Access Arrangements Policy 2025/2026

This plan is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Nichola Smith	
Date of next review	Sept 2026

Key staff involved in Access Arrangements

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	Nichola Smith
Exams officer line manager (ALT)	Mark Clempson
Exams officer	Juliette Pitchfork
SENCo	Dawn Hudson
Inclusion Manager	Dana Abdulkarim

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Oasis Academy Don Valley is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations.
References in this policy to GR, ICE and AARA refer to the JCQ documents General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations and Acesss Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

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

Access arrangements

Access Arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special education needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can know without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principle 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 Undid it, 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 the 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 time frames or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment

This is because the adjustment is not ‘reasonable’. The centre must ensure the approved adjustment can be delivered to candidates.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Oasis Academy Don Valley 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 check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) and that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (GR 5.4)

This policy is maintained and held by the ALS Inclusion Manager/SENCo alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

Where the SENCo is storing access arrangements documentation electronically they **must** create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's efolder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AA 4.2)

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication *'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments General and Vocational qualifications'*

General principles

The Head of Centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

A centre must make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they cannot make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AA 4.2)

The principles for Oasis Academy Don Valley 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 them 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 (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 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 (AARA 4.2)
- Applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year the course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working (AARA 4.2)
- Arrangements must always be approved before an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AARA 4.2)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AARA 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 assessment process.

Equalities Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements policy is covered in the Exams Disability Policy, which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting, and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Head of Centre/Academy leadership team will recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010†. This **must** include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is (are) appropriately qualified as required in JCQ regulations as follows (section 7.3 of JCQ regulations for AA).

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Postgraduate Award of Proficiency in Assessment for Access Arrangements

Appointment of assessors of candidates 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 AA. This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

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

The Head of Centre will ensure that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any

assessment of a candidate.

Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) will be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the SENCo. (AA 7.3)

Reporting the appointment of the assessor(s)

The SENCo / Exams officer holds the evidence which shows that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified.

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

Oasis Academy Don Valley confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments. They must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor must carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online (AARA 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 (AARA 7.3)

Additional information:

Picture of need/normal way of working, Oasis Academy Don Valley confirms:

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCo / specialist assessor who works in the centre, completes part 1 of form 8 i.e. paint a picture of need The SENCo and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process

Where relevant any additional information relating to private candidates is included.

Subject teachers and learning support assistants provide feedback to the SENCO to help to establish normal way of working within the centre. Other information to support 'normal way of working' may include:

- Classroom support records
- Internal Exams records

Processing applications for access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.
AAO is accessed through the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by using any 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.

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place

Centre delegated access arrangements/adjustments

All centre delegated arrangements are approved by the SENCO and the appropriate supporting evidence supporting this is held on the pupil's file by the SENCo.

Word processor policy

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

Use of a Word Processor in exams is authorised by SENCo. Authorisation documents and evidence of 'normal way of working' is be held of candidate's Access arrangements File.

The word processor policy on the academy's website has further information on this.

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 (AARA 6.1)

- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. (AARA 6.1)

- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AARA 6.1)

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be based on whether the candidate

• has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and

• the candidate's normal way of working within the centre The SENCo authorises the arrangement**.**

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. (AARA 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. (AARA 4.2)
It is the responsibility of:

- SENCo to inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Exams Officer to submit applications for approval using AAO
- SENCo 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 copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
- Exams Officer to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Officer to order modified papers