

Exam Access Arrangement Policy

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This policy applies to all stakeholders on the Henlow Academy site.

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Exam Access Arrangements Policy

This information should be read in conjunction with Henlow Academy's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) policy, which sets out the school's procedures for identifying SEND, making and evaluating provision for pupils with SEND, and monitoring the pupils' needs for access arrangements.

This policy and approach to Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) reflects our teaching and learning philosophy which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student may fulfil their full potential. It explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with Special Educational Needs (SEN), including those with formally diagnosed SEND.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a candidate with visual impairment who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable, will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

What Are Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in a national/public exam, where a particular need has been identified and it is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam. EAAs are intended to give all candidates equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of EAAs are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). The JCQ adjusts its regulations periodically and the School is bound to comply with the current regulations.

The most commonly used access arrangements at Henlow Academy are as follows:

Scribe: a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers including all punctuation, grammar and relevant spellings and the scribe would write exactly what the student says. This provision is usually not encouraged for Maths or Modern Foreign Languages. This provision also includes the use of a word processor with spelling and grammar functions enabled. However, relevant spelling/grammar marks would then be deducted from the final exam score. The school cannot support the provision of speech recognition technology for this arrangement.

Reader: a trained adult who would read the question and relevant text (with the exception of an exam testing the student's reading, such as English comprehension and Modern Foreign Languages) for the student. The student would then write the answers themselves although this text could then be read back to the student, if requested. Under JCQ regulations, three or four candidates may share one reader and candidates with individual readers may be required to share a room.

Word Processing: access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate but not usually for subjects such as Maths and Modern Foreign Languages) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled other than in exceptional circumstances where the student has 'scribe' provision (see above).

25% Extra Time: students may be entitled to an allowance of 25% extra time depending on their history of need and standardised scores below 85 relating to speed of reading, writing or processing.

Rest Breaks: where students are permitted to stop for short breaks during the exam and this time is then added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.

Prompter: used for students with little sense of time or ability to concentrate, a trained adult/invigilator can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus or move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.

The above list is not exhaustive but does cover the most commonly used exam access arrangements but the school would ensure each student's needs are met as required. EAAs may also differ according to a student's needs within each subject ie. extra time may be awarded to extended writing subjects only.

Procedures for EAA

Students will be identified for possible access arrangements through a combination of the following criteria:

- from Year 7 as a result of information from previous schools, prior access arrangements and/or low attainment scores in relevant assessments;
- referral from a teacher and evidence supporting student's area of need;
- EAAs granted/officially approved by previous secondary school (subject to relevant paperwork being sent to the SEND department at Henlow Academy), in addition to clear evidence of need and confirmation of qualifications of prior school's specialist assessor;

- presentation of a recent medical letter/diagnosis from a qualified health care professional; and
- parental concern expressed to a subject/form teacher.

'Provisional' access arrangements granted in Years 7, 8 or 9 are not automatically guaranteed for GCSE exams. Official approval is normally requested by the Autumn Term of Year 10 and is subject to results from the school's designated specialist and/or a medical diagnosis/report. EAAs have to be officially approved for all students taking GCSE. However, it is our aim to have 'provisional' access arrangements in place for internal assessments for students in younger years as soon as additional needs are identified so this becomes a student's normal way of working.

Students who are deemed eligible for access arrangements in Key Stage 4 will be tested (at the earliest in Year 9) by the school's designated assessor to ensure the results are valid for official approval for the entire GCSE period.

As advised by the JCQ, the school will not accept privately commissioned assessments as sole evidence for exam access arrangements. Privately commissioned assessments will only be considered as background evidence, additional to qualitative and quantifiable evidence gathered by the school to reflect the candidates' significant, persistent and long-term need and their normal way of working in school.

With the exception of temporary illness, or injury on the day of the examination, students who require EEA provision for medical purposes will need to provide written evidence from an appropriate medical professional in March of the year they will be sitting exams, stating their current diagnosis, treatment and details of how it might affect their performance. Historical information will not be taken into consideration. Any EEA provision will then be put in place to comply with current JCQ regulations, which may differ from that suggested by the medical professional.

The Special Educational Need & Disability (SEND) Department is responsible for EAA provision and duties include the following:

- ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a student's exam access arrangement;
- informing subject teachers at regular intervals regarding student's exam access arrangements and how they should be supported in the classroom;
- liaison with Exams Team;
- informing parents/carers about student's provisional access arrangements, specialist assessor tests and official approval of arrangements for GCSE or A Levels;
- ensuring each student understands how to use their access arrangements and under what circumstances; and monitoring the use of exam access arrangements to ensure they remain appropriate and they become the student's normal way of working.

Please note, it is the responsibility of the student and the subject teacher to ensure EAAs are put in place for any assessments and tests taking place in lessons (these do not include formal GCSE exams). This will be done with the support of the SEND Department where required.