Equalities Policy (Exams) 2026/27

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Version	Date	Revisions
1.0	September 2023	
2.0	March 2024	Placed on standardised proforma
3.0	November 2024	
4.0	September 2025	Updated to promote independence and to consider assistive technology as a first option before recommending human support.
5.0	August 2026	

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

Contents

1. Key staff involved in the access arrangements process 3
2. Purpose of the policy 5
3. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability 5
4. Identifying the need for access arrangements 6
4.1. Roles and responsibilities 6
4.2. Use of word processors 9
5. Requesting access arrangements 9
5.1 Roles and responsibilities 9
6. Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams 10
6.1 Roles and responsibilities 10
7. Internal assessments 11
8. Internal exams 11
9. Facilitating access – examples 12
10. Equality and Diversity 15
11. Related Policies and Procedures 15
12. Location and Access to this Policy 15
13. Equality Impact Assessment 16

1. Key staff involved in the access arrangements process

Role	Name(s)	
Assistant Principal SEND Learning and Support	Andrew Hulme	
Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) SENDCo for JCQ purposes	Tracey Melling	
Head of Centre	Jeremy Harrison: Delegated authority to Karen Cain	
Level 7 Tutor/ Assessors	L7 assessor L7 assessor L7 assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor L7 Assessor (no longer at the college) L7 Assessor (no longer at the college)	Pam Merrick Alex Glynn Julie Probin Billy Wood Amy Gregg Donna Marsh Rachel Wilson Stacey Stone Ben Holden Alison Mollon Lorna Murie Alexandra Owen Vacancy Vacancy Teresa McGeough Caroline Ritson

Neurodiversity Specialist SEND SSPs EAAs for HNLs only.	Specialist SSP Dyslexia/SpLD (no longer ta the college)	Deborah Lord
	Specialist SSP Accessibility/SpLD	Lexi Brylak
	Specialist SSP Accessibility/SpLD	Afia Gyamfi
	Specialist SSP Accessibility/SpLD	Grant Hurst
	Specialist SSP Accessibility/SpLD	Abby Watts
	Assistive Technologist	Sue Bleasdale
	Assistive Technologist	Allison Redlich
Examination officers (allocating)	<u>Exams Function:</u>	
	Exams Business Relationship Team Leader	Ethan Robinson
	Exams Business Relationship Officer	Hasan Udin
	Exams Business Relationship Officer	Joanne Billings
	Exams Business Relationship Officer	Peter Crowe
	Exams Business Relationship Officer	Lisa Clarke
	Exams Business Relationship Officer	Lisa Harrop
	<u>EAA applications:</u>	
	Exams Administrator Team Leader	Steven Cullen
	Exams Administrator	Courtney Motorshead
	Exams Administrator	Phoebe Kerr
	Exams Administrator	Said Omar
	Exams Administrator	Charley Hemingbrough
	Exams Administrator	Hazal Tuglaci

2. Purpose of the policy

This document is provided as an exams-specific supplement to the *centre-wide accessibility policy/plan* which details how the centre

> *"Recognise its duties towards disabled candidates as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates…or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect"*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR.

This policy details how the centre facilitates access to exams and assessments for disabled candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, by outlining staff roles and responsibilities in relation to

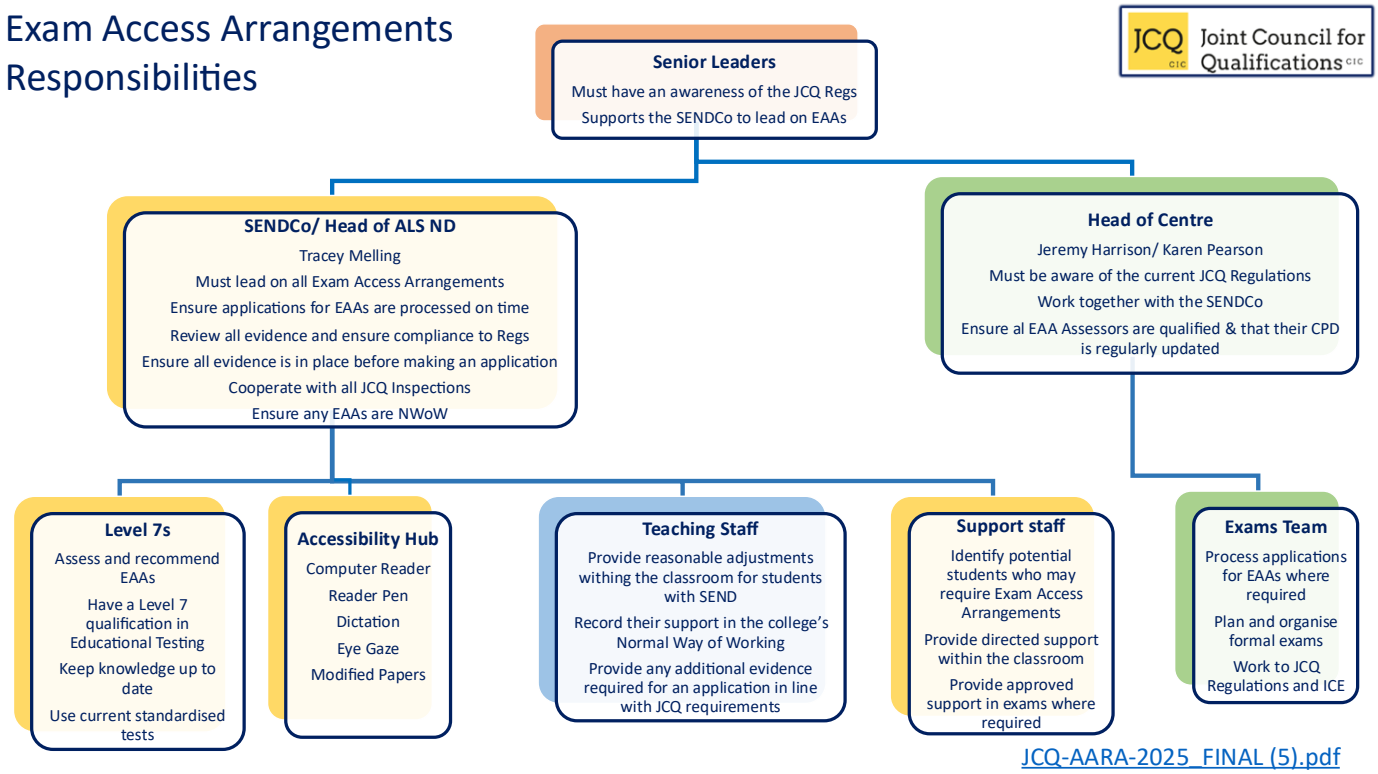
- identifying the need for appropriate arrangements, reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations (referred to in this policy as 'access arrangements')
- requesting access arrangements
- implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams
- good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010

3. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability

A definition is provided on page 4 of the current JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties* *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*

This publication is further referred to in this policy as AA.

4. Identifying the need for access arrangements



JCQ-AARA-2025_FINAL (5).pdf

4.1. Roles and responsibilities

Head of centre

- Is familiar with the entire contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA
- Must ensure that the SENDCo has sufficient time to both manage the access arrangements process within the centre and familiarise him/herself with the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- Is responsible for the quality of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within his or her centre; and
- Is responsible for the appointment of assessors, checking the qualifications of those assessing candidates (e.g. photocopy of certificate or printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration).
- Must satisfy themselves that a professional does have the required level of competence and training. The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7

Senior leaders

- Are familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publications including GR and AA

- Must support the SENDCo to lead on the Access Arrangements/ reasonable adjustments process within his/her centre.
- Must support the SENDCo to identify, determine and implement appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

Head of Additional Learning Support (Neurodiversity)

- Has full knowledge and understanding of the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication AA
- The SENDCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process within his/her centre.
- SENDCos must hold on file for inspection purposes evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified.
- The SENDCo must work with teaching staff to identify the most appropriate published format of modified papers (see Chapter 6) which will enable the candidate(s) to access their examinations.
- The SENDCo must work with teaching staff, support staff (such as Learning Support Assistants and Teaching Assistants) and exams office personnel to ensure that approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are put in place for internal school tests, mock examinations and examinations.
- Ideally the SENDCo will also be an inhouse designated assessor and will thus be able to assess, process applications online and hold evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE and/or GCE qualifications (Page 1)

The Head of Additional Learning Support (Neurodiversity) (SENDCo) must:

- ensure that applications are processed on time, no later than the published deadline.
    - Applications must be processed and approved before an examination or assessment, no later than the published deadline as above.
    - Late applications on account of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the published deadline are permissible. Centres must process applications as detailed in Chapter 8, section 8.3 using Access arrangements online where required.
    - Any application processed after the published deadline may be subject to scrutiny.

