Wyedean
School and Sixth Form Centre
Aspire together, achieve together
adfecere pariter, perfecere pariter

Access Arrangements Policy

Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre

Access Arrangements Policy

Centre name	Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre
Centre number	57161
Date policy first created	20/10/2025
Current policy approved by	Full Governing Body
Current policy reviewed by	Suzanne Howells
Date of review	10/11/2026
Date of next review	10/11/2027

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	**Name**
Head of centre	Gwennan Jeremiah
Senior leader(s)	Emma Hemsley Assistant Principal Academic
Exams Manager	Suzanne Howells
SENCo (or equivalent role)	Cari Sullivan
Other staff (if applicable)	Bianca Dowd Hanson Deputy SENCo / AA co-ordinator Sharon Jones EO Natalie Miller Assessor

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that access arrangements process at Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations and reflects centre practice.

References in this policy to GR, ICE and AARA refer to the JCQ documents **General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for conducting examinations** and **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**.

References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see AARA 1.8). The definitions and procedures in AARA relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments will also apply in Northern Ireland.

Introduction

(AARA Definitions)

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed **before** an assessment. They allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

Reasonable adjustments

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 awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a vision impaired candidate who could read Braille. A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

The centre must ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and:

- is complying with its obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements (GR 5.4)
- has a written process in place to check the qualification(s) of its assessor(s) **and** that the correct procedures are followed, as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* (GR 5.4)

1. General principles

The head of centre/senior leadership team will appoint a SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff, to coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine and implement appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties or disabilities, those for whom English is an additional language and those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4)

A centre **must** make decisions on appropriate access arrangements for their candidates. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision for the centre. They will not have a working knowledge of an individual candidate's needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in

timed assessments. It is the responsibility of the SENCo to make appropriate and informed decisions based on the JCQ regulations. (AA 4.2)

The principles for Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre to consider include:

- The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate (AARA 4.2)
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AARA 4.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis (AARA 4.2)
- Applications for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the start of or during the first year of a two-year the course having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working (AARA 4.2)
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment (AARA 4.2)
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre (AARA 4.2)
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (AARA 4.2)

The main elements of the process detailing staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and the conduct of examinations are covered in:

- Refer to Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre
  Equalities Policy (exams) http://www.wyedean.gloucs.sch.uk/Exams/Exam-Policies/

2. The assessment process

At Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre, assessments are carried out by:

- an appropriately qualified assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre in accordance with the JCQ requirements (AARA 7.3)

Details and qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Natalie Miller

an access
arrangements assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course at
or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual
specialist assessment who may conduct assessments
to be recorded within Part 2 of Form 8*

*The reference to at least 100 hours relating to
individual specialist assessment would include lecture, seminar and tutorial
time, study time, assessment time and time spent completing assignments.
Courses which are accredited at AMBDA or APC Level would meet this requirement,
as would post-graduate courses at or equivalent to Level 7 which provide a
qualification in access arrangements assessment.

a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising
Certificate, as awarded by BDA, the Dyslexia Guild or Patoss and listed on the
SASC website, who may conduct

assessments to be recorded within Part
2 of Form 8 and where necessary undertake full diagnostic assessments;

Appointment of assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements (AARA 7.3)
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate (AARA 7.3)
- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified will be drawn from the appropriate source(s), for example, a copy of a current practising certificate, a copy of a Level 7 assessment qualification certificate, screenshot of relevant registration or listing showing the unique registration number/code, expiry date (where applicable) and/or certificate number (AARA 7.4)

Additional information:

Refer
to 'Wyedean School Appointment of
Specialist Assessor Policy' http://www.wyedean.gloucs.sch.uk/Exams/Exam-Policies/

Reporting the appointment of assessors

- Evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified is held on file for inspection purposes (AARA 7.4)

When requested, the evidence will be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by:

