

Parental Guidance regarding Access Arrangements Academic Year 2021-22

Access Arrangements

An Access Arrangement is an arrangement put in place during examinations in order to compensate for a learning difficulty or medical need.

The most common Access Arrangement is 25% Extra Time, but applications for other arrangements, such as a Reader or Scribe can be considered, if there is evidence that this is the student's *normal way of working* in the classroom.

When applying for Access Arrangements, the School is obliged to work within the framework laid down by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). These regulations are very complex, and often change. The current guidance can be viewed at www.jcq.org.uk

Evidence needed for the Access Arrangement of 25 % Extra Time for students with a learning difficulty

Core evidence

1. A current Education, Health and Care Plan OR
2. A fully completed Form 8, with an assessment carried out by a specialist assessor approved by the College no earlier than the start of year 9, confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary education OR

In both cases, this evidence must be supplemented by classroom evidence.

Specialist assessor evidence for 25 % extra time

So as not to give an unfair advantage, Part 2 of Form 8 must confirm that the candidate has at least:

- 2 below average standardised scores of 84 or less; or
- One below average standardised score of below 84 **and** one low average standardised score (85-89)

In either scenario, the two standardized scores must relate to two different areas of speed of working as below:

- Speed of reading and speed of writing; or
- Speed of reading and cognitive processing; or
- Speed of writing and cognitive processing; or
- Two different areas of cognitive processing which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on speed of working

Other access arrangements such as a reader or scribe have different criteria. This information can be provided by contacting the SENCo.

Evidence from the classroom

Before submitting an application for Extra Time for a student, the School has to present a '*compelling*' case that the student's learning difficulty has '*a substantial and adverse effect*' on the student's performance in examinations.

This will generally require *statements from class teachers* that a student is underperforming in classroom tests, as well as evidence in the form of incomplete in-class tests, mock examinations or similar. The student must also have made use of Extra Time over a substantial period of time in

both classroom tests and mock examinations before the arrangement can be considered for use in external public examinations.

Please note that students may require Extra Time in some subjects but not in others; the awarding of Extra Time is therefore subject-specific. A student may need it for English, due to the problems experienced in structuring extended writing, but cope well in Mathematics, or the sciences, where written answers are generally shorter. The decision regarding the subjects for which Extra Time can be awarded, will be based on the evidence from the class teacher in each subject area.

Who can complete the Specialist Assessor Report?

Under JCQ guidelines, a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre **cannot** be used to process an application for exam access arrangements.

Current Ratcliffe College Specialist Assessors for 2021-22 are:

- Liz Johanson SpLD specialist teacher
- Eleanor Waters SpLD specialist teacher
- Jane O'Leary SpLD Assessor with Assessment Practising Certificate
- Clare Boorn HCPC registered Educational Psychologist

If you believe that your child has special educational needs and may be entitled to access arrangements such as 25% Extra Time, you must discuss this with the School SENCO *before* arranging an assessment.

A "Form 8" assessment is not required for access arrangements for students with disabilities, medical or psychological conditions, or access needs but specialist evidence to confirm the disability is required.

Please note that an access arrangement cannot be put into place based solely on the recommendation of a health professional.

In all cases the School's decision will be final.

On-going Monitoring of Access Arrangements

Students who have been granted Access Arrangements for their GCSE /GCE examinations will be closely monitored over the years to ensure that their eligibility remains valid. For example, during the school end-of-year and mock examinations, invigilators will observe whether the concession is still being used to good effect.

In terms of Extra Time, invigilators will observe and record:

- The amount of extra-time used by students
- The increase in marks due to extra-time

If a student continually does not use their extra time, the school is within its right to withdraw this Access Arrangement.

Access Arrangements for Extra Time Students Progressing from GCSE to A Level qualifications

Whilst no additional assessment is required for a student progressing from GCSE to A Levels, the Joint Council for Qualifications does require substantial evidence from class teachers to confirm that students who had extra time for their GCSEs *continue to need it for their A Levels*. Since most students will have chosen A Level subjects that play to their strengths, it is possible that they no longer need the extra time that they had for their GCSEs. For example, students who struggle with extended writing in English at GCSE are more likely to have chosen science or mathematical-based subjects at A Level.

In addition, as with GCSE examinations, the awarding of Extra Time for A Levels is 'subject-specific'. A student may need Extra Time in one subject, but not in others.

Before the School can allow Extra Time for A Level examinations it needs to:

- Confirm that Extra Time continues to be the student's normal way of working within the School as a direct consequence of their disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010
- Provide evidence from teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning