WOLLASTON SCHOOL

EXAMINATIONS

Parent & Student Guide to Access Arrangements

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What are Access Arrangements?

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 schools, others require prior JCQ/CIC awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Every year, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) produce a document for *Adjustments and Reasonable Adjustments*.

This is available online and contains the rules, regulations and guidance on what a student may, or may not receive when sitting formal examinations. If you would like to read the full version, please go to:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Examples of access arrangements are below, note this is not an exhaustive list.

JCQ-approved arrangements
- Scribe
- Word process *(spell check enabled)*
- Reader *(able to ask invigilator or scribe to read the instructions of the question paper and/or a word/sentence aloud. Work can also be read back to the student.)*
- Coloured paper
- Extra Time *(generally up to 25% extra time for each paper/assessment)*

Centre-approved arrangements (Normal Way of Working)
- Supervised rest breaks
- Separate invigilation *(small venue)*
- Examination reading pen
- Word processor *(spell check disabled)*
- Braille transcript

Access Arrangements are reasonable adjustments that should level the playing field. They are not in place to create an unfair advantage, nor should they disadvantage a young person. Arrangements should be put in place as soon as possible to enable the student to develop their exam techniques and adjust to the change. They must become their normal way of working and not just an arrangement presented to them just before sitting exams.

How are students identified as needing Access Arrangements?

Students are generally identified by teachers, parents or student raising concerns about potential difficulties in exams. Then it is determined what would be the most appropriate arrangement. Some of these arrangements require a **specialist formal assessment** before they can be granted. In all cases, the Additional Needs department will work with the student to understand and document their requirements.

JCQ-approved arrangements

For formal assessments, a specialist assessor is used. They hold a recognised qualification in assessing students for Access Arrangements and produce a report to be kept on file. The assessments are generally carried out in Year 9 to establish access arrangements for Years 10 & 11 (an approval is valid for 2 years). This also ensures that students get plenty practise using these arrangements in class, with practice papers and with mock exams. Year 12 students will be re-assessed for requirements in Sixth Form.

The assessments used will measure at least one of the following to establish what arrangements are required:
- Word reading and reading comprehension
- Writing speed
- Reading speed
- Spelling accuracy
- Cognitive Processing speed

To qualify for any Access Arrangement that requires formal assessment, a student's score must fall well below the average expected for a student of the same chronological age.

Results and subsequent access arrangements that students have qualified for will be communicated to parents and students, through the Additional Needs department.

Students with these access arrangements will be placed in a satellite exam venue (not in the Main Hall).

Centre-approved arrangements

These arrangements are established through the student's 'normal way of working' (how they work in lessons and assessments) and work on a 'use it or lose it' basis. For example, a student wishing to use a reading pen in exams must use a reading pen regularly in class to show that this equipment is supporting them.

Normal way of working is tracked and reported to the Exams Office and Additional Need departments during Years 10 & 11. If a student is not using their access arrangements in class,

subject teachers will be contacted to discuss this with the student and, if required, start to use the arrangements.

Student arrangements used in mock exams will also form part of the analysis for the Exams Office and Additional Needs department. If a student's arrangements are revoked due to non-use in class and mock exams, the Additional Needs department will inform parents in February during Year 11.

If parents and student wish to appeal and request the arrangement is re-instated, they must respond by 15th April to ensure that the access arrangement is in place before the examination period begins in May.

Please note that students will only be placed in a satellite exam venue (not in the Main Hall) if evidence has been provided to the Exams Office of long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs.

Any temporary injury or impairment that will impact a student during the examination period must be advised, in writing, to the school immediately. Evidence will be required if this alters their access arrangements.

Examples of Access Arrangements and their requirements

Access Arrangement	Eligibility	Evidence Required
Extra Time	- A learning condition that means they process information slowly - Medical condition causing them to work slowly	- EHCP or assessment by a qualified teacher - Medical note
Scribe or Word Processor (spell check enabled)	- Writing is slow/difficult - Dyslexic and has difficulty sequencing work	- Assessment by a specialist teacher
Small Venue	- Psychological/medical condition	- Medical note

Do students lose marks if they have an Access Arrangement?

Scribe

In subjects where separate marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) are awarded, the student will not receive any spelling and punctuation marks. They will be awarded marks for grammar – generally a third of the total SPaG marks available.

Students can choose to dictate their answers and indicate punctuation to be eligible for two thirds of the SPaG marks, this must be noted to the Exams Office if they wish to do so.

Full SPaG marks equal 5% of the total marks for the qualification.

Subjects that award separate marks for SPaG are:
- GCSE English/English Language
- GCSE English Literature
- GCSE Geography
- GCSE History
- GCSE Religious Studies

Scribes are not allowed in Modern Foreign Language (MFL) exams or in Functional Skills English Writing papers.

Reader

Students do not lose any marks for having a reader, however readers are not allowed in the following exams:

- GCSE English/English Language
- GCSE Modern Foreign Languages
- English Functional Skills Reading

Extra time is provided to all students in place of a reader in these exams. Alternatively, students can use reading pens for English Language exams.

Use of Word Processors

Word Processors in examinations are laptops, PCs or tablets. An exam login is provided on the day for the student and they will not have access to the internet or graphics packages. Spell check enabled or disabled is defined as per the Access Arrangement.

Word Processors are not allowed in Maths examinations.

Some students may only wish to use a Word Processor in 'long answer exams', such as English, Geography, History etc. (i.e. not Science). This can be accommodated as long as the normal way of working for that student is consistent within the impacted lesson/s.

Students entitled to a Scribe may choose to use a Word Processor instead with spell check enabled. SPaG marks are impacted by these, as detailed above.

Word Processors (spell check disabled) can be agreed for use in exams. There is no impact to SPaG marks. However, they are not provided to students solely on basis of a preferred method of answering papers - there must be evidence in place to support the use of a Word Processor in exams.

Spell check is allowed in most controlled assessments – please see the subject teacher for queries.

If a student has been granted Extra Time as an access arrangement to support slow writing speed, the use of a word processor may mean they are no longer entitled to this extra time.

Please see Wollaston School's Word Processor Policy (exams) for full details, available on the school website.

Extra Time

Whilst 25% is the maximum amount of extra time awarded by JCQ, Wollaston School will assess the amount of time required on an individual student basis.

What can I do as a parent?

- Discuss access arrangements with your child to ensure that you decide on the best form of support for them.

- Consider the implications of Access Arrangements and the long term aim of promoting independence.

- Communicate with the Additional Needs department to discuss the options

- Ensure that you respond promptly to any correspondence sent home about Access Arrangements.

- Check with your child that they are using their Access Arrangement in class and that they are aware of the implications and benefits in exams.

- If your child is entitled to a Reader, check if this is the best option for them. They will need to ask either the invigilator or their scribe (if they have one) to read the

word/sentence aloud. Would they be better with a reading pen, allowing them to hear the word as many times as they like and without having to rely on another person to respond to their request?

What can I do as a student?

- Discuss your preferred arrangements with your subject teacher/s, the Additional Needs department and your parents. It must be something that works for you and you must use the arrangement in class to become familiar with the new way of working.

- If you have any concerns about your access arrangement, speak to your teacher and/or the Exams Office as soon as possible.

- Remember that access arrangements work on a 'use it or lose it' basis. You will not be entitled to a Word Processor in exams if you do not use it regularly in class.

- Know what your arrangement entitles you to and how this will work in exams. Ask the Exams Office if you are unsure.

- If you are using a Word Processor, you must create a header on each page. This must include:

  o Your name
  o Centre Number – 27172
  o Candidate Number
  o Paper name/code
  o Page number

- Typed pages from a Word Processor will be printed out by the invigilator at the end of the exam. Ensure you check that this is your work and all pages have been printed.

Appendices

A memory aid for a scribe

I am here to write/type for you in your examination

I must write/type exactly what you say

I can draw maps, graphs and diagrams, but I can only draw exactly what you tell me
I can't draw for you in a Design examination

I can change what I have written/typed, but only if you ask me

If we have problems communicating, I must tell the invigilator

I can't give you any help with answers
I can't suggest when an answer is finished

I can't tell you which questions to choose
I can't tell you when to move onto the next question
I can't tell you which questions to do first

If you are allowed rest breaks, I can't write/type in those breaks

I can read back what I have written/typed, but only if you ask me

A memory aid for a reader

I am here to read for you in your examination
You must make clear what you want to be read

I can only read the instructions and the questions

I can repeat instructions, but only if you make it clear which
instructions you want me to read

I can't tell you which questions to choose
I can't tell you when to move on to the next question
I can't tell you which questions to do first

I can spell words if you ask me, but only words on the question paper

I can read back your answer, but only if you ask me

GCSE English Language examinations:

I can read the questions in the Writing section of this paper, but I can't
read any of the questions in the Reading section