

2019/20 Update to:

Assessing the need for Access Arrangements in Examinations

A Practical Guide – Fifth Edition, by Lia Castiglione

Introduction

This document provides a brief commentary on the changes to the JCQ regulations “**Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**” since publication in 2018 of “Assessing the need for Access Arrangements”. It covers essential changes made within the 2019/20 JCQ regulations.

The 5th edition of the book itself, which was fully updated in 2018, provides much greater detail on the more fundamental aspects of access arrangements work including, for example, the range of skills to be investigated, tests to be used, interpretation of results, and discussion of the wider issues involved. **Please note** that this update should be read in conjunction with the book, which is available to purchase on the Patoss website: www.patoss-dyslexia.org/Books

However, it is also **imperative** that all professionals familiarise themselves with the JCQ regulations directly and in full as the Guide and these notes are intended to support, but in no way replace, the regulations.

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA)

The JCQ publishes a revised AARA document each autumn, setting out its regulations and guidance on access arrangements for the forthcoming year. Previously, copies of the booklet have been sent to all centres at the beginning of the autumn term. However, the document will no longer be available in hard copy format. It is available to be downloaded from the JCQ website and for schools and colleges as an interactive document through the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

Candidate Personal Data Consent Form

A new, GDPR compliant, 'candidate personal data consent form' was introduced by the JCQ in January 2019. For all applications made since that date, the candidate is required to have signed the updated candidate personal data consent form before an application for access arrangements is made using Access Arrangements Online (AAO).

A candidate aged 13 years or over may sign the form. A parent is only required to sign the form where the candidate is unable to do so him/herself or to countersign the form where the centre deems it appropriate. The form can be downloaded from the JCQ website:

jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms/personal-data-consent-privacy-notice-ao-and-data-protection-confirmation

Once completed, the form should be kept in the candidate's file in hard copy or electronic format for inspection purposes.

Computer reader/reader

Assessment evidence and Form 8 are no longer required for candidates with learning difficulties who require a computer reader/reader.

For all candidates, the evidence required is a short concise file note written by the SENCo on centre-headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre.

An application for a computer reader/reader must still be processed online using AAO.

There is no longer an option to add 25% extra time to an application for a computer reader/reader. However, the need for 25% extra time should always be considered. The candidate may, for example, need to have text read aloud several times to absorb its meaning or need to hear his written responses read back to check their accuracy, or may need 25% extra time due to a processing difficulty or slow writing speed.

If the candidate does require 25% extra time, appropriate evidence must be in place and an online application made (JCQ p34).

Language Modifier

The term 'Language Modifier' has replaced Oral Language Modifier. The JCQ has made this change in response to feedback from BATOD. The evidence criteria for a Language Modifier remains unchanged (JCQ p55).

JCQ Form 8

JCQ Form 8 has been revised for the 2019-20 academic year, with sections renamed and reordered. Part 1 (formerly Section A) contains the centre-based evidence of need and normal way of working and is completed by the SENCO (or assessor working in the centre).

The assessor must have Part 1 before the assessment takes place and assesses the candidate in light of the information it contains. The assessment evidence is recorded within Part 2 (formerly Section C).

Part 2 has been updated, with the evidence for a reader removed as this is no longer required (see page 2). The remaining boxes have been reordered according to the access arrangement being considered.

Part 3 (formerly Section B) now comes after the assessment evidence as the access arrangements being requested are based on the information in Parts 1 and 2.

Assessors and SENCOs need to ensure they are using the updated Form 8 from 1st September 2019.

Please see the updated Form 8 Guidance Sheet which has been added to the book's downloadable resources.

Privately commissioned assessment reports

Whilst a privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre and without the assessor having obtained Form 8 Part 1 before the assessment cannot be used as evidence for access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application through Access Arrangements Online, such a report may contain useful information for the centre.

Therefore, the JCQ recommends that SENCOs and assessors 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 (JCQ p78).

Writing skills

Where the assessment evidence for a candidate with writing difficulties contains a below average standard score for writing speed and/or for spelling accuracy with unrecognisable spelling attempts, an application can be approved through AAO.

However, some candidates who do not have a below average score for spelling or writing speed have writing which is illegible or grammatically incomprehensible. An application for a scribe cannot be approved by AAO as there is no below average score. The SENCo may then decide to refer the application to the awarding body (JCQ p81).

The AARA document contains a useful example illustrating this on page 86 (Example 2).

Storage of access arrangements evidence

For access arrangements that have been processed through AAO, the SENCo is required to store each candidate's evidence for inspection purposes. Awarding Bodies may also request to see evidence of need when considered necessary. The documentation can be kept in hard copy paper format or electronically, with a separate e-folder for each candidate.