- The exams manager or access arrangements co-ordinator or SENCo

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist teacher assessors holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, who are directly employed within the centre, there is no need to record the names of these individuals within *Access arrangements online*. (AARA 7.4)
- The names of all other assessors, who are assessing candidates studying qualifications as covered by the *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* document must be entered into *Access arrangements online* to confirm their status (AARA 7.4)

Process for the assessment of a candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor

Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre confirms:

- Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor will be followed and Form 8 (JCQ/AA/LD - Profile of Learning Difficulties) will be completed (AARA 7.5, 7.6)
- Arrangements must be made for the candidate to be assessed by the centre's appointed assessor (AARA 7.5)
- Assessors **must** personally conduct the assessments. They **must not** sign off assessments carried out by another professional (AARA 7.5)
- The assessor **must** carry out tests which are relevant to support the application (AARA 7.5)
- A privately commissioned assessment, where the centre has not been involved, **cannot** be used to award access arrangements and **cannot** be used to process an application using *Access arrangements online* (AARA 7.3)
- Relevant staff 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 (AARA 7.3)

Additional information:

Refer to Appendix A and 'Wyedean School Equalities Policy (exams)' http://www.wyedean.gloucs.sch.uk/Exams/Exam-Policies/

Picture of need/normal way of working

Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre confirms:

- Before the candidate's assessment, the person appointed in the centre **must** provide the assessor with background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The centre and the assessor **must** work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process (AARA 7.5)

Additional information:

Refer to
Appendix A

Recording evidence of need

.

mock papers

.

signed teacher declarations

.

signed SENCo declarations

.

statement of special educational needs

.

health professional's statements

.

assessor tests

.

Form 8

Gathering evidence to confirm
normal way of working

.

signed teacher declarations

.

mock papers

3. Processing access arrangements and adjustments

Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is used to apply for approval of arrangements/adjustments for the qualifications listed within the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

> AAO is a shared digital service that enables centres to request and manage pre-agreed adjustments, such as extra time, readers, scribes or modified papers, for students with specific needs, disabilities or temporary injuries in a consistent and efficient way across JCQ member qualifications. It sits within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and is used by centres to submit a single application per student, rather than applying separately to each member, helping to streamline administration while supporting regulatory compliance and data protection requirements. (www.jcq.org.uk/about-us/shared-services/#aao)

Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.

Online applications **must** only be processed where they are supported by the centre **and** the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (AARA 8.1)

Candidates **must** be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using Access arrangements online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. (AARA 8.6)

Centre delegated arrangements/adjustments

Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by:

- Access arrangments co-ordinator / SENCo

Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by:

- Access arrangments co-ordinator / SENCo

- **The use of a word processor**

The Refer to Wyedean School word processor policy http://www.wyedean.gloucs.sch.uk/Exams/Exam-Policies/ details the criteria Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre specifically uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations and assessments.

- **Alternative rooming arrangements**

The Access Arrangements Policy details the criteria Wyedean School & Sixth Form Centre uses to award alternative rooming arrangements, e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs or an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation.

Additional information

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved alternative rooming arrangements e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs (formerly known as separate invigilation) will be made by the SENCo (or equivalent role).
The decision will be based on:
• whether the candidate has a substantial and long term impairment which has an adverse effect; and
• the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (AARA 5.16)
• the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities. For example, a long-term medical condition which has a substantial and adverse effect.
Some students may need to sit their exams in a smaller room. JCQ require students to have an identified, substantial impairment to be able to have an alternative invigilation arrangement (smaller room). This will be decided on a case by case basis, but will require evidence provided by one or more of the following:
• CAMHS
• a HCPC registered psychologist/Local Authority Educational Psychology Service, Psychiatrist, Hospital Consultant (NOT A GP)
• LA Specialist Service.
The evidence will need to demonstrate that the student has had a long term condition which prevents them from sitting the examination in the examination hall.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)
In most cases where the above evidence is provided, only a smaller room will be offered, not separate invigilation.

Modified papers

Modified papers (in the standard formats available) are ordered using AAO.

