

Friends' School Lisburn



Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments policy 2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with the current regulations from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

Friends' School Lisburn is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Access arrangements allow pupils with special educational needs, additional needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access assessments and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. Friends' School Lisburn aims to meet the particular needs of each individual pupil without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

The aims of the Friends' School Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments policy are as follows:

1. To clarify what access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are;
2. To explain how the assessment process is administered;
3. To establish how evidence of complex needs will be recorded;
4. To establish how evidence of a learning difficulty will be recorded;
5. To clarify our position on accepting privately commissioned psychological reports;
6. To explain how evidence of a pupil's normal way of working will be gathered;
7. To set out how and when access arrangements will be processed;
8. To clarify centre-delegated access arrangements;
9. To explain the appropriate use of word processors.

1. Definition of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

"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^{CIC} awarding body approval.... In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and SENDO require an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person 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. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment. There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment."

[JCQ website [an overview](#)]

2. How the assessment process is administered

Friends' School Lisburn will make every attempt to identify students needing exam access as early as possible.

- Post-primary transfer tests (SEAG/ AQE) are not regulated by JCQ and therefore pupils who had exam access arrangements for SEAG / AQE will not automatically receive them as pupils of Friends' School Lisburn.
- At the start of each academic year, the SENCo will collect data from new pupils about previously held exam access arrangements as evidence of history of need.
- Teachers and the SENCo identify pupils needing exam access through diagnostic assessment, class observations and from information contained in Statements, professional reports and other documentation. Teachers refer pupils to the SENCo for exam access assessment using evidence of winter examinations.
- On the request of the SENCo, teachers complete a teacher questionnaire detailing how a candidate's difficulties substantially impact on teaching and learning.
- Parents can contact the school SENCo to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns about the progress and learning of their child. The SENCo will investigate their concerns and contact all class teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a pupil.
- Once pupils needing exam assessments have been identified, the SENCo schedules an exam access assessment. The SENCo will contact parents/guardians to gain their permission to test. In line with JCQ regulations, the SENCo has successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.
- Pupils, teachers and parents will be informed of the outcome of their exam access assessment. A record of a candidate's access arrangements is recorded on the Additional Needs Register. The information about results of assessment for exam access arrangements is kept confidentially in line with school policy.
- Pupils with exam access arrangements will have these arrangements in class tests, mock exams and controlled assessments. Pupils may not require extra time for every examination/assessment and every subject. JCQ states that extra time may not be appropriate in practical examinations or non-examination assessments where the impairment has a minimal effect on the assessment.
- Pupils may need to be tested at each Key Stage for exam access arrangements.

3. Recording evidence of complex needs which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her speed of working.

Where a candidate has an impairment other than a learning difficulty, the SENCo will have explored and trialled the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time. The SENCo must have considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time.

Substantial impairment – evidence of need

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo, in line with JCQ guidance *reg 5.2.3* must complete Form 9 confirming the candidate's difficulties. Form 9 will:

- detail the candidate's current difficulties to show how they impact on teaching and learning and performance in examinations, summarising evidence of feedback from teachers and/or support staff;
- confirm that 25% extra time is the candidate's normal way of working.

Form 9 will be supported by specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability:

- *a letter / report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant*, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);*
- *a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or*
- *a current Statement of Special Educational Needs which confirms the candidate's learning difficulty, medical condition, physical disability, sensory or multi-sensory impairment.*

4. Recording evidence of a learning difficulty

For candidates requiring exam access, Form 8 is completed by the SENCo to record assessment and application information. Within Part 1 of Form 8, the SENCo **must** paint a picture of the candidate's normal way of working, clearly demonstrating the need for 25% extra time. The arrangement **must not** suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations.

Any assessment of learning difficulties must be carried out **no earlier than the start of year 10**. In order to award 25% extra time, Part 2 of Form 8 must confirm that the candidate has at least:

- *two below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or*
- *one below average standardised score of 84 or less and one low average standardised score (85-89).*

In either scenario, the two standardised scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- *speed of reading and speed of writing; or*
- *speed of reading and cognitive processing / fluency; or*
- *speed of writing and cognitive processing / fluency; or*
- *two different areas of cognitive processing / fluency ; which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working.*

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making an application for extra time.

