



Access Arrangements Policy

Medeshamstede Academy

Access Arrangements Policy

Centre Name	Medeshamstede Academy
Centre Number	22376
Date policy first created	22/11/2023
Current policy approved by	Miss C Smith
Current policy reviewed by	Mrs N Maker
Date of next review	22/11/2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Miss C Smith
Senior leader(s)	Mr D Seamer (DP) Mrs G Jones (AP) Mrs K Brueseke-Palmer (AP)
Exams officer	Mrs N Maker
ALS lead/SENCo	Miss C Smith & Mrs K Brueseke-Palmer
Other staff (if applicable)	N/A

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Medeshamstede Academy is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Introduction

(AA Definitions)

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity 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'.

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 vision impaired candidate 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 several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

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

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Medeshamstede Academy 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 (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to not only check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) but that the correct procedures are followed as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The principles for Medeshamstede Academy to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate 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 candidate (AA 4.2)

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)
- 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 (AA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AA 4.2)
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of the course (AA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before their first examination (AA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in the Equalities Policy for Exams..

2. The assessment process

At Medeshamstede Academy, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

- Sue Deoraj- Diploma for Teachers for Specific Learning Difficulties (Dip. SpLD), Oxford Cambridge & RSA Examinations (OCR), PATOSS Membership
Mrs Kiera Bruseke-Palmer - PATOSS membership

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Medeshamstede Academy:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AA 7.3)
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration, or screenshot of other relevant qualification listing) is kept on file (AA 7.3, 7.4)

Additional information:

Not applicable

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by EO, HOC or AP (SENDCO).

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within **Access arrangements online**. (AA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by AA must be entered into **Access arrangements online** to confirm their status (AA 7.4)

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Medeshamstede Academy confirms:

- All pupils at Medeshamstede have an EHCP plan so detailed notes from year 9 EHCP reviews and needs to enabling access are kept as part of Exam Access Arrangement evidence electronically and a hard copy is with the EO. A full Profile sheet of evidence and test results forms part of this evidence.
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements (AA 7.3)
- Relevant staff working within the centre should always carefully consider 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 candidate themselves should be instigated (AA 7.3)

Additional information:

Access assessments can be commissioned for Private candidates if applicable in line equal opportunities policies.

Picture of need/normal way of working

Medeshamstede Academy confirms:

- Before the candidate is assessed the assessor is given a clear picture of needs through the EHCP for the students and any professional reports and assessments that may give further relevant information ensuring a consistent process (AA7.5.2.)

Additional information:

- Medeshamstede collect evidence forms in Autumn term each year for year 10 and 11 for all core subjects a round what support and access arrangements form part of the students normal way of working.

- All assessments are discussed with the centres delegated SENDCO and EO.

- The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5.3)

- The academy will complete the access arrangements picture of need and normal way of working documentation (Form 8 must NOT be used as every pupil attending Medeshamstede Academy has an EHCP) and gather all appropriate evidence so the exam officer can make an application.

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by SENCO and HOC.. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by the EO..

- The use of a word processor

The Word Processor Policy details the criteria Medeshamstede Academy specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- Alternative rooming arrangements

The Alternative Room Policy details the criteria Medeshamstede Academy uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation).

Additional information:

- Throughout their time at the Academy the needs of the students are continually reviewed through the EHCP SEND review process where the support that required is also discussed and recorded as required applications for the candidate.

- A robust framework of evidence will be sourced not only through picture of need in the centre and the specialist assessors diagnostic screening tests but also from Educational Psychology, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy reports alongside their EHC plans. It is in the best interests of our students to ensure we can give them the full support they need to access their accreditations.

- Subject leaders with the appointed SENDCo will provide a portfolio evidence per access arrangement in place for each student to demonstrate normal way of working within the centre. Signed statements may be obtained from the subject teacher/candidate to evidence normal way of working.

- SENDCo will liaise with subject leaders to provide tracking and evidence for the specialist assessor in order to ensure that the testing is in relation to the candidates normal way of working.

- The provision detailed in an EHCP, teachers evidence, assessor evidence and SENDCo information will then all be used to create a statement profile on centre headed paper which details a candidates normal way of working.

- This information will be stored within the candidates file/e-file and a copy with EO for evidence for inspection if required.

Modified papers

Modified papers are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AA 6.1)

- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AA 6.1)
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination (AA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre 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. (AA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- the SENCO and EO to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate Personal data consent form) to record their personal data on-line through AAO
- The HOC to complete the Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo, prior to the processing of the online application
- Exams Officer, under direction of the SENCO to submit applications for approval using AAO
- SENCO and Exams Officer to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AA 8.6)
- Exams Officer, under direction of the SENCO to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer, under direction of the SENCO to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Exams officer will present the files when requested by the JCQ Centre Inspector

Changes 2023/2024

Due to section renumbering in the AA publication, references to AA sections in this policy have been changed to 2 places, e.g. AA 7.3.1 changed to AA 7.3, etc.

(Changed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** 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. (AA 7.3) (To) A privately commissioned report, or an assessment from an external professional, cannot be used to award access arrangements. (AA 7.3)

(Removed) Under **Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor:** An independent assessor will be instructed to contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This will take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor will be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate (AA 7.5)

(Removed) Under **Picture of need/normal way of working:**

An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.

All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. (AA 7.5)

(Changed) Under **Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments** all reference to Separate invigilation within the centre (To) Alternative rooming arrangements and re-worded the section accordingly.

(Changed) Under **Roles and responsibilities:** to hold the file/e-folder for each individual candidate containing a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and a signed candidate personal data consent form (AA 8.6) (To) to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). (AA 8.6)

Centre-specific changes

Upon review in Nov 2023, there are no centre specific changes in our processes.