



Gillingham School

Exam Access Arrangements Policy 2017

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on **evidence of need** and **normal way of working**. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres; others require prior JCQ (Joint Council of Qualifications) awarding body approval. Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and alternative question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Gillingham School's Policy for Access Arrangements is written in line with the JCQ Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' – with effect from 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2017.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body (Exam board) to make reasonable adjustments where a learner would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner.

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

Definition of disability: Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

Definition of Special Educational Needs: A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Education Act 1996 if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her.

Access arrangements may include:

- Extra time of up to 25%
- Extra time of up to 50%
- Extra time of over 50%
- Reader/Computer reader
- Scribe/Voice Activated software
- Supervised rest breaks
- Read aloud
- Word processor/laptop
- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examinations components e.g. French listening
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Practical Assistant
- Alternative accommodation away from the centre
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities: amplification equipment; Braille papers; closed circuit TV; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind; Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.
- In line with JCQ regulations, Gillingham School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement.

These arrangements require that the learner achieves specific results in standardised tests

Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 and 5 are usually identified early (during KS3). At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to Quality first teaching within lessons are then made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in delivering and monitoring the adjustments.

Formal Assessment for Access Arrangements:

- For those students potentially requiring access arrangements formal assessment and application to JCQ is usually carried out in Year 9 (summer term) and / or 10 and Year 12 as standard. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where necessary. When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.
- Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment (usually a score of 84 or less) will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent tests are binding and determine any subsequent Access arrangements.
- Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out by an appropriately qualified assessor.
- Parents may request an independent assessment. However, Gillingham School may elect to accept or reject a privately commissioned report. If rejected the SENDCO or a member of the Senior Leadership team must provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which must be available for inspection purposes.
- The examination officers, specialist assessors, SENDCO and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.
- If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement then access arrangements can be removed.
- If the SENDCO and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/careers.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has Access Arrangements?

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded

Students are informed verbally

A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff.