

Oriel High School : Access Arrangements Policy

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What are Exam Access Arrangements?

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands 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'.

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 centres; others require prior JCQ 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'.

Oriel High School Policy for Access Arrangements is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' – with effect from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025. The JCQ regulations are updated annually to reflect the ever-changing landscape of need.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the candidate/learner.

Duty to make a reasonable adjustment

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

Definition of disability: Section 6 of the Equality Act 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'.

Definition of special educational needs A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the Education Act 1996 if he/she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Access arrangements may include:

1. Supervised rest breaks
2. Extra time of up to 25%
3. Extra time of up to 50%
4. Extra time of over 50%
5. Computer reader
6. Human Reader
7. Reader Pen
8. Scribe/Voice Activated software
9. Word processor
10. Transcript
11. Prompter
12. Oral Language Modifier
13. Sign Language Interpreter
14. Practical Assistant
15. Other arrangements for candidates : amplification equipment; Brailers; Access to mobile phone for medical purposes; colour naming by the invigilator for candidates who are Colour Blind; Coloured overlays; low vision aid/magnifier; optical character reader scanners; separate invigilation with the centre.

In line with JCQ regulations, Oriol High School will make all decisions with regard to access arrangements based upon whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect, in conjunction with the access arrangement being the candidate's normal way of working at Oriol High School – demonstrating the involvement of the teaching staff in determining the need for the access arrangement. Cognitive and attainments testing data will also be used to support the profile of need.

Appropriate evidence of need will be available at Oriol High School for inspection.

Identifying the need for access arrangements within Oriel High School

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements during KS4 and 5 are identified early in KS3 (Y7). At this stage needs are identified, rather than formally assessed. Adjustments to Quality First Teaching within lessons are then made according to need, to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments.

Assessment:

- For those students potentially requiring access arrangements, a formal in school assessment and an application to JCQ is carried out from the end of year 9 and through to year 10 PPEs. Assessments may also be carried out at other points, where in exceptional circumstances such as when a student is new to Oriel High School. When granted, access arrangements are valid for 26 months. After 26 months, where appropriate, the access arrangements can be renewed.
- Any student with scores which indicate a substantial impairment will be considered for access arrangements. The most recent test data in school (which cannot be completed before Year 9) is binding and determines any subsequent Access arrangements.
- Any test data from external providers cannot be used to apply for access arrangements, these can only be used as recommendations.
- Specialist assessments for access arrangements will be carried out at Oriel High School by an appropriately qualified assessor.
- Parents may request an independent assessment. However, Oriel High School can only accept this if it is supported by evidence from teaching staff and accompanied by the assessor's qualification certificate.
- At Oriel High School examination officers, specialist assessors, SENDCo and teaching staff all work together to ensure that appropriate access arrangements are put in place for all tests and examinations.
- If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed. Students will be asked to sign a waiver formally rescinding their access entitlement.
- If the SENDCo and/or specialist assessor considers that access arrangements cease to be the student's 'normal way of working', they reserve the right to withdraw the permission, providing written confirmation to parents/careers.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has access arrangements?

When a need for Access Arrangements has been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Parents in writing – the letter outlines the type of arrangements that have been awarded.
- Students are informed verbally and their pupil passports where appropriate are updated.

- A list of those who receive Access Arrangements is made available to all staff to support 'normal way of working'.
- The Exam Access Arrangements list is shared with the Exams Officer to allow them to begin mapping the logistics for the exam periods.