

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

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Impact Assessment Status: In preparing the Policy, any potential disproportionate impact it might have upon individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, have been carefully considered. It is the conclusion of the College Group that the Policy does not adversely impact on individuals with any of the protected characteristics.

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Aim

The purpose of the Exam Access Arrangements Policy is to ensure, wherever possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for students and apprentices with additional learning needs and/or disabilities, therefore preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties.

The Equality Act 2010 requires Awarding Bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

This policy sets out the arrangements of the Chesterfield College Group to ensure that it complies with the following guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which in turn is informed by the Equality Act:

- [Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.](#)
- [Instructions for conducting examinations.](#)
- [Access arrangements: overview of evidence requirements.](#)

Scope

This policy and associated operating procedures apply to Chesterfield College, which includes our subsidiary companies: Training Services 2000 Ltd, Learning Unlimited ATA Ltd, Recruit Unlimited Ltd and Chesterfield College Enterprises Ltd.

The policy and any associated procedures apply to all staff, students and apprentices of the College Group.

The term 'access arrangements' is used to describe the reasonable adjustments implemented within examinations. Exam access arrangements remove barriers in the assessment and enable equal opportunity. Examples include prompts for an individual with a disability affecting their concentration, extra time for an individual with a disability affecting their processing and reading pens for an individual with a disability such as dyslexia.

Policy Statements

The following principles are applied to exam access arrangements at Chesterfield College:

- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Team will provide guidance to curriculum areas on inclusive practice and exam access arrangements, including reference to the Equality Duty, reasonable adjustments, normal ways of working, the formal referral process, and internal reporting.
- All students and apprentices with previous exam access arrangements in place (e.g., from school) must be considered for exam access arrangements within the centre. The SEND Team will ensure that tutors have the information required to do this.
- All students and apprentices with a declared disability must have access to the reasonable adjustments they require. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on factors such as the needs of the student or apprentice and any existing barriers

experienced. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes, or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

- A student or apprentice may be awarded exam access arrangements where they have:
 - A learning difficulty.
 - A medical condition.
 - A physical disability.
 - A sensory impairment.
 - Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand.
 - Slow handwriting speed.
 - A temporary injury or impairment, a diagnosis of a disability, or a manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability, arising after the start of the course.
- Access arrangements must have appropriate approval prior to the examination. Extra time, readers, and scribes must be approved by the relevant Awarding Body. Other arrangements require centre-based approval.
- Tutors must refer students and apprentices who may require exam access arrangements to the SEND Team. The SEND Team will assess eligibility for access arrangements, which are applied for and facilitated by the Exams Team within an agreed timeframe, agreed annually. Arrangements may consist of the following, as outlined in JCQ guidance:
 - Supervised rest breaks.
 - Extra time.
 - Computer reader.
 - Read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen.
 - Scribe or speech recognition technology.
 - Word processor.
 - Transcript.
 - Prompter.
 - Oral language modifier.
 - Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components.
 - Sign language interpreter.
 - Practical assistant.
 - Alternative site for the conduct of examinations.
 - Other arrangements to remove barriers related to concentration, e.g., chewing gum or music.
 - Bilingual translation dictionaries with up to a maximum 25% extra time.
 - Any other reasonable adjustment that is unique to the individual and is not listed above.
- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are considered on a subject-by-subject basis, as the student or apprentice may not require the same access arrangements or reasonable adjustments in each specification.
- The Head of Inclusion will ensure that the proposed access arrangements and reasonable adjustments do not unfairly advantage or disadvantage the student or apprentice, e.g., using technology in an exam that they are not familiar with.

- A student or apprentice with a disability must be offered reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to teaching, learning, and assessment throughout their programme. Any exam access arrangements requested must reflect both the needs of the student or apprentice and their normal way of working.
- JCQ guidance recognises that although exam access arrangements must be reflective of the student or apprentice's normal way of working, there may be occasional modifications. For example, consideration will be given to students and apprentices who do not have access to a scribe in the classroom, even though they require this adjustment for exams (the student or apprentice may have to evidence their learning practices in this instance, for example taking photos of information on the board rather than note-taking). Where a slightly different arrangement is needed for an exam, the student or apprentice must have appropriate opportunities to practice using the approved access arrangements. In addition, a student or apprentice with diabetes may require access to their phone during exams to monitor their blood sugar levels; they would not have requested approval for this in lessons as it would be normal practice for them to have their phone to hand.
- Evidence of eligibility must be provided, as stated in the JCQ Overview of Evidence Requirements document. Evidence must reflect the student or apprentice's normal way of working and clearly demonstrate the need for the access arrangement. Eligibility is informed by the professional judgement of the SEND Team based on knowledge of the student or apprentice's disability, their normal way of working, and tutor comments. Evidence of a history of support is key. Access arrangements must not suddenly be granted to students and apprentices with no history of reasonable adjustments to their learning at the time of the examination.
- Exam access arrangements must not alter the assessment objectives within a qualification. Access arrangements will not be granted if they affect the integrity of the assessment.
- Approved access arrangements are put in place for internal centre tests, mock examinations and formal examinations. Students and apprentices must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the approved access arrangements before their first formal examination. This is especially important where a computer reader, modified enlarged papers, a scribe, speech recognition technology, or a word processor will be used in examinations.
- In the event of logistical issues such as room or invigilator shortages, the Exams Team will consult with the SEND Team to achieve inclusive solutions and ensure that disabled students and apprentices are not disadvantaged.
- Where a student or apprentice has not made use of an access arrangement granted to them, this must be recorded and reviewed. The Head of Inclusion may consider withdrawing the access arrangement if it is no longer reflective of need and normal way of working, provided the student or apprentice will not be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