- SENDCos must ensure that the appropriate paperwork is on file and available for inspection and ensure that the full supporting evidence is in place before an online application is processed;

- review the evidence before an online application is processed, ensuring that the candidate does meet the published criteria for the respective arrangement.
- hold all supporting evidence and present such evidence to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request; and
- ensure that the agreed adjustments have been put in place before the candidate's first examination, e.g. internal school tests and mock examinations. This is referred to as Normal Way of Working (NWoW)

Teaching staff

- Inform the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) of any support that might be needed by a candidate
- Teaching staff must support the SENDCo in identifying, determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

Support staff (SEND Support Practitioners, Advanced SEND Support Practitioners and Communication Support Workers)

- (where appropriate) Provide comments/observations to support the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) in painting a holistic picture of need confirming normal way of working for a candidate

Assessor of candidates with learning difficulties
(An assessor of candidates with learning difficulties will be an appropriately qualified access arrangements assessor/psychologist/specialist assessor)

- Has detailed understanding of the current JCQ publication AA
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off
- assessments carried out by another professional.
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application
- The Assessor must follow The Manchester College EAA Policy, Equalities Policy and Laptop and Assistive Technology Policy and recommend Access Arrangements with consistency

The assessor must:

- record the results of any tests completed indicating that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's performance.
- only work within their area of expertise and in an ethical fashion.
- use current editions of nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate; report the results of their assessment within Part 2 of Form 8; and
- provide the centre with evidence of their qualification(s) before assessing any candidate (see paragraph 7.3.3).

4.2. Use of word processors

The College has a bespoke Word Processer & Assistive Technology Policy, which is represented within JCQ folders for both the examinations and the Exam Access Arrangements team, directed by the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) (as identified within the policy).

5. Requesting access arrangements

5.1 Roles and responsibilities

A Special educational needs coordinator (Head of ALS (Neurodiversity))

- Determines if the arrangements identified for a candidate meet the published criteria and require prior approval from the awarding body before the arrangements are put in place or if approval is centre-delegated

Exams officer

- Is familiar with the entire contents of the annually updated JCQ publication GR and is aware of information contained in AA where this may be relevant to the EO role

6. Implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

6.1.1 External assessments

These are assessments which are normally set and marked/examined by an awarding body which must be conducted according to awarding body instructions and/or the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting examinations (ICE).

Head of centre, delegating authority to Examinations Co-ordinator

- Supports the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) and Exam Access Arrangements and the exams officers and other relevant centre staff in ensuring appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.

Head of ALS (Neurodiversity)

Ensures appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for candidates where they are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act (unless a temporary emergency arrangement is required at the time of an exam).

Exams officer

- Is familiar with and follows the Checklist for heads of centre and examination officers – The Equality Act 2010 and conduct of examinations provided in the current ICE (page 44)

Other relevant centre staff

- Support the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) and the exams officer to ensure appropriate arrangements, adjustments and adaptations are in place to facilitate access for disabled candidates to exams.

7. Internal assessments

These are non-examination assessments (NEA) which are normally set by a centre/awarding body, marked and internally verified by the centre and moderated by the awarding body.

"Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are classified as 'NEA'."

[Quote taken from the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*]

Head of ALS (Neurodiversity)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

Teaching staff

- Support the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) by completing Normal Ways of Working and in implementing appropriately approved access arrangements for candidates.

8. Internal exams

These are exams or tests which are set and marked within the centre; normally a pre-cursor to external assessments.

Head of ALS (Neurodiversity)

- Liaises with teaching staff to implement appropriate access arrangements for candidates via the Neurodiversity & Exam Access Arrangements team.

Teaching staff

- Support the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity) in implementing appropriate access arrangements for candidates.

9. Facilitating access – examples

The following information confirms the centre's good practice in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and the conduct of examinations.

On a candidate-by-candidate basis, consideration is given to

- adapting assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- the provision of specialist equipment or adaptation of standard equipment
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes

The table provides example arrangements, adjustments and adaptations that are considered to meet the need(s) of a candidate and the actions considered/taken by the centre for the purposes of facilitating access.