5. Accepting privately commissioned psychological reports

In accordance with JCQ *regulation 7.3.6* the school cannot accept privately commissioned psychological reports for the purpose of processing access arrangements, unless this has been agreed in advance with the school and is in collaboration with the school.

6. Gathering evidence of *normal way of working*

Friends' School Lisburn will gather evidence of normal way of working as defined by JCQ in the following ways:

- Baseline aptitude tests (MIDYIS, YELLIS, CCEA adaptive tests);
- Candidate's self-reported difficulties;
- Information from feeder schools;
- Comments on teacher questionnaires about the candidate's difficulties ;
- SIMs tracking information;
- Information contained in Statements, IEPs or other documents.

The arrangement(s) put in place reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre

- in the classroom;
- in learning support sessions;
- mock and internal examinations.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

7. Processing applications for access arrangements

In line with JCQ regulations, the SENCo makes an application via *Access Arrangements Online* by the published deadline of **21 March 2025**. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

The SENCo keeps a record of the printed online application, letters from awarding bodies, Form 8s, a copy of the GDPR-compliant personal data consent form, assessments and any additional forms or documents for inspection. The files for inspection are located in M17.

8. Centre-delegated access arrangements

Friends' School Lisburn follows JCQ guidance when providing centre delegated access arrangements.

The SENCo allocates candidates a prompter or a reader/computer reader or supervised rest breaks if:

- the need is a result of substantial and long-term impairment, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties and it is their normal way of working;
- there is medical evidence to substantiate this arrangement and it is their normal way of working.

The candidate's difficulties must be established within the centre and thus known to a Collect Teacher, a Head of Year, the SENCo and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

JCQ state that the SENCo must have considered and thoroughly exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks before making an application for 25% extra time.

For rest breaks, the timing of the examination should be paused and re-started when the candidate is ready to continue. During the supervised rest break the candidate must not have access to the

question paper/answer booklet. If the candidate needs to leave the examination room, an invigilator must accompany the candidate.

9. Use of a word processor

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 this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

Friends' School Lisburn allows candidates to use a word processor:

- If a candidate has approval for the use of a scribe but prefers to use a word processor and this is their normal way of working.
- If a candidate has a permanent or temporary physical impairment that makes handwriting difficult and there is medical evidence to substantiate this.
- If a candidate's handwriting is so illegible that it cannot be read by third party. An example of their work is kept on file.
- A word processor is their normal way of working.

Laptops will be provided from M17. They will only be able to be accessed by using a specific exams log-in and the invigilator will give out a memory stick for each candidate. Candidates are responsible for frequently saving their work during the exam. It is permissible for a candidate using a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and handwrite shorter answers.

It is the responsibility of the Exams Officer and the candidate to ensure that their pages are numbered, that each page has the centre number, candidate number and unit/component code on each page and that a cover sheet is completed in line with JCQ regulations.

Every effort is made to ensure that candidates cannot access spell check, their own drive, and the internet during exams. However, if any student is found trying to get around the setting, this will be interpreted by the school as malpractice and will be reported to the relevant Awarding Body.

10. Alternative rooming arrangements within the centre

In 5.16 JCQ define alternative rooming arrangements as a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs. Preferential seating within the main hall will be trialled first. Friends' School Lisburn will follow JCQ guidance for any request for a candidate to sit the examination outside of the main examination hall. A room for a smaller group of candidates will be considered if the candidate has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect and if it is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. The candidate's disability may be established by a formal diagnosis, a supporting letter from a medical consultant* or a recommendation from CAHMS. The disability should be known to a Year Head, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. As stated by JCQ, nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations are not sufficient grounds for alternative arrangements within the centre.

**A letter from a GP cannot be accepted by JCQ for verifying the impact of a pupil's disability; evidence must be from a specialist in the area of the disability.*

Updated: November: 2024 (SEnCo attended annual update on JCQ regulations on 14/11/24)

Next review: November 2025