.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustment

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by SENCo. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the assessor.

● The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy (Exams) details the criteria Bankside School specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

● Alternative rooming arrangements

The Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy details the criteria Bankside School uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or 1:1 invigilation.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)

- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- SENCo to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- SENCo to complete the Data protection confirmation by the SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application
- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to submit applications for approval using AAO
- SENCo to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form, a completed Data protection confirmation by the SENCo, a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AA 8.6)
- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer under SENCo instruction to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

- Exams Officer to provide an **Access Arrangement: Candidate Notification Form** of approved access arrangements to candidate, and/or parent/carer where appropriate. This also details how access arrangements will be applied in exams/assessments and of any exceptions.

Changes 2024/2025

Not applicable

Centre-specific changes

Not applicable