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A medical condition which prevents the candidate from taking exams in the centre	Alternative site for the conduct of examinations Supervised rest breaks	Under the supervision of the Head of ALS (Neurodiversity), the Neurodiversity & Exam Access arrangements team gather evidence to support the need for the candidate to take exams at home External support agencies provide evidence of need for records. Approval confirmed by Head of ALS (Neurodiversity); AAO approval for both arrangements not required Pastoral head discussion with candidate to confirm the arrangements should be put in place EO submits appropriate 'Alternative site for the conduct of exams form' EO provides candidate with exam timetable and JCQ information for candidates Pastoral head confirms with candidate the information is understood Pastoral head agrees with candidate that prior to each exam will call to confirm fitness to take exam

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
		EO allocates invigilator(s) to candidate's timetable; confirms time of collection of exam papers and materials Invigilator monitors candidate's condition for each exam and records any issues on incident log Invigilator records rest breaks (time and duration) on incident log and confirms set time given for exam Invigilator briefs EO after each exam on how candidate's performance in exam may have been affected by his/her condition EO discusses with pastoral head if candidate is eligible for special consideration (candidate present but disadvantaged) EO processes request(s) for special consideration where applicable; incident log(s) provides supporting evidence Pastoral head informs candidate that special consideration has been requested
Persistent and significant difficulties in accessing written text	Reader/computer reader 25% Extra time Separate invigilation within the centre	Confirms candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 Papers checked for those testing reading Computer reader/examination reading pen sourced for use in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading OR up to 50% extra time awarded Original Form 8, signed and dated, with Part 1, 2 & 3 completed, or Form 9 where appropriate; kept on file with body of supporting evidence, printed approval from AAO
Significant difficulty in concentrating	Prompter Separate invigilation within the centre	Gathers evidence to support substantial and long term adverse impairment Confirms with candidate how and when they will be prompted Briefs invigilator to monitor candidate and the method of prompting (call out his name to bring his attention back to the paper - confirms requirement for separate room)

Example of candidate need(s)	Arrangements explored	Centre actions
A wheelchair user	Desk Rooms Facilities Seating arrangements Practical assistant	Applies for practical assistant to help candidate set up wheelchair and other equipment in a practical assessment; approval automatically fails so awarding body referral lists the tasks that will be performed Provides height adjustable desk in exam room Allocates exam room on ground floor near adapted bathroom facilities Spaces desks to allow wheelchair access Seats candidate near exam room door Confirms arrangements in place to assist the candidate in case of emergency evacuation of the exam room Practical assistant cover sheet printed from AAO; to be completed by facilitator and inserted inside the candidate's work where this may be applicable to the assessment

10. Equality and Diversity

Students can expect an inclusive and supportive learning environment whatever their background.

11. Related Policies and Procedures

- Student Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- TMC Access Arrangements Policy
- TMC Word Processor Policy
- TMC SEND Policy

12. Location and Access to this Policy

- Staff HUB
- Student HUB

13. Equality Impact Assessment

Are there concerns that this policy could have an adverse impact on any of these protected is action required?		If Yes, is action required?
Age	No	
Disability	Yes	Student with visual needs are prioritised before all other students with learning difficulties and disabilities due to the shorter deadlines applying for modified and tactile papers. Delay in processing these applications, would lead to students not receiving their modified or tactile papers in time for the exam. Students who require a practical assistant may not be recommended this support in exams if this would undermine the learning outcomes being assessed. This is covered by Section 96 (7-8) of the Equality Act where awarding bodies are not under any legal responsibility to make reasonable adjustments as this would lead to an unfair advantage and damage the integrity of the qualification being assessed.
Gender reassignment	No	
Marriage or civil partnership	No	
Pregnancy and maternity	No	
Race	No	
Religion	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual orientation	No	
EIA Summary		
Person responsible for EIA	Tracey Melling (HoD Neurodiversity & EAAs) and Marie Stock, Vice Principal	
EIA Outcome & statement		
The EAAs –Equalities Policy has been created in conjunction with the most up to date published copy of the JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Regulations. JCQ Regulations are updated each year and inform current assessments for exams access support. It directly considers the need to make reasonable adjustments when assessing learning outcomes, without reducing the integrity of the qualification.		