



ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Mrs C Lancaster	
Date of next review	January 2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
ALS lead/SENCo	Mrs H Kellow
ALS lead/SENCo line manager (Senior leader)	Mrs L Fielden
Head of centre	Mrs L Fielden
Assessor(s)	Mr I Machin
Access arrangement facilitator(s)	Teaching Assistants Invigilators

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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'.

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'. (¹AA, 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 Bowland High 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.

(JCQ's **General Regulations for Approved Centres**, section 5.4)

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS lead/SENCo 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 ALS lead/SENCo is storing documentation electronically he/she **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder **must** hold each of the required documents for inspection. (¹AA, section 4.2)

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

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)

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.

The school's Equalities policy (exams) is located in the exams office.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010[†], particularly Section 20 (7). This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

[†]for any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

The Access Arrangements 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 AA, section 7.3.

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

The assessor at Bowland High is Mr Ian Machin

Mr I Machin is qualified to assess for AA, he holds a post graduate Level 7 qualification in assessment as per JCQ regulations.

Mr I Machin holds the qualification CPT3A (Certificate in Psychometric Testing, Assessment and Access Arrangements), which incorporates CCET (Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing) and AAC (Access Arrangements Course), awarded by Real Training.

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 AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

Please refer to the school's policy and guidance for the recruitment and selection of school staff.

All appointees must formally provide:

- ☐ verification of relevant qualifications prior to appointment
- ☐ At least 2 satisfactory references
- ☐ Verification of identity
- ☐ Verification of professional status where required

And undergo the following checks:

- ☐ A check of the list of those barred from working with children
- ☐ A DBS enhanced disclosure

All assessors are recruited and all qualification checks are completed by HR before they are recruited by Bowland High.

Bowland High ensures that candidates with a learning difficulty have been assessed appropriately by the qualified assessor as appointed by the SLT.

The head of centre/senior leadership team will... have a **written** process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of their assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments... (GR, section 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.

Reporting the appointment of the assessors

Evidence of the specialist assessor and qualifications are held by the HR Officer. A copy of qualifications are held with the SENCO for inspection purposes and will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector when required.

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

At Bowland High, the assessment process is undertaken adhering to the guidelines outlined within the BPS (British Psychological Society) Code of Conduct, including: following pre-test protocols; ensuring the assessment situation/accommodation is properly prepared and appropriate for work; administering the assessment appropriately by following the guidelines

in the test manual; scoring the test accurately according to the instructions laid down in the test manual; and maintaining confidentiality at all points of the administration process.

The procedures in place at Bowland High to identify the needs of candidates requiring access arrangements are:

- ☐ Provisional lists are in place from Year 7 for students who we believe will go on to require special arrangements. This is initially based on information from primary schools and then further testing and observation throughout KS3.
- ☐ Within KS3, the reading and spelling ages of all students are reviewed annually with additional testing incorporated for those identified as causing concern.
- ☐ We also include and consider specific referrals from teaching staff and parents with regard to individual concerns.
- ☐ The specialist assessor tests and reports upon the students identified from additional testing within KS3.
- ☐ A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online (AA 7.3)

Picture of need/normal way of working

Bowland High begins to construct Access Arrangements files from KS3 onwards. A range of evidence is collected to support the need. This includes evidence of use of an AA within assessments. This would include, for example, photocopies of test papers providing evidence of additional time use, historical records of use of reader and/or scribe and/or laptop throughout KS3, completion of SEND-Curriculum area communication record, awarding body forms, JCQ [forms](#) used to record assessment and application information. Miss H Kellow as SENCo completes all forms, collates evidence and compiles individual pupil AA files.

In the initial stages of exploration of need, centre devised forms are used to collect and collate evidence and information. Following the assessment from the Specialist Assessor, the official JCQ forms are used.

JCQ forms might include, for example:

- ☐ Form 8 – Application for access arrangements
- ☐ Form 8A – Assessing candidates for access arrangements
- ☐ Form 9 – Arrangements permitted by the centre
- ☐ Form 11 – Notification of access arrangements Entry level
- ☐ Form 12 – Application for access arrangements Entry level
- ☐ Form VQ/EA – Application for reasonable adjustments; External assessments – Vocational qualifications
- ☐ Form VQ/IA - Application for reasonable adjustments; Internally assessed units – Vocational qualifications

Bowland High collates evidence of 'normal way of working' as an on-going process within normal classroom routine and any related assessments.

Evidence is gathered through a range of means, including:

- ☐ Construction and review of SEND Support Profiles/Plans as part of the assess-plan-do-review process
- ☐ Copies of assessments completed with/without the appropriate concession applied
- ☐ Copies of class work, where the concession has been applied

- ☐ Copies of Trial and Mock exam scripts, showing that the concessions have been used and applied
- ☐ Witness statements from SENCo and/or TAs
- ☐ Records of Involvement within intervention groups (incorporated within SEND Support Profile/Plan)
- ☐ Copies of TA support timetables

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 AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one 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.

At Bowland High, Mrs H Kellow (SENCo) is responsible for submitting applications using AAO.

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo **will** 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 **will** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process

Any independent assessor **will** contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This **will** take place **before** the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor **will** be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

All candidates **will** be assessed in light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor **will** discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the SENCo. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the SENCo.

Applications are submitted within JCQ timeframes and 'Application Approved' documents are held on a secure drive.

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.

All paperwork is stored securely within the SEND department within school.

Any applications made that are denied approval are carefully reviewed/scrutinised.

Mrs C Lancaster, Exams Officer, is responsible for submitting orders for modified papers upon liaising with the SENCo

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.

2 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, section 8.6)

Centre-delegated arrangements/adjustments

Where AAs are centre-delegated, e.g. use of word processor, appropriate evidence, evidence of use and normal way of working is collated and stored in the same manner as AAs requiring awarding body approval.

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.

Please refer to the school's separate Word Processor Policy (Exams) which is located in the exams office.

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.

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 (AA, section 5.16)
- In accordance with the regulations: 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 (or equivalent role within the centre) to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations.
- 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)
- If the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.
- If the centre has received a letter from CAMHS or NHS Psychiatrist.
- Alternative rooming reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations, as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.
- We follow the regulations from JCQ that a Doctor's letter will not satisfy the requirements.

- Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)

Privately Commissioned Assessments

Bowland High is under no obligation to accept the recommendations in a privately commissioned Educational Psychology report. These reports cost a significant amount of money. In this respect it, therefore, means that parents who are unable to obtain a private report through their financial circumstances are placed at a disadvantage. As an exam centre we must be fair and relatively consistent to all our pupils and ensure that no pupil is either given an unfair advantage or be disadvantaged by any arrangements put in place. Private reports are, therefore, reviewed with a degree of caution. A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online (AA 7.3)