

Friends' School Lisburn



Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments policy 2025/26

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 Access Arrangements Coordinator (AAC) will collect data from new pupils about previously held exam access arrangements as evidence of history of need.
- Teachers, SENCo, and Senior Teachers identify pupils needing exam access through diagnostic assessment, class observations and from information contained in Statements, professional reports and other documentation, refer pupils to the Specialist Teacher for exam access assessment using evidence of winter examinations.
- On the request of the AAC, teachers complete a teacher questionnaire detailing how a candidate's difficulties substantially impact on teaching and learning.
- Parents can contact the AAC to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns about the progress and learning of their child. The AAC will liaise with the SENCo and staff in investigating 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 Specialist Teacher schedules an exam access assessment. The AAC will contact parents/guardians to gain their permission to test. In line with JCQ regulations, the Specialist Teacher 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 AAC along with 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. School 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 AAC 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 rest breaks have been trialled, and 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 **AAC** to record assessment and application information. Within Part 1 of Form 8, the **AAC, supported by the SENCo and staff** 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, completed by the Specialist Assessor, 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 (CAT4, 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 **AAC** makes an application via *Access Arrangements Online* by the published deadline of **21/03/2026**. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

The AAC **along with the SENCo** keeps a record of the printed online application, letters from awarding bodies, Form 8s, 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 **AAC** 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 school 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. 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: 22/10/2025

Next review: September/ October 2026