



## **Important supplementary information for SENCOs and assessors Academic year 2020/21**

### **Introduction**

This document sets out supplementary information for SENCOs and assessors for the academic year 2020/21. It covers:

- Completing Part 1 of Form 8: Painting a picture of need and demonstrating normal way of working
- Undertaking remote assessments
- Arrangements for the Autumn 2020 series
- Rolling forward of approved applications
- Arrangements for the June 2021 series
- FE Colleges
- Use of technology

### **Completing Part 1 of Form 8: Painting a picture of need and demonstrating normal way of working**

The JCO awarding bodies are aware that for many schools plans to gather centre-based information and assess students during the Summer Term of Year 9 will have been disrupted this year. They recognise that the amount of centre based evidence to paint a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working may be more limited in light of the disruption in recent months.

The three questions in Part 1 of Form 8 are:

1. What is the candidate's history of difficulties?
2. What are the candidate's current difficulties in the classroom, tests and examinations?
3. What support and adjustments are in place for the candidate in the classroom, tests and examinations?

Online applications must always be substantiated with the evidence required by the JCO regulations. A picture of need and the demonstration of normal way of working is a core part of this evidence.

SENCOs can use a variety of sources to help them to paint a picture of the candidate's needs and demonstrate their normal way of working. For example, comments and observations from teaching and support staff, evidence of support for Key Stage 2 assessments, the candidate's self-reported difficulties, the use of baseline and tracking data. Other sources of information that could be used to paint a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working are:

- The candidate's self-reported difficulties (e.g. a questionnaire completed by the candidate)
- Comments and observations from parents/carers
- Comments from teaching staff and support staff familiar with the candidate
- An individual education plan or learning plan
- Use of baseline and tracking data

### **Undertaking remote assessments**

Access Arrangements Assessors may need to consider carrying out assessments with social distancing measures in place or, as a last resort, remotely via an online video call.

Ideally, assessments will be carried out in the physical presence of the candidate. Many test publishers have provided resources and guidance to facilitate remote assessment. Where assessment can be delayed (rather than be conducted remotely) assessors should wait until it is possible to meet with the candidate.

[SASC](#) has issued guidance on remote assessment and assessment with social distancing measures in place. Test scores recorded within Part 2 of Form 8 must be obtained from an assessment that has been conducted in accordance with professional advice and within publishers' guidelines.

### **Arrangements for the November 2020 examination series (this includes the exceptional Autumn 2020 series of GCE AS, A-level and additional GCSE examinations in England)**

DfE guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series/centre-responsibility-for-autumn-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series-guidance>

provides centres in England with information on responsibilities for entering candidates for examinations this Autumn.

Except for GCSE English Language and Mathematics and the associated condition of funding arrangements, the centre which entered the candidate for the June 2020 examination series should be responsible for entering the candidate for any examinations this Autumn.

Centres are expected to extend these arrangements to any private candidates wishing to sit examinations this Autumn. This would include candidates who were not on the centre's roll but where the centre had made entries by 20 March 2020, in addition to candidates who were on the centre's roll in Summer 2020.

This continuity will be important for private candidates. It is more likely that there will not have been enough evidence to award a Centre Assessment Grade for the June 2020 examination series. Examinations this Autumn will therefore be essential for their progression.

In most cases the school/college will know the candidate and will be aware of any access arrangements he/she requires.

As the November 2020 examination series is an exceptional examination series for centres in England, and in view of the disruption all centres have encountered in recent months, the JCQ awarding bodies are making a significant change. It is hoped that this change will streamline processes for centres whilst at the same time maintaining the integrity of the access arrangements process.

### **Rolling forward of approved applications - GCE AS, A-level and GCSE examinations**

Where a candidate will be returning to his/her former school or college to sit examinations, an approved application for an access arrangement which would have expired prior to, during or after the June 2020 examination series may now roll forward until **27 November 2020**.

The centre does not need to process a new online application. However, the SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, must ensure that the evidence to support the online application remains on file and is available for inspection purposes.

The rolling forward of an approved application will apply to those applications approved by the online system as well as those applications automatically rejected by the online system but subsequently referred to and approved by an awarding body. For example, an application for more than 25% extra time, 'Other' or a practical assistant.

The SENCo will need to ensure that the access arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable.

In the event of a candidate's circumstances changing, the SENCo may (where required) need to produce evidence and process an online application.

### **Arrangements for the June 2021 examination series**

In order to provide stability to SENCos and assessors only very minor changes have been made to the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* for the academic year 2020/21. No changes have been made to the evidence requirements, the processing arrangements or the rules which govern the use of an access arrangement.

SENCos and assessors **must** of course continue to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

However, the JCQ awarding bodies offering GCSE, GCE AS and A-level qualifications wish to remind SENCOs of an important change that has been made. In view of the disruption encountered during the Summer Term of the academic year 2019/20 and the fact that centres will be readjusting during the Autumn Term of the academic year 2020/21, the deadline for the processing of applications has been changed.

The deadline for the processing of access arrangements, where required, for candidates sitting GCSE, GCE AS and/or A-level examinations in June 2021 has been extended in view of these exceptional circumstances from **21 February 2021** to **31 March 2021**.

## **FE Colleges**

The JCQ awarding bodies appreciate the challenges FE Colleges face in trying to gather evidence to support online applications for access arrangements. This is particularly so for the large cohorts of candidates often entered for GCSE English Language and Mathematics qualifications.

When approached by a FE College, even where there may not be an established working relationship, awarding bodies would strongly encourage a school to assist the college.

The college should be sent a PDF of a fully completed Form 8, together with a PDF of the assessor's post-graduate qualification in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7.

Whilst the Additional Needs/Learning Support Team will need to determine whether the access arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable, receipt of this evidence will help them considerably. They will be able to determine more effectively the needs of candidates with learning difficulties re-sitting GCSE English Language and/or Mathematics qualifications.

Additional Needs/Learning Support Teams will need to check that the Form 8 is in order before processing a new online application for the access arrangement(s). All parts of the form must have been completed, being signed and dated.

Whilst an online application for a scribe does not require a detailed picture of need to supplement the Form 8, Additional Needs/Learning Support Teams will be required to produce a detailed picture of need for applications relating to 25% extra time.

## **Use of technology**

SENCOs may wish to consider the use of technology to a much greater extent instead of readers and scribes. Computer readers, examination reading pens, speech recognition technology and word processors not only allow candidates to work independently but are also a better preparation for Further and Higher Education and the world of employment.