# EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

**Purpose and scope of this policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity to students, staff and parents/carers in relation to the College's provision of exam access arrangements informed and guided by the legislation. The scope of this policy relates specifically to Further Education learners (including Access to Higher Education), Apprentices, and learners enrolled on leisure courses at the college. A separate policy applies to Higher Education, at University Centre Reaseheath.

**Exam Access Arrangements**

Reaseheath College's policy for access arrangements in examinations is determined by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) which dictates the exam access arrangements available and the way these are applied to examinations which are conducted for the Awarding Bodies. Exam access arrangements must reflect your normal way of working. If learners do not make use of their exam access arrangements during assessments and examinations, the College may withdraw the provision of them.

Exam access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, medical conditions, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment. In this way, the Centre acts as an agent of the Awarding Bodies to comply with the duty of the *Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements included here below.

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, unreasonable time frames, or affects the security of the assessment. The College is bound by immovable deadlines for JCQ and the organisation/administration of examinations within the College.

The Examination Access Arrangements (EAA) Team works holistically with all departments in the College to ensure a whole college approach, embracing equality and diversity to provide an equal opportunity for all our learners.

**Examples of specific needs and available access arrangements**

This list is not exhaustive. All exam access arrangements are assessed based on the needs of the individual learner, supporting evidence and what is considered reasonable by the College.

| Examples of specific need | Examples of available access arrangements (not exhaustive as dependent on the specific need) |
|---|---|
| Cognition and learning<br>Communication and interaction<br>Medical condition<br>Sensory impairment<br>Physical impairment<br>Social, mental and emotional | Extra time<br>Reader or computer reader<br>Scribe (writer) or scribe typist/speech to text software<br>Word processor (laptop)<br>Read aloud<br>Supervised rest breaks either inside or supervised outside the room (Up to 5 minutes in every hour or ad hoc based on |

| | medical needs agreed by EAA assessors in advance, but with no break permissible in the first or last 20 minutes in accordance with JCQ regulations) <br> Prompter <br> Coloured overlays <br> Coloured or enlarged examination papers/text <br> Smaller examination rooms or in exceptional circumstances an individual room |
| --- | --- |

Other specific requests for exam access arrangements, such as assistance animals or sensory stimulus items, would require approval from the individual Awarding Body on a case-by-case basis. Requests would be required to meet the JCQ expectations in relation to history of need and provision evidence, as detailed below.

**Exam Access Arrangements Assessment Process**

The College is required to review the exam access arrangements requested by learners when considering whether exam access arrangements continue to be required at College. The Team will review learner requests for exam access arrangements based on the JCQ guidance, the history of need evidence and history of provision evidence provided by the SENCO/SENDCO at their previous educational setting.

**Your Responsibilities**

**Learners will:**

- Provide the EAA team with any relevant information and evidence of their specific need to enable them to make the appropriate recommendations for the learner at enrolment or within the first 6 weeks of the start of the programme of learning. This evidence may include:
  - ➢ Information about exam access arrangements from their school or previous educational provider.
  - ➢ Evidence of the specific need – this will look different for different types of specific need:
    - ▪ Learning difficulties: Learners should ask their school or previous educational provider for their Form 8 and details of their exam access arrangements.
    - ▪ Physical, sensory, mental health or neurodevelopmental impairment: Learners should provide their diagnosis letter/report or evidence from a medical professional or specialist.
    - ▪ EHCP: We will have a copy of the plan; learners should ask their school or previous educational provider for details of their exam access arrangements.

- Inform the EAA team via their course manager if anything changes (e.g. new diagnosis of specific need or deterioration of condition) – this may have an impact on the recommended exam access arrangements.

- Attend exam access arrangement assessment appointments provided and sign the required data protection consent forms. In the event of learners not attending or missing appointments a further assessment will only be arranged in exceptional circumstances (for example, bereavement or medical emergency) as agreed by the Head of Inclusive Learning.

**If learners do not provide the evidence required within the first 6 weeks of their study programme, or if the necessary assessment appointment is missed, it will result in exam access arrangements being declined or not being in place in time for the exams.**

**The responsibilities of the College:**

**The EAA Team will:**

- Comply with the current regulations as set out by JCQ Regulations, *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*, or other Awarding Bodies as required.
- Coordinate the exam access arrangements process within the College (see assessment process below).
- Complete and submit relevant documentation required by JCQ Regulations and appropriate Examination Boards by the set college Internal Deadlines and/or JCQ/Awarding Body External Deadlines in order to allow the Exam Office to prepare for the exams.
- Explain and agree exam access arrangement recommendations with the learner and inform staff via appropriate College systems.
- Comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure protection of learners' personal data.
- Respond to queries regarding exam access arrangements within 10 working days. Queries can be sent to EAA@reaseheath.ac.uk.

**Curriculum staff responsibilities:**

- Your course manager and/or English and Maths tutors (as required) will document your normal way of working (the differentiations in place to support your learning) within the first 6 weeks of your programme of learning.

- Your course manager will arrange an appointment for you to discuss your exam access arrangements with the EAA team within the first 6 weeks of your programme of learning (or during your first block release at the College for apprentices). The appointment may occur after the first 6 weeks but will be booked during your initial assessment.

