D'OVERBROECK'S OXFORD
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

Last reviewed:	September 2024
Next review due:	September 2025
Reviewed by:	Director of Teaching and Learning Examinations Officer

Access Arrangements in exams are largely controlled by the Joint Council for Qualifications who publish yearly updates.

The school is required to have a thorough knowledge of the most recent Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) document and for key members of staff to have completed the yearly update training.

The JCQ AARA document for 2024 states:
"A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations."

The school applies the policies, procedures and regulations set out in the AARA to our school context in the sections below:

1. **Students in KS3 and KS4**

1.1 **Students who join the school having had a cognitive assessment with an Educational Psychologist or a Specialist Assessor, who has made recommendations for access arrangements**

   As part of any cognitive assessment, the assessor or psychologist will make recommendations for potential access arrangements. The current AARA document states that although a specialist, eg, a medical consultant, educational psychologist or SpLD assessor may recommend specific access arrangements, it is the SENDCo who must determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations. This will be based on the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments and comments and observations from teaching staff. Some arrangements may be necessary when they are younger and become less helpful as they mature; this is often the case with arrangements such as scribes and readers. We revisit access arrangements prior to test periods to check whether the arrangements continue to be appropriate.

- **Students with cognition and learning difficulties need to have an access arrangements assessment no earlier than Year 9**

  It is this assessment that provides the standardised scores needed for the school to make an application to the exam boards for access arrangements such as extra time, reader, computer reader, scribe and typing with the spell check 'on'. Although historical assessments can be used as evidence that there is a history of difficulties for the students, these older scores cannot be used in the access arrangements application for GCSE.

- **All access arrangements assessments must be commissioned by the school**

  We use assessors that have an established relationship with the school. This means we have a copy of their certificates or registration numbers and approved their qualifications. They might be employed by the school already, or work in another Nord Anglia school. There is no charge for these assessments, but it is important to note that we do not provide a written diagnostic report to parents.

  Because the JCQ updates their regulations every year, it is sometimes possible for a student that has been eligible for an arrangement in their younger years to be ineligible by the time they reach GCSE. Therefore, we aim to establish a normal way of working and apply through JCQ before the end of Year 10 at the latest to apply under the current and existing regulations.

1.2 **Students who join the school with a long-term or life-long diagnosed medical condition, including diagnoses of ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

It is likely that part of the diagnostic assessment for conditions such as ADHD and ASD resulted in some recommendations for access arrangements. These are suggestions and the expectation is that the student's school will work with them to explore these options to find the student's preferred and usual way of working. Some arrangements may be necessary when they are younger and become less helpful as they mature; this is often the case with arrangements such as scribes, readers and prompts. We revisit access arrangements prior to the November and Summer test periods to check whether the arrangements continue to be appropriate and invite teachers to comment on what has worked well for individuals and what might not be working so well for them.

It is through this review and discussion process that students begin to learn how they best work in different subjects, and this is essential for them to advocate for their 'normal way of working' in preparation for their GCSE exams.

- Students with life-long medical conditions do not need an updated assessment for us to apply for access arrangements. They do not need confirmation of their diagnosis. This includes ADHD and ASD.
- Students with long-term or life-long conditions that are changeable and could get better or worse may need an updated assessment or medical review for us to get advice about suitable and appropriate arrangements. This includes conditions like eating disorders, anxiety disorders and epilepsy, diabetes and migraines.

The JCQ have recently issued some rules around medical conditions and the awarding of extra time in exams. There is an expectation that Rest Breaks have been 'exhausted' as a suitable option before awarding extra time and schools are expected to be able to evidence that this has happened.

They have also recently issued some rules around the specialist evidence that can be accepted. For an extra time application, scribe and/or reader the evidence must be from a consultant or clinician and not from a GP. The school will need to see copies of this professional medical evidence.

1.3 **Students who are identified as requiring access arrangements during their time at our school**

Many of these students are identified through school-led screening processes. The SEND staff work closely with the teachers to refer students who might have underlying difficulties that make them eligible for access arrangements. Teachers can refer students that they feel should be assessed for arrangements such as 25% extra time or use of a Word Processor and Form Tutors or Director of Studies are able to refer students that they feel should be considered for alternative room invigilation.

