

Boston High School

Word processor and Access

arrangements policy

2023

Written by Kate Osborn

This policy is reviewed **annually** to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
Date of next review	March 2024

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
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What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

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 particular 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'. [AA Definitions, page 3]

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 a number of 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'. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'. [AA Definitions, page 11]

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Boston High School 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...

[JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres, 4.2]

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [GR](#)

This policy is maintained and held by the SENCo alongside the individual files of each access arrangements candidate. Each file contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

This publication is further referred to in this policy as [AA](#)

Where this policy refers to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) 'Instructions for conducting examinations' within this document this will be referred to as ICE.

Special Educational Needs and Disability policy

Part of the access arrangements process is covered in the Boston High School Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy. This policy includes staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements. This policy is available on the Boston High School website.

The Access arrangements policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

The assessment process

Assessments are carried out by an assessor appointed by the Head of Centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA](#) 7.3.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor

We appoint the services of a Specialist Assessor, who holds the current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate, from the Lincolnshire County Council Specialist Teacher Team. **Our current assessors are Karen Brown and Jacky Swift.**

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged in the centre, evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AA](#). This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

Checking the qualification of the assessor

We hold a copy of the assessor's qualification on file so that it is available for inspector purposes by a JCQ Inspector [AA](#) 7.3 *Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties*.

The Head of Centre ensures that evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) is obtained at the point of engagement/employment and prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without prior consultation with the centre cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application using Access arrangements online. 7.3.6.

A privately commissioned assessment does not follow the processes required as above or paint the picture or need and evidence of normal way of working within the centre. The SENCo would however 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.

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

As outlined in the Boston High School Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy students are referred to the SEND team via a variety of sources. Once they are referred and identified as having learning differences then the SENCO starts to create a picture of need. A candidate will not be assessed until this picture of need is built, access arrangements are trialled and the impact of them is evaluated. Where a candidate has learning difficulties and is not subject to a current *Education, Health and Care Plan* the SENCO must paint this picture of need and complete Part 1 of Form 8 prior to the candidate being assessed.

Boston High School follows the requirements of [AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor](#) and [7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties](#)

Evidence of need and Part 1 of the Form 8 is provided to the assessor before the candidate is assessed. [[GR 7.6.1](#)]

Painting a picture of need and gathering evidence to demonstrate normal way of working

Diagnosis from an approved assessor alone does not establish the history of need required by the Joint Council of Qualifications for the school to be able to apply for Access Arrangements. Evidence of the provision being the student's normal way of working at school will also be required. The SENCO builds and holds evidence of need in order to demonstrate that it is the candidate's normal way of working.

The picture and evidence of need is provided to the assessor before the candidate's assessment. [AA 7.5 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor](#). *The picture of need is painted as per Part 1 of the Form 8 7.6 Completing Form 8 – JCQ/AA/LD, Profile of Learning Difficulties.*

Before the candidate's assessment, the SENCO must provide the assessor with background information, ie a picture of need has been painted as per Part 1 of Form 8. The SENCO and the assessor work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process. All candidates must be assessed in light of the picture of need and background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements for every examination/assessment and every subject. As subjects and the methods of assessment vary, so the demands on the candidate will vary. Consideration is therefore

made on a subject by subject basis [AA](#)

Processing access arrangements

Arrangements requiring awarding body approval

Access arrangements online (AAO) is a tool provided by JCQ member awarding bodies for centres to apply for required access arrangement approval for the qualifications listed in [AA 8.5](#). This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications listed on page 92 ([AA](#)).

AAO is accessed within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) by logging in to one of the awarding body secure extranet sites. A single application is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

The responsibility to request access arrangements specifically lies with the SENCO [AA 7.5.3](#). The examination officer applies for arrangements requiring approval using AAO. The Examination Officer processes these on instruction from the SENCO and using the information provided within the Form 8. Applications are made before the published JCQ deadlines.

Form 8s are made up of 3 parts. Part 1 is completed prior to assessment by the Specialist Assessor. The Specialist Assessor completes Part 2. Part 3 is then completed with the details of the access arrangements to be requested. A copy of the Form 8 and a signed candidate personal data consent form is held by both the Examinations Officer and SENCO. Further appropriate evidence of need is held within the SEND office. These records are available for inspection by the JCQ Centre Inspection Service. This process has been put into place to meet the requirements of [[AA 7.6.4](#)]

Some applications may not gain automatic approval and require further information and evidence to be submitted; this information is collated by the SENCO and forwarded by the Examinations Officer. Arrangements for the candidate may then be approved/refused on an individual basis by the different awarding bodies. If an application is refused then this access arrangement will not be in place for the candidate for future examinations.

Centre-delegated access arrangements

JCQ publication *Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* sets out which access arrangements may be centre delegated. Approval for these are only made by the SENCO. The process for identifying the need and creating a picture of need remains the same as for those which require external approval. A record of these, alongside all access arrangements in place, is kept within the 'Access Arrangements' electronic file which is locked by and maintained by the Examinations Officer.

Centre-specific criteria for access arrangements

Word processor (exams)

An exam candidate may be approved the use of a word processor where this is appropriate to the candidate's needs and not simply because this is the candidate's preferred way of working within the centre.

