

Exams – Access Arrangements Policy

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Directors on :	Spring 2026
This Policy will be reviewed by the GLC Board on :	Spring 2027

GLC Mission Statement

The GLC’s mission is to develop active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community.

This will be achieved through:

- High quality teaching that deliberately develops competencies of curiosity, creativity, communication and critical-thinking;
- An inspiring and meaningful curriculum;
- The development of productive relationships by instilling the values of compassion, resilience, responsibility and aspiration to prepare our young people for learning and life;
- A commitment to the wellbeing of our staff;
- A culture of professional generosity, collaboration, challenge and support throughout the GLC;
- The development of effective external partnerships for the benefit and wellbeing of our community.

The Gateway Learning Community Trust comprises the Gateway Academy, Herringham Primary Academy, Lansdowne Primary Academy, the Gateway Primary Free School and Tilbury Pioneer Academy. For the purposes of this document each will be referred to as an ‘Academy’.

Equalities Statement

The GLC’s commitment to equality is enshrined in our mission statement to develop ‘active and thriving citizens within a diverse, truly fair and equal community’.

We are a vibrant, innovative and successful organisation: we work hard to be the place of choice to work and to learn. Across the 5 academies of the GLC, we pledge that everyone enjoys an equality of opportunity. We work tirelessly to ensure that individual characteristics including age, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, disability, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation are not discriminated against in any way. We create inclusive environments characterised by mutual respect where difference is celebrated.

Contents

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?.....	3
Access arrangements.....	3
Reasonable adjustments.....	3
Purpose of the policy.....	3
General principles.....	4
Equalities Policy (Exams).....	4
The assessment process.....	4
The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s).....	5
Appointment of assessors.....	5
Process for the assessment of a candidate’s learning difficulties by an assessor.....	5
Picture of need/normal way of working.....	6
Processing access arrangements and adjustments.....	7
Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval.....	7
Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments.....	7
Word Processor Policy (Exams).....	8
Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy.....	8

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

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. [AARA¹, Definitions]

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. [AARA¹, Definitions]

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

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Gateway Academy 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.

This policy is maintained and held by SENCo [or equivalent role] alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo [or equivalent role] is storing documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. [¹[AARA](#) 4.2]

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current JCQ document 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

¹This publication is further referred to in this policy as AARA

General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. [GR 5.4]

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AARA [4.2]. These 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;
- The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate;
- 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;
- Applications should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working.
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment;
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre;
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

Equalities Policy [Exams]

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy [Exams] which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

Can be found in the staff shared area and/or the GLC website

This policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is [are] appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in AARA.7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Sarah Curtis

- Master of Science in Developmental Neuropsychology
- Exam Access Arrangements for Specialist Assessors
- Supporting Teaching and Learning [SENCo 2]

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in AARA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments...* (GR 5.4)

The head of centre **must** ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AARA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of assessors

7.4.1 SENCos must hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor(s) is/ are suitably qualified. This can be drawn, for example, from the following sources:

- A copy of current Assessment Practising Certificate [APC] issued by Patoss, Dyslexia Guild or British Dyslexia Association;
- copy of Level 7 assessment qualification certificate;
- Screenshot of HCPC registration showing the Unique Registration Number;
- Screenshot of SASC listing showing the APC code number and expiry date;
- Screenshot of listing for PAPAA Graduates showing the certificate number;
- Screenshot of listing for CPT3A Certificate Holders showing the certificate number;
- Screenshot of listing for ETAAC Certificate Holders showing the certificate number; or
- Screenshot of listing for Patoss AAA Certificate Holders showing the certificate number.

7.4.2 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 .

7.4.3 The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as listed within the Deadlines section, must be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status

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

7.5.1 The SENCo must arrange for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor.

7.5.3 The assessor is required to establish if the results of tests in literacy and/or cognitive abilities present evidence that the candidate has an impairment which substantially affects their performance.

7.5.4 Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional.

7.5.5 The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application.

7.5.6 Current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores must be used, where published.

7.5.7 Where a computer-based assessment tool is used to gather assessment evidence for Part 2 of Form 8, a suitably qualified assessor [see paragraph 7.3.4] must be present to oversee the test's computerised administration, actively observe the candidate and monitor the candidate's engagement with the assessment.

7.5.8 The candidate's chronological age must be less than the 'ceiling' of the test, unless there is no published test for the candidate's age.

7.5.9 Results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. [These are standard scores.] Standardised scores of 84 or less are described as 'below average'. Standardised scores of 85-89 are described as 'low average'. Test results for Part 2 of Form 8 must not be reported as percentiles, scaled scores, T-scores or age-equivalent scores. Such scores must be converted into standard scores. Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD must be used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and be presented by the SENCo for inspection. The form must only be used for candidates with learning difficulties or where a Language Modifier is required.

Where the SENCo is also the centre's appointed assessor the online version of Form 8 may be completed using the Centre Admin Portal [CAP]. CAP can be accessed using any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites.

Where the centre's appointed assessor, working within the centre, will complete all parts of Form 8, the online version of Form 8 may be completed using the Centre Admin Portal [CAP]. CAP can be accessed using any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites.

Picture of need/normal way of working

7.5.2 Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo must provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCo and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

Part 1 of Form 8 must be completed prior to the assessment. The SENCo or the assessor working within the centre must detail the candidate's background and history of support. The statements within Part 1 of Form 8 must be addressed.

The SENCo must have completed at least a 'skeleton' Part 1 of Form 8 before the candidate is assessed. Once the assessment has been completed, and before processing an online application, the SENCo must ensure that Part 1 of Form 8 has been fully completed.

Part 1 of Form 8 is a pen portrait of the candidate's needs. It allows the SENCo to 'paint a holistic picture of need', confirming normal way of working bringing together:

- Any previously granted access arrangements;
- Comments and observations across relevant subjects from teaching staff and support staff [i.e. Learning Support Assistants, Teaching Assistants and Communication Support Workers];
- Intervention strategies [e.g. individual education/learning plans] in place for the candidate;
- Pupil premium indicators;
- Screening test results;
- Use of pupil baseline and tracking data;
- Information about any differentiation in the classroom;
- Normal way of working in the classroom [where appropriate];
 - Arrangements made for end of year internal school examinations/mock examinations.

Effective screening and monitoring systems during Years 7 to 9 will enable the SENCo to provide sufficiently robust evidence of need. School tests might identify those candidates who need to be assessed for access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments.

Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online [AAO] is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. [Refer to [AARA 8](#) [Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments] and 6 [Modified papers].

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal [CAP] 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.

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. [AARA 8 Summary]

Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

The SENCo **must** keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes:

- a copy of the candidate's approved application;
- appropriate evidence of need (where required);
- evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AARA 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

For centre delegated arrangements/adjustments evidence of need is gathered and kept on file.

Centre-specific criteria for particular arrangements/adjustments

Word Processor Policy [Exams]

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because the candidate now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home. The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

Can be found in the staff shared area and/or the GLC website

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs will be made by the SENCo [or equivalent role].

The decision will be based on:

- Whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect;
and
- The candidate's normal way of working within the centre [AARA 5.16]

Alternative rooming arrangements **must** reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school/college tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations **is not** sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. (AARA 5.16)