Documentation stored electronically must be suitably backed up in an alternative format, for example on a memory stick or in hard copy. The SENCo must be able to access the documentation in the event of an IT failure during an inspection (JCQ p19).

Substantial impairment

The SENCo produces a file note or centre letter to set out the centre evidence for candidates with communication and interaction needs, sensory and physical needs, social, mental and emotional needs, and those who have a current EHCP or Statement (see pages 155 to 160 of the 5th Edition).

The information required in the centre letter or file note has been simplified and a new template can be found in the downloadable resources accompanying the book.

Word processor

The use of a word processor with grammar and spell check switched off is a centre-delegated access arrangement for which no individual formal evidence is required. However, all centres must have a policy on the use of word processors and a member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations (JCQ p51).

Rolling forward a Form 8

When a candidate progresses from GCSE to GCE qualifications, the existing Form 8 can be rolled forward in certain situations. (See Chapter 15 of the 5th Edition).

The information required in the SENCo's cover sheet has been simplified and a new template can be found in the downloadable resources accompanying the book.

For candidates requiring a computer reader/reader, the existing Form 8 does not need to roll forward as assessment evidence is no longer required. The SENCo produces a short concise file note on centre-headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the candidate's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects his/her normal and current way of working within the centre. A new application for a computer reader/reader is then processed through Access Arrangements Online.

AAO training site

The training site for Access Arrangements Online is no longer available. Centre staff processing applications through AAO must ensure that they have the required evidence in place and to hand so that the questions can be addressed accurately.

Updated resources to accompany the 5th Edition

Updated resources in line with the 2019-20 regulations are available to download from the reference provided in the 5th Edition (Appendix 2). These are:

- Guidance sheet to complete Form 8
- Detailed file note templates for 25% extra time, scribe and more than 25% extra time
- Short concise file note template for computer reader/reader
- Roll forward template for 25% extra time and scribe

Evidence requirements for access arrangements

The first column in the table lists the various access arrangements available (JCQ p87).

The middle column indicates the evidence required for each arrangement. (Refer to the JCQ AARA for full details of the required evidence.)

The final column shows whether an online application is required through AAO.

In some cases, an online referral to the Awarding Bodies will be needed.

Access Arrangement	Evidence required	AAO application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplification equipment • Bilingual dictionary • Braille transcript • Braille transcribers • Closed circuit television (CCTV) • Colour naming • Coloured overlays • Communication professional • Coloured/enlarged paper • Live speaker • Low vision aid/magnifier • OCR scanners • Prompter • Read aloud • Examination reading pen • Separate invigilation in the centre 	<p>No formal evidence required.</p> <p>Arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working and be appropriate to their needs.</p>	<p>No application required.</p> <p>Centre delegated access arrangements.</p> <p>[Non-interactive PDF can be ordered via AAO for Coloured/enlarged paper.</p> <p>Other modified papers are also ordered via AAO with no formal evidence required.]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervised rest breaks 	<p>SENCo to produce short concise file note.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word processor 	<p>No individual evidence required.</p> <p>Centre must have a policy on the use of word processors.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual dictionary with 10% extra time 	<p>Evidence compiled by the EAL Coordinator or SENCo meeting the JCQ criteria (AARA p68)</p>	<p>Online application required.</p> <p>Approval through AAO.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer reader/reader 	<p>SENCo to produce short concise file note</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scribe 	<p>Candidates with learning difficulties (without EHCP):</p> <p>Form 8</p>	<p>Online application required.</p> <p>Approval through AAO.</p> <p>An online referral to ABs may be required for rare and exceptional cases.</p>
	<p>Candidates in other categories of need and/or with EHCP:</p> <p>SENCo's file note & specialist evidence/EHCP</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% extra time 	<p>Candidates with learning difficulties (without EHCP):</p> <p>Form 8 and a detailed picture of need</p>	
	<p>Candidates in other categories of need and/or with EHCP:</p> <p>SENCo's file note & specialist evidence/EHCP</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra time of up to 50% (between 26% to 50% extra time) 	<p>Candidates with learning difficulties (including those with an EHCP):</p> <p>Form 8 and a substantial body of centre-based evidence</p>	
	<p>Candidates in other categories of need and/or with EHCP:</p> <p>SENCo's file note & specialist evidence/EHCP</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra time of over 50% 	<p>Only available for candidates with very substantial impairments (not for learning difficulties).</p> <p>SENCo's file note & specialist evidence</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language modifier 	<p><u>All</u> candidates require assessment evidence and Form 8.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other 	<p>Evidence depends on the arrangement being requested.</p> <p>SENCo may need to seek advice from the ABs.</p>	

Update by Lia Castiglione and Nick Lait

Note: No responsibility is taken by Patoss, or contributing authors, for any misunderstandings or failures to comply with the JCQ regulations during this or subsequent years.
