



CAMPBELL
COLLEGE

EST 1894

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

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THIS POLICY IS WRITTEN IN LINE WITH THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR QUALIFICATION (JCQ) GUIDANCE.

The JCQ is a membership organisation comprising the seven largest providers of qualifications in the UK. The JCQ provides a single voice on issues of examination administration and, when appropriate, qualification and wider education policy. These regulations for schools can be accessed on the JCQ website.

What are Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified.

Access Arrangements allow candidates with **special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries** to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

These include:

- **Extra time:** students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% (or more in exceptional circumstances) depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher.
- **A reader:** a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of the 'Reading Section' of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would write the answers themselves but can ask for them to be read back to them.
- **A scribe:** a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers, or may type on a computer themselves with the spell and grammar check on.
- **Word processor:** for exceptional reasons, a student may be given access to a computer for an exam so they can word process their answers (without the spell and grammar check facility). This **cannot** be because a student types faster than they write or because they prefer it, but must be to account for significant disadvantage. See appendix A.
- **Rest breaks:** where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

What evidence is needed to apply for Access Arrangements?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that are needed to apply for Access Arrangements to Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)¹:

Firstly, and most importantly, a report from the school's Specialist Assessor (Mrs Sheppard) which notes

- Evidence of persistent and significant difficulties, which would usually have been identified in Primary school and during Key Stage 3
- Evidence from teachers that this difficulty impacts on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Evidence that the access arrangement is the student's normal way of working in school i.e. that they always need more time to complete work, or that they always need a scribe to complete written work

And

for Learning Difficulties:

Significant difficulties must be identified through Educational Assessments such as those of reading speed, processing speed, working memory, reading comprehension or writing. JCQ¹ states that '*significant difficulties*' are those with a Standardised Score of below 85 (the bottom 14% of the population). Two scores with a Standardised Score of below 85 in two areas of speed of working are needed as evidence of the need for extra time in examinations.

These Educational tests must be conducted by Mrs Sheppard as the College's Specialist Assessor.

It should be noted that it is not necessary to have a diagnosis, nor does a diagnosis guarantee Access Arrangements.

for long term Medical issues (and this includes ADHD/ADD and ASD),

the SENCo's detailed information, as above, will be supported by confirmation of the candidate's disability:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or
- 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 disability.

¹ 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' Joint Council for Qualifications (updated annually)

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

A growing number of parents are having their children assessed by private Educational Psychologists and submitting the reports to Learning Support as evidence that their child should be awarded Access Arrangements.

Often private educational psychologists recommend that children should receive Access Arrangements which can be in conflict with what the school feels are appropriate. The school can not accept the recommendations of a Private Educational Psychologist report, but will instead follow the recommendations made by the schools Specialist Assessor as required by JCQ regulations.

JCQ regulations state that ‘a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award Access Arrangements and cannot be used to process and application’

Private reports can be helpful in the case of concerns that cannot be identified by school testing, or if a diagnosis is required. If this is the case, Mrs Sheppard will speak to the Psychologist before the consultation in order to complete the report on the student's background, provide the evidence from teachers and the student's normal way of working in school.

How would students be identified for Exam Access Arrangements?

Information from Primary schools

Reports and IEPs from Primary school are very useful to give evidence of the persistent nature of the difficulty however it should be noted that even if a student received Access Arrangements for the Transfer test, this does not guarantee that they will receive it at GCSE or A level because their needs may have changed. For example, a student who had Extra Time in the Transfer test may not qualify for Extra Time at GCSE because their speed of working has improved to the extent it does not meet JCQ criteria.

Baseline testing completed in KS2

All students in Year 8 are tested at the start of the year and again in Year 9 and 10. We use computerised Cognitive Ability Tests to baseline general ability, and Progress Test in English/ Progress Test in Maths to look at attainment in these two core pillars of education. These tests are primarily to look at progress though school but can also help identify learning difficulties. Learning Support will use this information to put appropriate interventions into place.

Evidence of need gathered during internal examinations and assessments

JCQ states that:

“if a candidate can complete a paper in the normal length of time, and never uses the extra time which has been made available, then it is not an effective time management. It would not be appropriate to process an application for extra time.”

Close attention is paid to the use of Extra Time during internal examinations in Years 8 -10, and to comply with JCQ regulations we can not process applications where there has been no need for it in past exams.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the Tutor to ask for advice if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the Tutor will investigate their concerns by sending a “round robin” to the child’s teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student.

Teacher Referral

Teachers can refer a student to Learning Support where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a student in their class. All of the student’s current teachers will be asked to give feedback to gain information, and following this a decision will be made as to whether to test a student.

Individual Educational Tests conducted at staff or parental request

Once the decision to test has been made, the student will attend Learning Support to meet with the Specialist Assessor. They usually complete a self-evaluation form and the appropriate Psychometric tests are selected.

If the nature of the difficulty is proven ‘*significant*’ and meets the strict criteria, **and** if the Specialist Assessor can confirm the persistent nature of the problem, the student’s normal way of working using evidence from teachers, then an application to JCQ can be made. The student must sign a Data Protection Notice to give consent for some of their personal data to be shared with JCQ and the Exam awarding bodies.

How do staff and students know whether Exam Access Arrangements have been approved?

- Students who are approved for Access Arrangements are identified to teachers via SIMS, and their name appears on an ‘Access List’ on the school network. The information is kept confidentially in line with school policy, are shared on a ‘need to know’ basis.
- Students who are approved for Access Arrangements will either be informed at the time, or through Firefly.

• What support is given to students with Access Arrangements?

Students with Access Arrangements are encouraged to use their Access Arrangements during internal assessments and exams so that they gain practice at using them effectively.

Students who have access to a Reader or Scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and can’t do with the Reader/Scribe during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give.

All teachers can see the list of students with Access Arrangements, and they are asked to give Learning Support notice before they do tests or Controlled Assessments so that support can be provided. Students who have a Reader can be supported by the teacher supervising the test or may have individual support if necessary. Learning Support can provide a separate room, Reader, access to ICT and a Scribe with the required amount of notice.

Students with Access Arrangements are monitored regularly through the use of data from Progress Reports, Trackers and exam results, and twice yearly IEP review where appropriate.

AVAILABILITY OF POLICY

This policy is published on the College website (and the Firefly Parent App); however, a hard-copy can be collected from the College by request.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy is reviewed every two years; however, when necessary the College may update the policy when it deems it necessary. The latest version may be obtained by contacting the College.

Appendix A – Use of word processor

GCSE and Alevel examinations are designed to be handwritten. In order not to provide a candidate with an advantage over others, word processors cannot be granted to a candidate because

- ❖ he prefers to type
- ❖ he can work faster on a keyboard
- ❖ he uses a laptop at home

The use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in school and the arrangement must be given in order to remove significant disadvantage and create a level playing field with those who are handwriting the exam.