

## Access Arrangements at KS4 2015-16

The 2015-16 JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for General and Vocational Qualifications* has been published and contains changes made for the forthcoming academic year. This briefing highlights the main points and changes from the previous year but schools must refer to the full document to ensure that access arrangements meet the stated criteria.

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE and GCE qualifications, they must be processed using *Access Arrangements Online*, as early as possible. Arrangements must be processed and approved before an examination or controlled assessment/ coursework as per deadlines. For the May/June 2016 examinations these are **31 January 2016** for modified papers and **21 March 2016** for all other access arrangements.

The new guidance begins with a statement regarding the regulations which reflect a whole-centre approach to access arrangements.

### Chapter 1 - Information and guidance for centres

- 1.4 The document states the definition of a disability and SEN as stated in the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years. It also mentions the overlap between children and young people with a disability and those with SEN as described in the Equality Act 2010. It provides some useful examples of pupils for whom reasonable adjustments could be made.

**Chapter 2 – Vocational Qualifications** -There are no changes in this section.

### Chapter 3 – Candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties and application of assessment objectives

- 3.1 General qualifications-centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice *in an accessible format*. This chapter gives examples of how assessment objectives would impact on the availability of access arrangements.

### Chapter 4 – Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties

- 4.1.4 Managing the needs of candidates – Social, Mental and Emotional Needs, replaces Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs. A diagnosis of ADD or ADHD may require centres to consider associated cognition and learning needs.
- 4.2.10 Reminds schools that it is not acceptable to use Sixth Form students to facilitate access arrangements.
- 4.2.14 Examples are given of the evidence SENCOs are required to present to the JCQ Centre Inspector.

### Chapter 5 – Access Arrangements available

- 5.1.1 For candidates who require supervised rest breaks, their difficulties must be established in the Centre and be known to Form Tutor, Head of Year, SENCO and/or senior staff with pastoral responsibilities.
- 5.2.2 Extra time – Identifies where, in exceptional circumstances, 25% extra time may be given to students whose scores are within the low average range.

- Where a candidate progresses from GCSE to GCE a fully completed Form 8 (sections A&B) may roll forward. Evidence will be needed to show extra time is still required. This also applies to use of scribe, computer reader and reader.
- 5.2.3 Where a candidate has complex needs resulting in long term/adverse effect on processing speed, Form 8 is not required. This also applies to scribe and speech recognition technology. Centre letters can now also be supported by HCPC registered psychologists and LA specialist services in addition to previous sources.
- 5.4.1 Extra time over 50%-applications to be considered individually. In examples the guidance clarifies that candidates with SpLD who prefers 25% extra time to a reader/scribe may do so, but a note needs to be made giving the reason.
- 5.5 Computer reader/Reader- Centres may now open papers 90 minutes before the exam starts.
- 5.5.7 Gives clarity on the factors centres need to take into account regarding 25% extra time and a reader.
- 5.5.9 Readers can read back responses but must do so without emphasis on errors.
- 5.7.9 SENCo/specialist assessor needs to explain reason for 25% extra time when using a scribe e.g. by completion of Form 8 (Section A) Examples of use of a scribe are provided.
- 5.8 Examples of 25% extra time and use of word processors. Examples of use of a word processor are provided.
- 5.10 Examples of when a prompter may be used.
- 5.11.1 Access Arrangements online does not include an Oral Language Modifier. Centres to refer to awarding body. Reminder that an oral language modifier must only be considered for candidates whose disability has a very substantial and long term adverse effect resulting in very persistent and significant difficulties in accessing and processing information.
- 5.11.2 Candidates need to have reading comprehension and/or vocabulary scores of 69 or less to qualify.
- 5.11.5 Modifier must have successfully completed the accredited training course.
- 5.13.4 Interpreters must sign at an appropriate level for the exam.
- 5.14.7 Examples included of when to use a practical assistant.
- 5.15.1 Written evidence is required to confirm the need for alternative site for the examination.
- 5.18.1 Bilingual Translation Dictionaries not to be used in GCSE English/Irish, Welsh, MFL, geography, history and Religious Studies exams.
- 5.18.2 Web based translators added to the list of those not to be used.
- 5.18.4 25% extra time when a candidate uses a bilingual translation dictionary only available for Entry Level Certificate , Essential Skills (Wales + N. Ireland), Functional Skills (Entry Level 1&2), GCSE and Key Skills (N. Ireland).
- 5.18.5 Centres must determine the needs of individual GCSE candidates – not all will need a dictionary.

## **Chapter 6 – Modified Papers**

- 6.2.4 Centres to order Braille papers appropriate to candidates normal way of reading, i.e. SEB or UEB.
- 6.3.4 For A4 modified 18 point bold paper in non-interactive electronic format, centres need to contact awarding body.
- 6.5.3 If coloured/enlarged papers have been agreed, centres can open papers in secure room 90 minutes prior to exam start.

- 6.7.1 Centres need to maintain security of non-interactive electronic papers and ensure only authorised staff have access. These must not be converted from PDF format to Word. Also they must not use software to re-format text or remove diagrams.

## **Chapter 7 – Learning Difficulties**

- 7.3.3 A specialist assessor is a specialist teacher holding a **current** SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate or an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professional Council. Other professionals must hold a Post Graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7. In rare/exceptional circumstances centres may need to refer to an alternative professional, such as clinical psychologist or neuropsychologist where initial assessment has indicated specific/global learning needs, mental health or developmental concerns.
- 7.5.2 SENCOs and specialist assessors must work together and ensure a joined-up and consistent process in painting a picture of need.
- 7.5.3 Independent assessors must contact centres for evidence of candidates' normal way of working and background information. The candidate must then be assessed in light of the picture of need as detailed in Section A of Form 8. Assessors must then discuss with the SENCO appropriate Access Arrangements but it is the SENCO's responsibility to request such arrangements.
- 7.5.9 Test results in Section C of Form 8 must be given in standardised scores.
- 7.5.10 If a timed text-level reading test including comprehension questions produces a measure combining text level speed and accuracy then the results may be used to provide evidence relating to extra time in Form 8. Tests measuring single word reading speed are *not appropriate* in this case but may contribute to cognition processing for extra time.
- 7.5.11 A substantial spelling impairment is further regarded as one where spellings are bizarre making the target words unrecognisable.
- 7.6 Candidates names are to be placed on all pages of Form 8 which then needs to be stapled. Centre-devised equivalents of Form 8 are not acceptable. Only fully completed Form 8s are a passport to Access Arrangements.
- 7.6.1 It is strongly recommended that a hand signed copy of Form 8 is provided to candidates with their GCSE results in August.

## **Chapter 8 – Processing applications for Access Arrangements - GCSE and GCE qualifications**

- 8.3 Examples of temporary access arrangements.
- 8.4 If a candidate has *very substantial needs* but cannot be catered for on the on-line system as they are not listed, then centres need to approach the awarding body. Further paperwork may be required.
- 8.7 Where centres have approval for an access arrangement for GCSE or GCE candidates. The Cambridge Technical qualifications have now been added to the previous list of awards.

The complete document can be downloaded from <http://preview.tinyurl.com/plduazk>