



## THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

### ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMINATIONS

#### The Rationale for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Credit is only given for skills demonstrated by the candidate working independently.
- EAAs are not intended to give an unfair advantage.
- EAAs will not be permitted if they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- EAAs may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- An alternative assessment route may be available within the specification.
- 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 Exam Access Arrangements that are available

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Computer reader/reader
- Scribe
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations e.g. home, hospital
- Separate invigilation within the centre
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities or temporary injuries
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. coloured/enlarged paper)

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

All of the above EAA have to be a student's normal way of working with evidence provided. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) prefers all other EAA to extra time.

## Evidence needed for Exam Access Arrangements

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from JCQ, depending on the arrangement required. These include:

- Form 8 report (Application for Access Arrangements - Profile of learning difficulties) from Access Arrangements Assessor
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension scores, writing tests etc.
- Medical evidence of support

## Staff roles in determining and managing EAA

### Examinations Officer:

- To ensure that the agreed EAA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To ensure the agreed EAA provision is updated in Sims Exams tool.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding EAA provision.
- To put in place (in conjunction with the SEND department) any on day provisions – such as medical emergencies.
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.

### SENCO:

- 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)/SENCo within the centre to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidance.
- The SENCO, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within his/her centre.
- Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENCo in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.
- Ideally, the SENCO will also be the 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. At The Bishop's Stortford High School, we currently have a separate specialist assessor.

### Specialist Assessor:

- To work with students at Key Stage 3 (KS3) to do basic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision.
- To administer recognised psychometric testing after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews and classroom observations.
- To assist the SENCO in the decision making process about EAA.

### Teaching Staff:

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's **persistent and significant difficulties**.
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENCo.

- 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 must record any support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct EAA are in place for controlled assessments.

## Timelines towards being awarded an EAA Year 7-11

1. Year 6 – The primary school and parents notify the secondary SENCo of any history of need/provision and provide supporting paperwork.
2. Key Stage 3 - Teachers monitor students closely and gather evidence of need for EAA. EAA trialled in tests/exams.
3. Year 9 summer term/ Year 10 first half of Autumn term – Form 8 completed based on evidence supplied by teachers. Specialist Assessor then tests students. SENCo along with the examinations officer applies online.
4. Key Stage 4 (KS4) – EAA in place and all parties informed and may be integrated into daily practices.
5. Final deadline (set and agreed by the school) for teachers to submit evidence and requests for EAA. Mock examinations are the last chance to trial EAA. **Students must use them then or lose them.**
6. Summer Year 11 – exams completed with correct EAA in place as 'normal way of working'.

## Years 12-13

1. Students declare EAA they had at KS4 when they apply to TBSHS Sixth Form or in the first half term of attending.
2. For students new to TBSHS the school will contact feeder schools for evidence of EAA at KS4. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain their documentation from their feeder school. Students who have come up through THSHS should already have EAA in place.
3. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENCo.
4. Trial EAA are put in place for the internal examinations in Year 12. Teachers give feedback from these exams to the SENCo (did students use them? Were they effective?). These internal 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.
5. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENCo or Specialist Assessor by July of Year 12. We accept that students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, the Year 12 summer exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

## Deadlines for making EAA applications

### Year 10

Deadlines for F8 and assessments completion will be published yearly.

The Year 10 summer examinations provide an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

### Year 11

The deadline to raise concerns about a student in Year 11 is data drop term 2b. This enables the SENCo and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 December mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any EAA.

## **Year 12**

F8 and assessments are to be completed during the second half of the Autumn Term.  
The Year 12 summer examinations provided an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

## **Year 13**

**Year 13 is too late to make requests for EAA** as no history of need or provision is in place. The deadline for sixth form EAA requests is July of Year 12, as long as body of evidence has been collected by teachers.

## **Procedure for medical letters**

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school for an application to be made. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.

## **Private assessments/Educational Psychologist reports**

We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. A student's 'normal way of working' in school is paramount. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a private assessment/Educational Psychologist report. In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.

## **External Candidates**

Students must provide recognised supporting documents.

## **Use of Word Processors**

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. Candidates who would benefit from the use of a word processor might have:

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
- Poor handwriting

This list is not exhaustive.

## **Use of Supervised Rest Breaks**

These can be used so anxious or injured candidates are not disadvantaged. It allows them time to recompose/rest without losing examination time. Evidence is required to support the need for this.

## **Use of Separate Accommodation**

Evidence is required to support the candidates need for sitting an examination away from main room.

## **Malpractice**

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually in the spring or in the 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 down for up to 5 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

## **Further Information**

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

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/>

Any questions about exam access arrangements, please contact Mrs. Alison Matthews (SENCo) on 01425 652039.