

Access Arrangements Policy

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name (s)
Operations Manager	Ann-Marie Hutton
Head of Centre	Maxine Ennis
Education Programme Manager/Exams Officer	Mark Fallon

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Rotunda Ltd has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its, 'obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements...' [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, (section 5.4)]. This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR. Rotunda Ltd also has a written process in place to not only check the qualifications(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed from the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4). This policy should be read in conjunction with the colleges Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) policy, this sets out the procedures for identifying SEND and making and evaluation provision for learners with SEND.

General principles

The general principles of access arrangements for Rotunda Ltd to consider are detailed in Access Arrangements. These include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled learner preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled learner.
- The appropriate member of staff, must ensure that the proposed access arrangement does not disadvantage or advantage the learner.
- Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- Learners may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessment may vary,

leading to different demands of the learner. The need for access arrangements must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

- Exam access arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment.
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the learner in the centre.
- The learner must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s) before his/her first examination.
- All learners with exam access arrangements are considered to be students with SEND.

What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow learners with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and not be disadvantaged in any way. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which Rotunda Ltd bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires providers to make reasonable adjustments where a learner, 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. Reasonable adjustments can be defined as:

- Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that would place an individual during an assessment at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who does not.
- Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable the learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Rotunda Ltd are required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a braille paper, which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired learner who could read Braille of being allowed an extended time period to complete an exam if they have been diagnosed within the autistic spectrum. 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 several factors, which will include, but are not limited to:

- The needs of the disabled learner;
- The evidence to support the reasonable adjustment;
- The effectiveness of the adjustment;
- The cost of the adjustment;
- The likely impact of the adjustment upon the learner and other learners.

An adjustment may not be approved if it:

- Involves unreasonable timeframes;
- Affects the security and integrity of the assessment. This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable.'

Reasonable adjustments must be approved, agreed with the awarding body and set in place before the assessment takes place. The work produced by the individual will be assessed in the same way as all other learners.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the education programme manager. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in Access Arrangements 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s) and internal quality assurance personnel

Mark Fallon and Ann-Marie Hutton possess the following qualifications: Level 3 in Assessing Vocationally Related Achievement and Level 4 in Understanding the Principles and Practices of Internally Assuring the Quality of Assessment. All teaching staff are qualified to PGCE level. All members of the Education team complete annual statutory training around equality and diversity.

Appointment of assessors of learners with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in Access Arrangements. If they do not have the experience or knowledge around implementing access arrangements and special considerations policy this training is provided as a part of their induction process. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a learner.

Checking the qualification(s) of the assessor(s)

Upon the first meeting with Rotunda Ltd.'s Exam's Officer, the assessor has their qualifications verified and a photocopy is made of the assessor's qualifications. The evidence that the assessors are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes.

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

Evidence that the assessor(s) are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes. Rotunda Ltd will notify all awarding bodies if there are any changes to the assessment team. When requested, the evidence will be presented to the awarding body by the Exams Officer.

How the assessment process is administered?

- The assessment process is supported by the awarding body, based on a referral by the centre's exams officer.
- They make referrals based on observations and recommendations from teachers and support staff, observations that have been carried out in classes or by information provided by the learner.
- The assessor carries out confidential testing on a one-to-one basis with the learner. The results of this will form the basis of an access arrangement applications.
- Guidelines for the assessment of the learner's learning difficulties by an assessor.
- Arrangements must be made for the learner to be assessed by an assessor.
- 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.
- 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 an application using Access arrangements online.
- Any privately commissioned assessment to see whether the process of gathering a picture of need, demonstrating normal way of working within the centre and ultimately assessing the learners themselves should be instigated.

Before the learner's assessment, the centre manager will provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted. The centre and the assessor must work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process.

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the learner's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the learner is assessed.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the centre.

Teaching staff are asked to provide examples of learners work to demonstrate the need that has led to the application of an access arrangement being made. This work is stored in the learner file in the access folder and made available for inspection. Since the application requires evidence of need, Rotunda will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice.

This can include:

- Educational psychology reports.
- Speech Therapist reports.
- Occupational Therapist reports.
- Letters from outside agencies such as hospitals, doctors and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service).
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers.
- Copies of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangements.

Processing access arrangements

Learners must declare at the time of enrolment if they have any medical or psychological conditions, SEND needs, previous exam access arrangements at another educational institution or any other issues that may require exam access arrangements. Failure to disclose this negates Rotunda Ltd from their responsibilities.

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements are applied by completing the relevant application form and submitting all supplementary evidence on the secure portal at least 3 weeks prior to the assessment taking place. Awarding bodies for centres to

apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included.

Access arrangements may for example include: supervised rest breaks, extra time, reader, scribe, word processor, transcript, oral language modifier and prompter.

Evidence needed to apply for exam access arrangements

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for exam access arrangements:

- Previous exam access arrangements from another school.
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mock exams.
- Results from baseline assessments such as reading ages or writing tests.
- Medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability.
- An Educational Psychology report which explicitly diagnoses the need for exam access arrangements.
- A Speech therapy report which diagnoses severe language impairment. When granted access arrangements are valid for 26 months.

How do staff know whether a student has access arrangements?

If a need for access arrangements have been identified, the relevant parties are informed:

- Learners are informed verbally and in writing.
- A list of all learners who receive access arrangements is made available to all staff. This information is also placed on the Rotunda's relevant shared drives.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

- Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements are made by the Centre Manager and Exams Officer. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file.
- Learners may be provided with this arrangement for reasons such as, but not limited to: bereavement, recent physical injuries or sickness, having an identified SEND need that would be better served in a quiet venue, behaviour concerns that would necessitate closer supervision of the learner, and to separate them from the main exam venue in order to minimise potential disruption to the majority of the cohort.

Centre-specific criteria for particular access arrangements

Word Processor Policy (Exams)

An exam learner may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the learners needs and not simply because this is their preferred way of working within the centre.

Separate Invigilation Policy

For functional skills exams accessibility arrangements/ special considerations will be implemented by the invigilator. This will only occur with awarding body authorisation and carried out in accordance with Rotunda Ltd exam policy. The Separate Invigilation Policy details the criteria Rotunda Ltd uses to award separate invigilation with the centre. The decision will be based on:

- whether the learner has a substantial and long-term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
- the learner's normal way of working within the centre Access arrangements

The Invigilation Policy details the criteria Rotunda uses to award separate invigilation within the centre.

For example, in the case of separate invigilation, the learner's difficulties are established within the centre and known to the Centre Manager and Exams Officer. Separate invigilation reflects the learner's normal way of working in tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long-term social, mental or emotional needs.

Modified papers

- Modified papers are ordered through AAO.
- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned.
- Modified papers are individually prepared for learners for whom other access arrangements are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore, centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a learner will require a modified paper.
- Modified papers must not be ordered for learners unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series.

- For the adjustment to be effective, the learner must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination.

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to an awarding body inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically.

Where access arrangements documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual learner must be created. The learner's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection.

It is the responsibility of:

- Exams Officer to submit applications for approval to the awarding body
- Centre Manager to hold the file/e-folder for each individual learner containing a copy of their approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed learner personal data consent form.
- Exams Officer to order modified papers.

Rotunda Policy Review Record

Reviewed by:	Approval date:	Review frequency:	Review date:	Signed:
Maxine Ennis	09/04/2024	Annual	10/04/2025	