**Assessment process**

Students are asked to declare their SEND and access arrangements when applying to the College/Reaseheath Training to ensure support is arranged in time for your start date.

At interview, information will be requested about your specific needs, including learning difficulties, medical conditions, wellbeing or disabilities. You will also be asked to confirm if exam access arrangements had been provided at your school or previous education provider.

In the summer term prior to the programme start date, the EAA Team will contact prospective learners who have requested exam access arrangements to provide relevant evidence in support of your request.

- If a learning difficulty is declared, for example dyslexia, you will be asked to provide evidence from your school or previous education provider (see **Your Responsibilities** section); this should be forwarded to the EAA Team at the earliest opportunity or brought to the Learning Skills Centre, located in Centre Point (Main Reception) addressed to the EAA Team. Information can be sent electronically to EAA@reaseheath.ac.uk.

- If a medical condition or disability is declared, appropriate evidence will be requested (see **Your Responsibilities)**; this should be forwarded to the EAA Team at the earliest opportunity or brought to the Learning Skills Centre, located in Centre Point (Main Reception) addressed to the EAA Team. Information can be sent electronically to EAA@reaseheath.ac.uk.
- If you are supported by an EHCP you will be asked to provide evidence from your school or previous education provider confirming the exam access arrangements you had in place.

**Only once the appropriate evidence has been received, can an appointment to assess for exam access arrangements be made.** This assessment can occur before enrolment. The College will endeavour to process the exam access arrangement requests at the earliest opportunity. If the required evidence is not received by the end of the first 6 weeks of your programme of learning, the College will not be able to process your exam access arrangement request in time for your exams, except in extenuating circumstances (for example bereavement or medical emergency).

### Word processor policy

A learner wishing to use a word processor in examinations must demonstrate that they would be at a disadvantage by not using a word processor.

As with other exam access arrangements, a learner must have a recognised specific need under the *Equality Act 2010*. For example:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect in their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Slow or illegible handwriting

The use of a word processor will not be recommended if it involves unreasonable costs, unreasonable time frames or affects the security or integrity of the examination. The use of a word processor should reflect a learner's specific need and be their normal way of working in the centre.

### Assistive technology

The JCQ Regulations allows assistive technology to be used in examinations. For example (not an exhaustive list):

- Computer reader software (if the learner qualifies for a reader)
- Speech recognition technology (if the learner qualifies for a scribe)
- Exam reading pen
- Oral language transmitter

The use of assistive technology tools will not be recommended if it involves unreasonable costs, unreasonable time frames or affects the security or integrity of the examination. The use of assistive technology should reflect a  learner's specific need and be their normal way of working in the centre.

### Separate rooms

A separate room (learner and invigilator in a room entirely separate from other learners) can be recommended by the LSC for students in the following circumstances:

- Learners needing exam access arrangements which would disturb other candidates e.g. read aloud.
- Learners needing an assistance dog or other aid device, which would disturb other candidates.
- Medical condition needing privacy – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- Mental health condition – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- Physical condition – either temporary or permanent needing privacy.

A separate room may also be recommended *'at the discretion of the Assessor'*.

In order to provide a separate room, evidence is required from the learner that a small group provision would put them at a *'substantial disadvantage'* to other candidates.

Evidence can be in the form of:

- History of provision at a previous Examination Centre e.g. school.
- Medical recommendation from a Consultant or Specialist.
- Mental health recommendation from a Consultant or Specialist.
- EHCP recommendation.

A Small Group – in a classroom accommodating up to 20 learners:

- Learners needing exam access arrangements, which would NOT disturb other candidates.
- Learners needing or using strategies, which would NOT disturb other candidates.
- Medical condition NOT needing privacy.
- Mental health condition – *without* supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- Physical condition – either temporary or permanent NOT needing privacy.

In order to provide a small group setting for your exam, the EAA assessors will require evidence that to sit your exam in the main exam room would place you at significant disadvantage to your peers and that this is your normal way of working from your curriculum staff or based on recommendations from the Wellbeing team, mental health or medical specialists.

**Temporary arrangements**

It may happen that a learner has a temporary illness or injury at the time of the examination. In this situation, the learner must supply medical evidence of their condition. The EAA team can use this evidence to put in place temporary arrangements, for example, a learner with a broken arm may require a scribe. Although we shall endeavour to put suitable reasonable adjustments in place, this may not be possible if there is insufficient time or evidence to organise the exam access arrangements prior to the examination. In the event that access arrangements cannot be applied, a learner may consider submitting a Special Consideration form (post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition) at the time of the examination /assessment.

**Retention of evidence**

Colleges are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ Regulations; the College is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the College will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, file note, letters from outside agencies, record of access arrangements used, together with a data protection form signed by the learner. All information and data, whether electronic or paper based, will be stored in accordance with the College's GDPR policy.

| Date of issue | August 2021 |
|---|---|
| Review Date | August 2022 |
| Lead | Assistant Principal Performance and Progress |
| Approved | Executive 2 August 2021 |
| Published | Staff and Student Intranet. College website. |
| Equality Analysis Review | August 2021 |