



Exam Access Arrangements Policy 2025-26

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Exam Access Arrangements are for students who experience '*substantial disadvantage*' and '*persistent and significant difficulties*' in accessing examinations (Joint Council for Qualifications – JCQ).
- 1.2 This policy must be read in conjunction with [JCQ adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties](#).

2 The Rationale for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

- 2.1 EAAs are designed for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment in its normal format due to a difficulty or disability.
- 2.2 EAAs should reflect the normal way of working for which there is evidence of need unless such arrangements would affect the integrity of the assessment.
- 2.3 EAAs are intended to increase access to assessments but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment.
- 2.4 Credit is only given for skills demonstrated by the candidate working independently.
- 2.5 EAAs are not intended to give an unfair advantage.
- 2.6 EAAs will not be permitted if they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- 2.7 EAAs may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- 2.8 An alternative assessment route may be available within the specification.
- 2.9 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.

3 The Exam Access Arrangements Available

- 3.1 The following EAAs are available:
 - Supervised rest breaks
 - Extra time

- Computer reader/reader
- Scribe / voice recognition software
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. coloured/enlarged paper)
- Other specific arrangements for candidates with disabilities

3.2 A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

3.3 All the above EAA must be a student's normal way of working with evidence provided and must be subject specific.

4 Staff Roles in Determining and Managing EAA

4.1 The SENCO and the Access Arrangements team will work:

- To ensure that the agreed EAA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators by the Exams Officer, as to which subjects the EAA applies to
- To ensure the agreed EAA provision is updated on CID, by the Exam Access Assessor
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding EAA provision, including an assessment of which subject(s) these apply to
- To advise and organise any on the day provisions – such as medical emergencies, which will then be implemented by the Exams Officer
- To advise the Exams Officer of suitable rooming for students agreed by the Exams Access Assessor. The exams officer to ensure students rooming concessions are enforced and there is zero/minimal disruption for other students also sitting exams
- To liaise with the Exams Officer regarding Access Arrangements

4.2 SENCO:

4.2.1 The SENCO will work to ensure there is a 'whole centre' approach to access arrangements; it is therefore the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team and the specialist assessor(s) within the centre to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidance.

- 4.2.2 The SENCO, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within the centre.
- 4.2.3 Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENCO in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.
- 4.2.4 Ideally, the SENCO will also be an in-house specialist assessor and will thus assess candidates, process applications on-line and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE and/or GCE qualifications and vocational qualifications.
- 4.2.5 The SENCO will work closely work with the specialist assessors to ensure that all data for Access Arrangements is available in a timely and accurate manner.

4.3 **The Specialist Assessors will work:**

- 4.3.1 With students on entry to the College to do basic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision.
- 4.3.2 To administer recognised psychometric testing after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews and observations from the teachers within the classrooms.
- 4.3.3 To assist the SENCO in the decision-making process about EAA.

4.4 **Teaching Staff will work:**

- 4.4.1 To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's **persistent and significant difficulties**.
- 4.4.2 To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and in their subject. Provide evidence of this for the SENCO in the form of teacher feedback and annotated sample papers.
- 4.4.3 To detail the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example, teaching staff will record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- 4.4.4 To ensure that the correct EAA are in place for timed assessments in class, mock exams, progression exams and formal assessments.

5 Students are responsible for checking their Exam timetable on their Portal:

- “Important: This is your personal timetable for scheduled, timed examinations. It is your responsibility to check the details. If you consider that there are any errors or omissions, please come to the Exams Office in Room E004 or email exams@reigate.ac.uk, without delay”
- **The College will not be held liable for any errors not reported**

6 Deadlines for making Exam Applications Online (AAOs)

6.1 JCQ have hard deadlines for applications for AAOs. Before this can happen, the College must have history of need (details of previous concessions from school), scores from psychometric tests or medical evidence, teacher feedback, (including annotated sample papers for the EAA of Extra time), and evidence to show it is the candidate’s normal way of working. The College also requires a Form 8, Form 8R or Form 9.

6.2 For GCSE Exam resits in November and BTEC level 2 or 3 Exams and other vocational qualifications in January

6.2.1 Students who have November or January external exams must inform us at the start of September to meet the JCQ deadline for application

6.3 For BTEC Level 2 or 3 Exams and other vocational qualifications

6.3.1 EAA must be in place (applied for, assessed, confirmed and recorded) at least one week prior to the set deadlines below:

- January Series: 10 October 2025
- Summer series: 15 March 2026

6.4 For Exams in Upper Sixth

6.4.1 Concerns by student, parent or teacher can be raised at any time in the Lower Sixth. This supports the collation of evidence, assessment where required, trialling the access arrangement, collating teacher feedback and gathering sample papers (for when the access arrangement of extra time is being requested), as required by JCQ.

6.4.2 The Upper Sixth is normally too late to make requests for EAA as no history of need or provision is in place.

7 Timelines Towards Being Awarded an EAA

7.1 Lower and Upper Sixth

- 7.1.1 Students declare EAA they had at KS4 when they apply to Reigate College at application, interview or enrolment, or in the first half term of attending.
- 7.1.2 It is expected that all students who have accepted a place at Reigate College will provide evidence from their current educational provider of EAA at KS4 to support an application for EAA.
- 7.1.3 Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of the Lower Sixth, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENCO.
- 7.1.4 In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Specialist Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the **Autumn** and **Spring** Terms and the SENCO applies/reapplies for EAA.
- 7.1.5 Trial EAA are put in place as they are assessed during the year. Teachers give feedback from the key assessments and Progression Exams to the SENCO (did students use them? Were they effective?). The Progression examinations also provide a final chance to identify any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.
- 7.1.6 If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout The Lower Sixth, they should see the SENCO or Specialist Assessor by the end of the Lower Sixth. The College accepts that students may be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A Level. However, The Lower Sixth progression exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

8 Procedure for Extra Time in Exams

- 8.1 Where exam arrangements (such as 25% extra time) are requested for conditions other than a learning difficulty:
- “the SENCO must have trialled and exhausted the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and/or mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time.” (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ 2025/2026 5.1)*
- 8.2 In addition to Form 8 and Form 8RF there must be:
- A sample of internal school tests/mock exam papers across relevant subjects showing the application of 25% extra time

- Comments and observations from teaching staff in relevant subjects as to why the candidate needs 25% extra time and how they use the 25% extra time awarded.

(Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ 2025/2026 5.2.2)

8.3 Procedure for extra time in exams in practical subjects:

- 8.3.1 Extra time will not be permitted in examinations testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as a Dance or Drama practical assessment, a musical performance or a sport, where timing is an explicit part of the assessment objective.

25% extra time would be awarded in a timed Art examination where a candidate has a formally diagnosed medical condition, a physical disability or a sensory impairment which has a substantial and adverse effect on their manual dexterity, their physical coordination. The candidate is demonstrably slower when, for example, mixing paints, painting and/or sketching.

- 8.4 *In rare and exceptional circumstances there may be candidates with substantially slower processing, poor memory skills, difficulties with sequencing and/or visual perceptual weaknesses which are impacting on their ability to perform the skill to their expected level when under timed conditions*

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2025/2026. 5.2.5)

- 8.5 All arrangements must be discussed with the Exam Access Assessors and confirmed and verified by JCQ. The above provisions will only apply in very rare circumstances and usually students do not receive extra time in practical subjects.

9 Procedure for medical letters

- 9.1 Letters from an appropriate medical professionals will trigger an investigation, but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice. EAAs cannot be awarded purely based on a medical letter.

- 9.2 Specialists (for example, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist) are responsible for providing a formal diagnosis and may make recommendations. They are **not** responsible for decisions about access arrangements. The school or college must decide which access arrangements a student has for their exams and meet any threshold criteria set by JCQ. Teachers must give evidence to show that an access arrangement is needed. The school or college will record how effective the arrangement is in the classroom, in internal tests or in mock exams.

9.3 Private assessments/Educational Psychologist reports

9.3.1 The College cannot accept Private assessments/Ed Psych reports unless the assessor has an established link with the College. This is a JCQ requirement. The College can only accept private reports as supporting evidence. A student's 'normal way of working' in college is paramount. EAAs cannot be awarded purely based on a private assessment/Ed Psych report.

10 Malpractice

10.1 Colleges are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually every summer during the examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification for the student from one or more examinations, disqualification for a whole cohort of students, or even the centre being closed for up to five years. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted EAA which are not their normal way of working
- EAA being 'suddenly' granted before examinations
- EAA being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- EAA being granted without sufficient evidence
- Students not using their EAA in a mock examination and still being allowed it in the real examination

11 Guidance in Relation to Specific Categories of Exam Access Arrangements

11.1 Policy on the use of word processors in exams at Reigate College:

- The College values good handwriting and imposes high standards on presentation of work and expects that most students will handwrite in exams
- A word processor cannot be granted to a candidate because they now want to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because they use a laptop at home
- However, there are exceptional circumstances, as identified by the College, where students may benefit from using a word processor and in these cases the College will allow use of a word processor for note-making in class, for homework, and for internal and public examinations

11.2 The College will only allow students to use word processors in exams when they meet one of the following criteria:

- The student has a specific learning difficulty/disability (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ASD)
- The student has a physical difficulty/medical condition such (such as hypermobility)
- The student has a sensory impairment
- The student has planning and organisational difficulties when writing by hand

- The student has very poor handwriting and would lose marks due to the examiner finding their answers illegible (examiners are adept at deciphering poor handwriting, so it must be extremely difficult to read, not just messy)
- Slow handwriting speed (confirmed by an internal assessment by a Specialist Assessor at College)

11.3 Students permitted to use word processors in public exams (i.e. GCSEs, GCEs and vocational qualifications) must have been using a word processor as their normal way of working in lessons, for homework, internal tests and internal or previous exams.

11.4 A student may also use a word processor on a temporary basis because of a temporary injury for which evidence has been provided or is visually obvious e.g. broken bone enclosed in plaster.

11.5 IT Support with word processor

11.5.1 IT Support will allocate a secure exam log in to each student. As standard the computer will have no access to the internet and spellcheck will be removed. Where the permissions of the assessment are different, IT support will adjust.

11.6 Students who think they may be eligible, meet the criteria above, or need to use a word processor should contact the Learning Support Department at College in the Support Hub (P103) or by email: learningsupportadmin@reigate.ac.uk by the above set deadlines, unless the student has an 'on the day' physical injury and needs to word process.

11.7 Policy on Supervised Rest Breaks

11.7.1 The College's policy for supervised rest breaks is in line with current JCQ regulations, which state:

The SENCO must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) and there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

(Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments – JCQ 2025-2026 5.1.1)

11.7.2 Supervised rest breaks could be awarded on account of:

- Medical conditions – rest breaks can be agreed if you have a serious medical condition, e.g. type 1 diabetes. Medical evidence required. If a mobile phone is required to monitor blood sugar levels, the student will be seated accordingly in the ILC and the phone will be placed on the invigilators desk with an appropriately trained invigilator. There will be one to one invigilation when the student is in possession of

their mobile phone to ensure the integrity of the examination. Candidates will have a card on their desk identifying them as diabetic to highlight their medical condition to the invigilators

- Should medical evidence dictate the student must retain their mobile during the exam, an appropriately trained invigilator will be required to supervise the student, to ensure the phone is only appropriately used to monitor the blood sugar levels
- Diagnoses of ASC or AD(H)D – should a student have a diagnosis or have evidence of being on the pathway for referral, we will look at the recommendations and consider whether rest breaks will be helpful in exams. Evidence of a diagnosis or confirmation of difficulty by a medical practitioner is required. There must also be **evidence** that a rest break is the student's normal way of working
- Social, emotional and mental health needs, where current written evidence of need is provided from an accredited professional medical source outlining the condition and explaining current need
- Rest breaks for anxiety, worry, or stress caused by exams are not awarded. This would not be a student's normal way of working. The Exams officer and team are trained to support students on the day

11.7.3 In addition, the candidate's difficulties **must** be **established within the centre** and thus known to the SENCO and/or the pastoral team.