This policy includes the statement of the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for exams. This statement is also available at the end of this document, see appendix 1.

Centres are allowed to provide a word processor (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) **with the spelling and grammar check/predictive text disabled** to a candidate **where it is their normal way of working within the centre**, unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise. For example, where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates. This also includes an electronic braille or a tablet. [ICE 14.20]

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 use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre.

A member of Boston High School's Senior Leadership Team has produced a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations. A copy of this is attached to both this policy and the **school's** Word Processor in Exams policy.

[AA 5.8.4]

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement.

(AA 5.8.1)

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate.

Although access arrangements are intended to allow access to assessments, they cannot be granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

(AA 4.2.2)

Candidates may not require the same access arrangements in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. SENCOs must consider the need for access arrangements on a subject-by-subject basis.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Boston High School complies with AA. Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties and (chapter 5.8) Word processor when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in his/her exams.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

The use of a word processor

The centre will

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to a candidate if it is appropriate to their needs

Needs may include

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to write legibly
 - a medical condition
 - a physical disability
 - a sensory impairment
 - planning and organisational problems when writing by hand
 - poor handwriting (AA 5.8.4)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
 - not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
 - consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
 - consider the needs of the candidate at the start of the candidate's course leading to a qualification based on evidence gathered that firmly establishes the candidate's needs and 'normal way of working' in the classroom, internal tests/exams, mock exams etc. and confirm arrangements in place before the candidate takes an exam or assessment (AA 4.2.5)
 - provide access to word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

The centre will not

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate 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 (AA 5.8.4)

Exceptions

The only exceptions to the above where the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate would be

- in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course (AA 4.2.5)
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Centre specific processes

An electronic record of candidates who have been provided with a centre delegated access arrangement of a word processor is kept. This record is within the Access Arrangements electronic document locked and maintained by the Examinations Officer. The Access Arrangements document is available for staff to read via the staff area of the Shared drive. The SENCO informs the Examinations Officer when a candidate satisfactorily meets the criteria described above and has been approved for this arrangement. The Examinations Officer then updated this document accordingly.

Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated primarily in a delegated examinations IT room (this may be IT1, IT2 or IT4). They may also be in the main examinations hall with the main cohort using a laptop. They may also be accommodated in alternative room, dependent on the needs of the student whilst complying with the regulations.

In compliance with the regulations the centre:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (5.8.1)
- Occasionally a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort, in this instance the battery capacity of the word processor will be checked before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- The invigilator ensures the candidate is reminded to complete his/her centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code. (ICE 14.22) This appears as a front page before opening the examination paper and candidates therefore complete this before commencing the examination. Students practise this process during their mock examinations.
- The document automatically forces the candidate to save and then autosaves every one minutes.

- The IT department set the documents at 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24). However candidates may change this, to allow to access for impairments such as visual impairments.
- Page numbers on the answer pages automatically number.

(ICE 14.25)

The centre will ensure the word processor:

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable and is not connected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe

Portable storage medium

The centre will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

Printing the script after the exam is over

The centre will ensure:

- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his or her own
- a word processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- a word processor cover sheet (Form 4) is completed and included with the candidate's typed script (according to the relevant awarding body's instructions)

Centre specific processes

Boston High School uses the software programme ExamsWritePad

Boston High School uses the electronic reader software programme 'ReadWrite' according to the regulations within Section 5.5

Separate invigilation within the centre

A decision where an exam candidate may be approved separate invigilation within the centre will be made by the SENCo.

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** in internal schools tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs [AA]
- The candidate's difficulties are therefore established within Boston High School and known to a Form Tutor, Head of Key Stage (Assistant Head), the SENCO and/or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities (Deputy Head, Safeguarding Lead)
- Evidence will be requested. Where this is medical evidence, this must be from a medical specialist such as a consultant rather than a candidate's own GP.

Evidence from medical professionals relating to a candidate's disability

Evidence of disability may be required in addition to the SENCo's detailed information and picture of need. This would need to be supported by confirmation of the candidate's disability:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT) **or**
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service **or**
- a **current** Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the candidate's disability.

-For example, an Occupational Therapist specialising in Children and Young People Services, learning disability, mental health.

NB A letter from the candidate's GP is not acceptable.

Appendices

Appendix 1

The criteria Boston High School uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations

The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams. An exception to this is where a candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology.

The use of word processors

There are also exceptions where a candidate may be awarded/allocated the use of a word processor in exams where he/she has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates. Normal way of working is established through a student's use of a word processor in assessments, tests and mock examinations. The use of a laptop in lessons and access to the SEND departments laptops is also assigned to students with the SENCO approval where they meet the criteria outlined.

Needs might include where a candidate has, for example:

- 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

The only exception to the above where the use of a word processor may be considered for a candidate would be

- on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury at the time of the assessment
- where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates

Arrangements for the use of word processors at the time of the assessment

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be provided by the IT department in liaison with the SENCo and the exams officer. In exceptional circumstances where the number of appropriate word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session, the cohort will be split into two groups. One group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the awarding body's published start time. Boston High School currently use the IT rooms for examinations and this would therefore be in very exceptional circumstances. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7 of ICE.

Statement produced by: **Anne-Marie Franks**, Deputy Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team
Statement date: **21st February 2023**