We screen students in Year 7 and 9 using GL Exact which gives us a measure of literacy skills including reading and writing speed and spelling accuracy. We also use tests of non-verbal reasoning and maths fluency to highlight students who may have an underlying cognitive difficulty. There is no charge for these services.

Where students seek a diagnostic assessment for a specific learning difficulty such as Dyslexia or a life-long medical condition such as ADHD, these reports can be used as evidence for access arrangements applications as described above.

Full diagnostic assessments are not provided by the school, and these would need to be commissioned and funded by parents. The SEND Team provides information to clinicians/psychologists carrying out these kinds of assessments and can advise parents on the correct process should you intend to use it to support access arrangements. Please remember that the SEND Team require 10 working days during term-time (2 weeks) notice to collate information to share with clinicians / psychologists and to complete questionnaires for diagnostic assessments.

Some students will develop medical conditions during their time with us. We ask that parents make medical conditions known to Form Tutors as soon as possible so that they can consult with the SEND Team regarding potential access arrangements. Reports should be shared with the school so that access arrangements can be fully considered.

2. **Students in KS5**

2.1 **Students who join us from UK schools with established access arrangements from GCSE**

Where students provide the correct paperwork from their previous school, d'Overbroeck's will automatically roll forward existing arrangements and no further assessments will be required.

Exceptions to this rule are:

- if the JCQ have changed the criteria for eligibility for specific arrangements;

- if the student cannot provide suitable paperwork from their previous school, or where the previous school has not applied for the arrangements correctly;

- if the arrangements were for an illness or injury from which the student has now fully or partially recovered;

In these exceptions, the SEND Team will advise individuals accordingly.

2.2 **Students who join us from international schools and have a diagnosis of a learning difficulty or a medical condition including ADHD or Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Students joining from other education systems will not necessarily have paperwork in place that meets JCQ regulations. Therefore, we ask that these students identify themselves as soon as possible in Year 12 and meet with the SEND Team. The SEND Team will establish whether there is a history of need and what access arrangements are required and devise a plan to secure the necessary documentation to apply to the exam boards. Any diagnostic reports will need to be shared with school and in the first instance be translated into English if necessary.

As part of any cognitive assessment, the assessor or psychologist will make recommendations for potential access arrangements. The current AARA document states that although a specialist, eg, a medical consultant, educational psychologist or SpLD assessor may recommend specific access arrangements, it is the SENDCo who must determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations. This will be based on the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments and comments and observations from teaching staff. Some arrangements may be necessary when they are younger and become less helpful as they mature; this is often the case with arrangements such as scribes and readers. We revisit access arrangements prior to test periods to check whether the arrangements continue to be appropriate.

2.3 **Students who are identified as requiring access arrangements during their time at the school**

There is an expectation that most students with underlying needs will have been identified during their childhood and earlier adolescence. However, some students do not experience substantial difficulties until they begin A-Level study.

Many of these students are identified through school-led screening processes. The SEND staff work closely with the teachers to refer students who might have underlying difficulties that make them eligible for access arrangements. Directors of Studies can refer students that they feel should be assessed for arrangements such as 25% extra time, use of a word processor, or smaller room invigilation.

- **All access arrangements assessments must be commissioned by the school**

  We use assessors that have an established relationship with the school. This means we have a copy of their certificates or registration numbers and approved their qualifications. They might be employed by the school already, or work in another Nord Anglia school. There is no charge for these assessments, but it is important to note that we do not provide a written diagnostic report to parents.

Where students seek a diagnostic assessment for a specific learning difficulty such as Dyslexia or a life-long condition such as ADHD, these reports can be used as evidence for access arrangements applications but are not always required for some types of access arrangement provision to be made.