- Modified papers must be ordered in advance of a specific examination series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers are prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres must provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper (AARA 6.1)
- Modified papers **must not** be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series (AARA 6.1)
- For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before their first examination (AARA 6.1)

Roles and responsibilities

When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed online and approved, the evidence of need (where required) must be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (AARA 4.2)

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual candidate must be created. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. (AARA 4.2)

It is the responsibility of:

- the Assessor to inform candidates that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Access Arrangements co-ordinator / deputy SENCo to submit applications for approval using AAO
- Access Arrangements co-ordinator / deputy SENCo to keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a copy of the candidate's approved application, appropriate evidence of need (where required) and evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required) (AARA 8.6)
- Access Arrangements co-ordinator / deputy SENCo to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO
- Exams Manager to order modified papers

Additional responsibilities:

Changes effective from 1 September 2026

(Amended) Under heading **Appointment of assessors** amended wording of bullet point relating to evidence that the assessor(s) is/are suitably qualified.

(Added/amended) Under heading **Arrangements/adjustments requiring awarding body approval** added/amended information relating to AAO.

Centre-specific changes

THESE ARE NOT CHANGES FOR THE YEAR, BUT CONTINUED POLICIES NOT OUTLINED EARLIER IN THIS POLICY

Non-electronic ear defenders/ear plugs / Non-electronic headphones policy (Exams)
Non electronic ear defenders / ear plugs / non-electronic headphones will be permitted where:
• the wearing of ear plugs is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre (from year 9 or before)
• the need can be evidenced by teaching staff / Head of Year / Tutor showing the candidates significant difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom
Evidence must also include one of the following:
• a formal diagnosis of a learning difficulty, a current EHCP or Statement of special educational needs
• a formal diagnosis of sensory and/or physical needs
• a formal diagnosis of social, mental and emotional needs
• a formal diagnosis of a medical condition at consultant level (not a GP)
In the form of:
• a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist OR
• a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability
The exams office will require a pair of earbuds (purchased by the student) to retain throughout internal and external exams so that the centre can ensure that they are controlled, know they aren't linked to any external media and can ensure that they are always available/not forgotten on exam day.

The centre recommended buds are:

Loop Experience High Fidelity Ear Plugs – for Noise Reduction, Concerts, Work, Musicians, Motorcycles and Noise Sensitivity – Silicone Ear Tips in XS, S, M, L – 18dB Noise Cancelling - Black : Amazon.co.uk: Musical Instruments & DJ
These should be provided to the exams office, still in the original sealed packaging and they will be returned to the student after the last exam.

Alternatively, the centre can provide over ear noise cancelling headphones.

Appendix A
Exam Access Arrangements - A Guide for Parents and Students at Wyedean School
Access arrangements are agreed before an examination or assessment. They allow students/students with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the examination and show what they know and can do without changing the integrity and demands of the examination.
The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies (such as exam boards) to make a reasonable adjustment where a student 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. Disabled means 'limitations going beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'. Access arrangements during assessments and examinations give a distinct advantage to students who do not have a 'substantial impairment'.

Identification:
Screening for access arrangements must be completed by a JCQ qualified assessor. The external assessor comes into school during the first school term (September to December). Indicators for an initial referral to the assessor and consideration for access arrangements are lower than average standardised scores). A mean standardised score of below eighty five will automatically result in a referral.

Students on the SEND register, who have been identified as fulfilling one or more of the following criteria, will also be referred to the assessor:

• A specific medical need or disability
• A specific learning difficulty and lower than average standardised scores
• A specific learning difficulty that impacts upon their progress across all subjects
• A Statement of Special Educational Need / an Education and Health Care Plan

