



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Guidance regarding parental/candidate requests for access arrangements when the centre has no evidence of need

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Produced on behalf of:



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Regulations and guidance about examination access arrangements are outlined in the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*. As this document makes clear, an access arrangement can only be granted where the centre has evidence that the arrangement is required, there is a 'picture of need' **and** it is the candidate's normal way of working.

Where a parent or candidate requests an arrangement that has not been recommended by subject teachers, learning support or teaching assistants who are familiar with the way the candidate works in the classroom, the SENCo, access arrangements coordinator or an equivalent member of staff should fully investigate the request.

This may involve:

- speaking directly with the candidate about their experiences and perceived difficulties;
- consulting with subject teachers and support staff who know the candidate's classroom behaviour and performance;
- carrying out informal screening or observational assessments (where appropriate and proportionate);
- reviewing classwork, timed tasks or mock exam scripts for evidence of difficulty.

If it is determined that the access arrangement is not justified or appropriate, the SENCo (or equivalent) should provide feedback to the parent(s) or candidate, explaining why the requested arrangement would not be appropriate. For example, it should be explained that:

- the centre must adhere strictly to the JCQ regulations;
- granting arrangements without the required evidence would constitute malpractice;
- access arrangements are not given on the basis of preference or a diagnosis alone; they must reflect how the candidate ordinarily works in the centre and what is needed to remove a disadvantage.

The JCQ document *Guidance for parents, carers and students about access arrangements* might be a useful resource. It is important that parents and candidates understand that the centre **must** work within the published regulations.

If the parent(s) or candidate continue to request the arrangement, the SENCo (or equivalent) should refer the matter to a member of the senior leadership team. Ideally, there will be a member of the senior leadership team who has a good working knowledge of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and who can engage with parents and candidates in a supportive but informed manner. The senior leader should then liaise with the parent(s) or candidate explaining why the arrangement would not be appropriate. They should reinforce the centre's position and the legal and regulatory constraints it must operate within.

An online application must only be processed where it is supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement with the full supporting evidence in place.