Full diagnostic assessments are not provided by the school, and these would need to be commissioned and funded by parents. The SEND Team can provide information to clinicians/psychologists carrying out these kinds of assessments and can advise parents on the correct process should you intend to use it to support access arrangements applications. Please remember that the SEND Team require 10 working days' notice during term-time to collate information to share with clinicians / psychologists and to complete questionnaires for diagnostic assessments and reports etc.

Some students will develop medical conditions during their time with us. We ask that parents make medical conditions known to Directors of Studies as soon as possible so that they can consult with the SEND Team regarding potential access arrangements and JCQ applications can be submitted before the end of Year 12.

3. Eligibility criteria for specific access arrangements

3.1 **Extra time**

Eligibility criteria for 25% extra time and 26%-50% extra time are set out by the JCQ. The school must comply with these regulations and follow their processes. Extra time must be applied for before the published deadline for each exam year.

Further information can be found here:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/

3.2 **Scribe and Reader / Computer Reader**

Eligibility criteria for using a Scribe (including having spell-check 'on') and for using a Reader or Computer Reader are set out by the JCQ. The school must comply with these regulations and follow their processes. These arrangements must be applied for before the published deadline for each exam year.

Further information can be found here:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/

3.3 **Word processor**

The school is required to have a word processor policy. This can be found below in **Appendix 1**.

3.4 **Rest breaks**

The school has a policy for rest breaks. This can be found below in **Appendix 2**.

3.5 **Separate invigilation or small room invigilation**

The school has a policy for alternative room arrangements. This can be found below in **Appendix 3**.

3.6 **Other arrangements**

As some arrangements are reflective of 'normal way of working' they might be specific to individuals. Therefore, the JCQ has a category for 'other' access arrangements. The majority of these arrangements, but not all, must be applied for on Access Arrangements Online prior to the published deadline.

Examples of arrangements that must be applied for: headphones playing white noise, use of own keyboard.

Examples of arrangements that do not need to be applied for: prompt, ear defenders.

Further information can be found here:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/

WORD PROCESSING IN EXAMS POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy on the use of word processors in examinations and assessments is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated JCQ regulations and guidance contained in the publications Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and Instructions for Conducting Examinations.

References to 'AA' relate to JCQ *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2022-23* and 'ICE' to JCQ *Instructions for conducting examinations 2023-24.*

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy details how the centre manages and administers the use of word processors (including laptops and tablets) in examinations and assessments.

3. Principles for using a word processor

d'Overbroeck's complies with AA chapter 4 *(Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties)* and regulations and guidance as follows:

(AA 4.2.1)
- Candidates with access to word processors are allowed this access in order to remove barriers which place them at a **substantial disadvantage** as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

- The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, at the same time as providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

(AA 4.2.2)
- The use of a word processor is not granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.3)
- Candidates may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of our candidates, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

(AA 4.2.4)
- The use of a word processor is considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course.

- Candidates are made aware that they will have the use of a word processor for examinations and non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments/coursework).

(AA 4.2.5)

- The use of a word processor for candidates at a **substantial disadvantage** is only granted if it reflects the support given to the candidate as their 'normal way of working', which is defined as support:

  - o   in the classroom; or

  - o   working in small groups for reading and/or writing; or

  - o   literacy support lessons; or

  - o   literacy intervention strategies; and/or

  - o   in internal school tests and mock examinations.

The only exception to this is where an arrangement may need to be put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment at the time of an exam or assessment.

4. Centre specific processes

A word processor will be granted to a candidate for examinations when:

- a candidate has a report from an educational psychologist that recommends they use a word processor in examinations;

- a candidate has been identified as being eligible for a word processor during school-led screening processes for access arrangements, and this has been approved by the Head of Learning Support (SENDCo);

- a candidate joins the Sixth Form with the evidence from their previous school's SENDCo stating that they were entitled to the use of a word processor for examinations;
- a candidate holds medical evidence of a physical disability or medical condition supporting the use of a word processor.

It is not enough that a student can type faster than they can write. The student must be at a **substantial disadvantage**. Their writing must be particularly slow or very difficult to read.