11.7.4 Rest breaks are used in different ways:

- A student may take a short break to rest an injury or physical disability and sit quietly in the exam room
- A student can leave the exam room supervised to take a short walk
- A student may have a snack
- A student may need to check blood sugar levels and take insulin if required

11.7.5 Note:

- A request to go to the toilet will incur having the time deducted, unless it is for a medical reason
- A Rest break is for taking a rest from the exam, not for thinking time or processing information, therefore the exam paper will not be on show, and the student must not engage with the exam during this time

11.7.6 The duration of the supervised rest break must be determined by the SENCO based on their knowledge of the candidates' needs and normal way of working when placed under timed conditions. For example, a student may be allowed rest breaks totalling 10 minutes per hour and not in the first or last 10 minutes of the exam. Therefore, a student sitting a 2-hour examination will be allowed a maximum of 20 minutes' rest break. Deviations from this will be discussed and agreed with the candidate in advance of their exam.

12 Policy on provision of Alternative Rooming Arrangements and One to One Invigilation in Exams

12.1 Alternative Rooming Arrangements

12.1.1 Invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb the other candidates in the examination room.

12.1.2 Please note: Alternative Rooming Arrangements means sitting the examination *'as part of a smaller group with similar needs away from the main examination room. This is an appropriate and reasonable adjustment reflecting the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments.'*

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12.1.3 At the College, the main exam room is typically the Sport's Hall. In examinations where the student is required to sit the exam in the ILC, the alternative rooming arrangement may be the Lower ILC, E003 or departmental classrooms (or a combination, depending on numbers).

12.1.4 The regulations state that nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about exams is not sufficient grounds for alternative rooming arrangements within the centre.

12.1.5 You may be eligible for alternative rooming arrangements under the following categories:

- 'Long term' mental health issues.
- 'Long term' social or emotional needs
- A medical/physical condition/impairment requiring separate invigilation
- Eligibility for access arrangements necessitating separate invigilation e.g. use of reader, word processor

12.1.6 For class assessments students with alternative rooming arrangements will be expected to remain in their class, as this is considered alternative rooming arrangements.

12.2 One to one Invigilation (own room)

12.2.1 The College will endeavour to ensure that students sit their examinations with the main body of students taking exams (this includes those students taking exams in alternative rooming arrangements).

12.2.3 For very few students it is not appropriate for them to take their exams with other people and need their own room with separate invigilation.

12.2.4 For candidates to have their 'own room' during examinations they must meet one of the following criteria:

- Have a sensory impairment such that they cannot be with others

- Have a Medical, mental health condition or learning difficulty which means that they are likely to be a distraction to others
- Have a confirmed diagnosis of a condition, by a hospital consultant and documented evidence of extreme difficulty within college which means they are unable to be with other students in class and/or key assessments
- Eligibility for access arrangements necessitating individual invigilation (own room) e.g. use of a scribe

12.2.5 Students will not be accommodated in their own room just because they request to be on their own. They must meet one of the above criteria.

12.2.6 One to one Invigilation can only be accommodated in highly exceptional circumstances.

13 Further Information

13.1 Further information can be found at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:

- www.jcq.org.uk

13.2 Any questions about exam access arrangements, please phone the College and ask to be transferred to the Learning Support Department on 01737 221118 or students to come to the Support Hub (P103).

13.3 Key Contacts:

- Helen Fayers, Associate Principal (Systems and Support)
- Claire de Maudave, Exams Officer
- Deborah Center, SENCO
- Robert Walton-Kinghorn, Deputy SENCO
- Mel Harris, Assistant SENCO
- Carmela Charalambous, Exam Access Coordinator
- Madeleine Speke, Exam Access Coordinator