

Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Policy

1. Scope

This policy is for centres to provide an understanding of the access arrangements and reasonable adjustments requirements. This policy applies to all WJEC qualifications, including those under the Eduqas brand.

WJEC, as a member of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), follows the JCQ guidelines as detailed in '[Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration – Joint Council for Qualifications](#)'. This guidance is followed by all JCQ Awarding Organisations and ensures consistent application of the requirements. This policy should be read in conjunction with the JCQ guidance and any subject specific guidance within specifications, with the requirement that centres adhere to all documents.

The requirements reflect a whole centre approach to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. It is the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team, the SENCo/ALNCo*, and assessors to be aware of the requirements.

** where this is not a designated role within a centre, this can be an appropriate equivalent individual responsible for exploring candidates' needs and establishing access arrangements.*

1.1 Definitions

Within the context of exams and assessments, a reasonable adjustment is any support arrangement to minimise or remove the impact of a candidate's health condition, disability or learning difficulty. Reasonable adjustments can be a bespoke arrangement, or they can be predefined support based on a learner's individual needs, such as extra time or a scribe/reader. These predefined types of support are referred to as access arrangements. Therefore, access arrangements are a type of reasonable adjustment.

Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are predefined types of support that are agreed **before** an assessment. They allow candidates with specific requirements such as additional learning needs, special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to access the assessment and demonstrate what they know without changing the demands of the assessment.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires WJEC 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. WJEC is required to take

reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.

Evidence of Need

The evidence of need will vary depending on the disability and the access arrangement(s) being applied for. Chapter 5 of the [JCQ guidance](#) provides details as to what constitutes the core evidence/evidence of need. It is important this reflects the candidate’s normal way of working.

1.2 Duty to make a reasonable adjustment

The duty for WJEC to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where assessment arrangements would put a disabled candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate who is not disabled. In such circumstances, WJEC is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

WJEC is not required to make adjustments to the academic or any other standard being applied when conducting an examination/assessment.

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’.

Where a centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, it **must not** charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid.

Centres must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

1.3 Unit/component exemptions

Where a candidate has a disability that prevents them from undertaking an assessment, and no other reasonable adjustment can be identified to facilitate access, an exemption as an Access Arrangement may be considered in line with section 5.17 [within JCQ’s guidance](#). This must be approved by WJEC in advance of the assessment and not requested at the time of the assessment.

A unit or component exemption will not be permitted where this undermines the integrity of the qualification, including where any competence standards would be invalidated if an exemption was made.

Competence Standards (Vocational Qualifications)

A competence standard is defined as an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability. WJEC is allowed to apply competence standards to a disabled person, and it is not always possible to arrange equal access for a candidate whose impairment affects a competence which is being tested.

A wide range of reasonable adjustments will be available, however there are some important exceptions where the competence standards would be invalidated if an adjustment was made. Reasonable adjustments to qualifications that carry a licence to practise need to be carefully considered so as not to invalidate the licence. Centres should review the [JCQ guidance](#) (chapter 2) in the first instance and seek further advice from WJEC where required.

2. Recruiting with integrity

Centres must recruit with integrity. This means centres must ensure learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process must include the centre assessing the support needs of each potential learner. The centre must make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment(s) and achieve the qualification. The centre's assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the qualification(s).

Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all assessments for the selected qualification, the centre must communicate this clearly to the learner and their parent/guardian (where appropriate). A learner may still decide to proceed with a qualification and not be entered for all or some of the assessments.

3. How to apply for access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

WJEC are unable to accept requests from candidates or parents/guardians. All applications must be made by and supported by the centre. The candidate must meet the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with full supporting evidence available.

Private candidates should liaise with the entering centre so that they can apply on the private candidate's behalf.

All applications must be made as early as possible, which can be once the course has begun, and in line with the published deadlines. The deadlines for each series are published in the [Key Dates](#) document on WJEC's website. Applications received after the deadline are not guaranteed to be processed or agreed prior to an assessment.

- Applications are made via the Access Arrangements Online (AAO) platform, which can be accessed on [WJEC's Portal](#), or another JCQ awarding organisations' secure site.

A step-by-step user guide to Access Arrangement Online (AAO) is available on the WJEC Portal home page.

4. The status of an application

AAO will typically provide a single automated response of 'approved' or 'not approved'.

A centre can query the outcome of an access arrangement application by contacting the WJEC Special Requirements Team. If an application is not approved, a centre may refer this to the WJEC Special Requirements Team for further review by selecting 'REFER TO AWARDING BODY'.

5. Modified papers

Centres can submit an order for a modified paper, to help candidates with certain additional needs. Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable.

Orders must be submitted using the JCQ Access Arrangements Online (AAO) web tool accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) via WJEC's secure website. This facility is only available to the centre's primary account holder (usually the Exams Officer).

WJEC aims to despatch modified papers approximately 7-10 days before the published examination date.

Deadlines for submitting orders for modified papers are published in the [Key Dates](#) document on WJEC's website. If a centre fails to meet the deadline then AAO will still accept orders for modified papers, however it is crucial that as soon as a centre is aware that the deadline has been missed that they request a paper as soon as possible. Late orders may not always be accommodated based on proximity to timetabled examination.

5.1 Centre-delegated modified paper arrangements

Centres are encouraged to consider using a PDF copy of the standard question paper which will ensure better print quality and reduce the possibility of human error when collating and stapling. Centres can access the PDF copy of the standard question paper from WJEC's Portal up to 60 minutes before the published start time for the following centre-delegated arrangements:

- photocopying onto coloured paper and/or
- enlarging from A4 to A3

Alternatively, centres may remove question paper packets from the centre's secure storage facility and open these in the secure room up to 90 minutes before the published start time of the examination for the arrangements outlined above.

When printing or photocopying question papers, centres must check local print settings carefully; it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the examination question paper is printed/photocopied to a high standard.

Re-typing a question paper or altering it in any other way is strictly forbidden and constitutes malpractice.

6. Appeals

A centre can formally appeal an access arrangements and reasonable adjustments decision. This must be submitted in writing to WJEC, within 14 calendar days of being notified of the decision by WJEC and in accordance with [JCQ's](#) and [WJEC's Appeals Guidance](#).

7. Further advice

Centres should refer to this policy and the [JCQ guidance](#) in the first instance.

For queries relating to modified papers, centres should refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document on WJEC's website or contact modifiedpapers@wjec.co.uk.

If further support or advice is required regarding access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, centres can contact WJEC's Special Requirements Team either via email to specialrequirements@wjec.co.uk, or by telephone on 02920 265 155.

8. Version control and policy review date

Version Control	Date	Owner	Changes	Next Review
1.0	September 2026	Assistant Director: Policy & Regulation	Creation of Policy document	July 2027