When no recommendation from an educational psychologist exists, and where a student has not been identified by our school-led screening processes but where a teacher has a concern, it is required that:

- the relevant Director of Studies or Form Tutor makes a request to the SEND department.
- the relevant teachers complete a form with evidence and testimony from the relevant teacher(s) detailing how the student is **significantly disadvantaged** through slow or illegible handwriting or has organisational difficulties that inhibit composition.
- where the student finds it very difficult to plan and organise written work when writing by hand. This is clearly evidenced via internal processes and is the student's normal way of working.

The SEND department will evaluate the candidate's case using this policy to assess eligibility and conducting necessary assessments to evidence difficulty. If approved, the SEND department will inform the Examinations Officer. Ideally this will be done at least six weeks before the first mock examinations and/or by Christmas of the examination year.

The SEND Team share the exam-related procedures surrounding the use of word processors in exams before the first examination is taken.

5. The use of a word processor

d'Overbroeck's complies with AA chapter 5 *Access arrangements available* as follows:

(AA 5.8.1)
- Provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off).

- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate with substantial difficulties where it is their normal way of working (see 4.2.5 above) within the centre.

- Only grants the use of a word processor to a candidate with substantial difficulties if it is appropriate to their needs (for example, the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when writing by hand).

(AA 5.8.2)
- Provides access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessments (including controlled assessments or coursework) components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification.

(AA 5.8.3)
- Allows candidates to use a word processor in an examination to type certain questions, i.e. those requiring extended writing, and hand-write shorter answers.

- Are also aware that examinations which have a significant amount of writing, as well as those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thought and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. Examinations which require more simplistic answers are often easier to handwrite within the answer booklet. The candidate avoids the difficulty of visually tracking between the question paper and screen.

6. Word processors and their programmes

d'Overbroeck's complies with ICE 14.25 *Word processors* instructions by ensuring:

- word processors are used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable;
- word processors have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used;
- an unauthorised memory stick is not permitted for use by a candidate;
- where required, candidates are provided with a memory stick, which has been cleared of any previously stored data, by a nominated member of centre staff;
- word processors are in good working order at the time of the examination;

- word processors are accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen;
- where a candidate using a word processor is accommodated separately, a separate invigilator is used;
- word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium;
- documents are printed after the examination is over;
- candidates are present to verify that the work printed is their own;
- word processed scripts are inserted in any answer booklet which contains some of the answers;
- word processors are used to produce scripts under secure conditions, and if they are not then the centre is aware that they may be refused by the awarding body;
- word processors are not used to perform skills which are being assessed;
- word processors are not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication;
- candidates are not given access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets, etc, when using a word processor;
- graphic packages or computer aided design software is not included on a word processor unless permission has been given to use these;
- predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check is disabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology (the script must have a completed scribe cover sheet included), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking;
- voice recognition technology is not included on word processors unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software;
- word processors are not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe.

7. **Laptops as word processors**

d'Overbroeck's further complies with ICE 14.20 -14.25 instructions by ensuring:

- the IT staff will ensure sufficient word processors are available for the examinations;
- laptops used during examinations/assessments are designed to run for a long period of time once fully charged and are 'free-standing';
- the battery capacity of all laptops is checked before the candidate's examination(s) with the battery sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the examination;
- candidates are reminded that their centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code must appear on each page as a header or footer;
- candidates using Notepad or Wordpad software (which do not allow for the insertion of a header or footer) are instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer once they have finished

the examination and printed off their typed script; candidates are also supervised to ensure that they are solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way;

- candidates are instructed to appropriately number each page;
- candidates are instructed to use a minimum 12pt font and double spacing;
- invigilators remind candidates to save their work at regular intervals;
- where it is possible 'autosave' is set up on each laptop/tablet;
- candidates are present at the end of the examination when their script is printed off so they can verify that the work printed is their own.

8. Accommodating word processors in examinations

Candidates using word processors (including laptops or tablets) are internally accommodated in the library or smaller room.

Invigilation arrangements relating to the use of word processors meet JCQ regulations and recommendations.

9. Invigilators

Invigilators will be instructed prior to the exams as to the relevant JCQ regulations and the school requirements for supervising examinations for students using a word processor, including:

- seating arrangements;
- layout of candidate information on each typed page;
- use of answer booklets/question papers with word processors;
- printing procedures;
- word processor cover sheets;
- collation of printed sheets and question/answer papers.

10. After examinations

The Examinations Officer will check that:

- each word processor cover sheet is present to make sure the correct typed pages are attached to the correct candidate's question/answer paper;
- the correct number of typed pages have been included with the question paper/answer booklet before securely sending the work to the exam board as required.

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REST BREAKS POLICY

1. **General principles**

   - For long-term conditions, rest breaks are considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course.
     The exception to this principle is when a student's needs change during their course. Examples could be the escalation of a condition such as panic disorder or a physical impairment such as hypermobility or visual fatigue. It could also be because of a development/diagnosis of a new medical condition such as Diabetes. migraines or Epilepsy.

   - Candidates are made aware that they will be permitted to take rest breaks during examinations and non-examination assessments.

   - Candidates will be involved in discussions and decisions about the purpose and particular use of their Rest Breaks, based on their individual circumstances.

   - Rest breaks must be a break from the exam. Best practice is for the student to leave the exam. room. Students can remain in the room but must not engage with exam material or they must take the rest breaks in the corridor under supervised conditions. They may also wish to go to the bathroom whilst the invigilator remains outside. Students are not permitted to take rest breaks outside of the school building and they must remain inside the school building at all times whilst the exam is taking place.

2. **Centre specific eligibility criteria**

Rest breaks can be considered for a candidate with persistent and significant difficulties in examinations when:

   - a candidate has a report from an Educational Psychologist that recommends they are given breaks;

   - a candidate has a medical diagnosis that evidences an impairment;

   - a candidate joins the school in KS4 or KS5 with the File Note from their previous school's SENDCo stating that they were entitled to Rest Breaks in examinations;

   - a candidate has been identified as being eligible for Rest Breaks following school-led identification processes, and this has been consulted on and approved by relevant professionals such as the School Nurse and/or Pastoral Leadership and/or SENDCo and/or Learning Development Lead.

   - Use of rest breaks will be discussed and agreed with the SEND Team in advance. A candidate can use rest breaks at any point during the exam; the exception being the last 20 minutes as we feel this causes disruption to the candidate's thinking process. Students may take up to 5 minutes every half hour.

- If a student has multiple exams in one day, there may be a need for longer rest breaks. This will be discussed and agreed with the SEND Team in advance.

- We recognise that for some students with a particularly higher level of needs, there may need to be exceptional circumstances and therefore, longer rest breaks may be required. To consider this, there would need to be a discussion between the candidate and the SEND Team.

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ALTERNATIVE ROOMING ARRANGEMENT POLICY

1. Principles for small room or separate invigilation

For longer term conditions, alternative rooming eg, smaller or individual room invigilation are considered and agreed where appropriate at the start of the course.

The exception to this principle is when a student's needs change during their course. Examples could be the escalation of a condition such as anxiety or sensory overwhelm/sensory distractibility.

It could also be because of a development/diagnosis of a medical condition that needs to be managed on the school site and cannot be successfully managed at our off-site examination venue.

2. Centre specific eligibility criteria

2.1   **Alternative rooming – individual room**

- a candidate has arrangements that would distract other students in the room (eg, Read Aloud, Scribe etc);

- a candidate has a medical condition that would distract others in the room, such as high likelihood of a seizure, fainting or vomiting;

- a candidate has a recommendation from a medical professional that their needs cannot be met in the usual exam environment, including a small room invigilation;

- the request is approved by a multi-professional panel in school which could include the school nurse, SENDCo, Pastoral Director, Deputy Head Pastoral, school counsellor.

2.2   **Alternative rooming – small room**

- a candidate has a recommendation from a medical professional that their needs cannot be met in the usual exam environment of an exam hall;

- the request is approved by a multi-professional panel in school which could include the school nurse, SENDCo, Pastoral Director, Deputy Head Pastoral, school counsellor.

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