Referrals for screening can also be made by teachers where there are concerns that a student may have persistent and significant difficulties within the classroom. For access arrangements to be granted a body of evidence is required from all teachers to accompany the lower than average standardised scores and the assessors authorisation.
If the access arrangement is for medical reasons a medical report/letter specifying the need for access arrangements needs to be provided. There have been significant changes in the evidence required in cases of emotional, social and mental health issues. If a student has previously been granted a "Smaller Room" this may not be awarded in future exams (from September 2015) as there is further evidence required for this arrangement to be granted. (See 'Smaller Room' section for evidence required).
Normal Way of Working – this is a key aspect of access arrangement provision: students must be using their access arrangement as their normal way of working regularly within the classroom for all access arrangement qualifying subjects. If students are not demonstrating a need for an access arrangement it may result in the access arrangement being withdrawn.
Below are the following reasonable adjustments granted by JCQ after assessment and evidence are collated and analysed:

Smaller Room
Some students may need to sit their exams in a smaller room. Recent changes by JCQ require students to have an identified, substantial impairment to be able to have an alternative invigilation arrangement (smaller room). This will be decided on a case by case basis, but will require evidence provided by one or more of the following:
• CAMHS
• a HCPC registered psychologist/Local Authority Educational Psychology Service, Psychiatrist, Hospital Consultant (NOT A GP)
• LA Specialist Service.
The evidence will need to demonstrate that the student has had a long term condition which prevents them from sitting the examination in the examination hall.
Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre. (AA, section 5.16)
Supervised Rest Breaks

Rest breaks may be awarded where there is a need for a student to stop during an exam to take a break. The JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) guidance states 'in order to be awarded supervised rest breaks a student must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 with a diagnosed condition'. The total time allowed for a break is agreed in advance of the exam. The exam is paused and then re-started when the student is ready to begin again. If the student needs to leave, they must be supervised at all times. Where no other access arrangement is granted students with rest breaks will sit their examinations in the examination hall.
Extra Time of up to 25%

Students may be awarded up to 25% extra time if they need longer to process information and/or longer to read and write. Subject specific evidence must be provided to show that the student has required extra time to complete work in class, in particular timed assessments and mock exams.
Reader

Students awarded a reader will take their exams in a smaller room and will use an invigilator or computer software to read their examination paper to them. A reader is a responsible adult, from the trained invigilation team, who reads the instructions of the question paper and the questions to the student. There are strict guidelines that are followed by the reader these will be discussed with the student at the start of each exam.
Read Aloud

Some students may benefit from being able to read the questions out loud. Students will be in a room alone. This must reflect their normal way of working and assessments and examinations would need to have been taken in a separate room throughout KS4/KS5; evidence will be collated from teachers to enable these students to be placed in

a separate room.
Word Processor/Laptop

The use of a word processor must reflect the student's normal way of working and be appropriate to the student's needs. This means a student must have used a laptop regularly in and out of class to complete classwork, tests and homework. There must be clear and recent evidence available that demonstrates that the student has a significant need that requires them to work from a laptop. Evidence will be gathered from all subject teachers to confirm that this arrangement is necessary. Spelling and grammar checking will not be enabled.
Please note that for some students shifting the focus from paper to screen and back again can cause more delay/distraction during examinations than writing by hand. This is particularly the case for shorter answer question papers and for students who have certain Dyslexic traits.

A word processor may be granted if the student fulfils one or more of the following criteria:
• A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
• A medical condition (broken wrist)
• A physical disability (Hypermobility)
• A sensory impairment
A word processor cannot simply be granted to a student because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.
Under normal circumstances, a word processor will not be available in a Maths exam.
Scribe

A scribe is a responsible adult, from the trained invigilation team, who writes down or word processes the dictated answers to the questions on behalf of a student. Alternatively a student may use a word processor with the spelling and grammar check enabled; however the student will not have access to the marks awarded for spelling and punctuation. These exams take place in a smaller room.
Prompter

These are awarded where a student has a specific learning difficulty that results in them having little or no sense of time, they may lose concentration easily or have another condition that may well lead to them revisiting questions rather than moving on. The prompt keeps the student focused and can move them on to the next question.
Deadlines for application

Arrangements must be approved before the strict JCQ deadlines. Applications cannot be made after the deadlines, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.
Where a student has a temporary difficulty (eg a broken wrist), arrangements can be put into place.

Cari Sullivan
SENCo