- Failure to comply with the regulations contained in this policy has the potential to constitute malpractice, which may impact on the student or apprentice's results. Examples of failure to comply include:
 - Putting in place access arrangements that are not approved.
 - Failing to consider putting in place access arrangements (this may be a failure to comply with the equality duty to make reasonable adjustments).
 - Permitting access arrangements which are not supported by appropriate evidence.
 - Charging a fee to provide access arrangements to a disabled student or apprentice.

Implementation

In compliance with JCQ regulations, the college will ensure that:

- Students and apprentices are made aware that they are expected to declare any disability and previous access arrangements prior to the start of their programme or at the beginning of their programme, namely during the application, enrolment, and induction processes. Students and apprentices will be notified that late declarations may prevent arrangements being put in place and that access arrangements do not automatically carry over from school.
- Disability information is recorded correctly to enable accurate reporting and information sharing through a variety of appropriate means, signposted by the SEND Team.
- Learner Inclusion Plans are in place where appropriate across all cohorts. These are tailored to the individual student or apprentice, referencing any disabilities, identified barriers to learning, and any recommended reasonable adjustments, including learning technologies and exam access arrangements.
- Where Learner Inclusion Plans are not in place, guidance on reasonable adjustments is provided within group context reports, disability guidance documents, adjustment permits, and the declared SEND report. Tutors are expected to embed the relevant reasonable adjustments into everyday delivery.
- Any exam access arrangements requested are the best fit for the disability, normal way of working, and examination format.
- The exam access arrangements referral process allows adequate time for the implementation of reasonable adjustments, opportunity for observations of normal ways of working, and assessments of eligibility, whilst also adhering to Awarding Body deadlines.
- The SEND Team collates suitable evidence of eligibility to enable the Exams Team to seek Awarding Body approval for students and apprentices who require a reader, scribe, and/or extra time.
- The SEND Team collates suitable evidence of eligibility to enable the SEND and Exams Teams to consider centre-approved arrangements, specifically students and apprentices who require a smaller room.

- Prior to each exam series all staff responsible for invigilation receive invigilation training, including relating to the application of exam access arrangements.
- There is effective coordination of exam access arrangements and supporting resources, and that these are in place for examinations. These include:
 - Invigilators.
 - Scribes.
 - Prompts.
 - Human readers.
 - Laptops with memory sticks.
 - Headphones.
 - Overlays.
 - Reading pens.
 - Modified papers.
- There is effective planning of rooms, with careful consideration of location, capacity, and compatibility with the access arrangements in place.
- Students and apprentices are notified of their approved exam access arrangements prior to their first formal examination.
- Effective reporting of exam access arrangements will enable the SEND and Exams Teams to collate evidence for updates and make new applications when access arrangements are no longer valid. Exam access arrangements expire after 26 months, or when the student or apprentice progresses to a higher-level qualification or a different Awarding Body.
- Staff providing exam access arrangements also act as invigilators and so will follow relevant guidance for both roles (e.g., checking the identity of the student or apprentice in their capacity as an invigilator and reading the correct sections of an exam paper if also providing access arrangements as a reader).

Communication Flow

The policy is approved by the college's Standards and Performance Committee.

The policy is communicated to all staff who directly support students and apprentices through business meetings, staff induction training, and online college communication platforms. Tutors delivering exam-assessed subjects engage in annual exam access arrangements training delivered by the SEND Team.

Exam access arrangements are discussed with students and apprentices and their parents/carers as appropriate through the application and enrolment processes.

The policy can be accessed on the staff intranet and the college website.

Monitoring

The policy is reviewed annually in line with the Equality Act, JCQ requirements, and college policy framework by the Head of Inclusion and Head of Quality Assurance.

Data related to those in receipt of exam access arrangements is continually reviewed and monitored by the SEND Team to ensure that they are applied as appropriate throughout the learner journey.

Practice will be reviewed annually by the Head of Inclusion and Head of Quality Assurance in line with student numbers sitting examinations, numbers of SEND declarations, and room capacity.

Associated Information and Guidance

- JCQ Guidance: [Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties: access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.](#)
- JCQ Guidance: [Instructions for conducting examinations.](#)
- JCQ Guidance: [Access arrangements: overview of evidence requirements.](#)
- Equality Act 2010.

Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- Examinations and Assessment Policy – TLA01
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy – TLA07
- Conflict of Interest Policy – TLA09
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Procedure – TLA11
- Word Processor Policy – TLA13
- Complaints and Compliments Policy – CSE06
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy – GOV03
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy – GOV11
- Data Protection Policy – INF03