

Special Needs

A candidate's special needs requirements are determined by the SENCo, Educational Psychologist, Specialist Dyslexia Teacher and/or other medical specialists. The SENCo and/or Specialist Assessor can inform staff of any special arrangements that individual candidates have been granted for their course and in exams.

Access arrangements

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo/Specialist Assessor.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take exams is the responsibility of both the SENCo and Exams officer.

Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the SENCo.

Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the SEN Exams TA, with the Exams Officer.

Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SEN Exams TA with the Exams Officer.

As an exam centre we will ensure that the school is accessible to both internal and external students in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, by considering the following:

The building -

- Ensure that the entrances to the centre and corridors approaching the exam rooms are well lit.
- Lighting should be evenly distributed, ensuring that it doesn't cause glare and shadows. This is particularly important for people with a visual impairment or with perceptual difficulties.
- Ensure that there is no lighting which may trigger seizures for those students with epilepsy.
- Make sure that any obstacles are removed from corridors and that there are safe access and exit routes in order to meet the health and safety duty to staff and students, in particular people with mobility impairments, including wheelchair users.
- If possible, arrange exam rooms on the ground floor of the building and ensure that they are located near emergency exits.
- Where a private room has been arranged for an exam, check that the environment is suitable for the student e.g. ensure enough room for a wheelchair and its supports.
- Ensure that those who need to take medication during the course of the exam can do so in privacy and as speedily as possible.
- Try to arrange exam rooms which are close to an accessible toilet.
- Check that there is a facility to open the door in an accessible toilet from the outside in an emergency.
- Ensure that all staff and students, including disabled students and staff, are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures so disabled students can be safely evacuated from the building, whatever their impairment.

Seating -

- If it is known that a student may become unwell during the exam because of the nature of their disability, try to ensure they are seated close to the exits to make them feel more comfortable and limit disruption for others.
- Make sure that there is sufficient space between desks and chairs to enable a student (or invigilator) wheelchair user, to enter and leave the area without difficulty.
- Make sure that there are chairs available outside exam rooms to enable those with mobility issues or those who may simply be experiencing particular stress to sit and rest before they enter the exam.
- Ensure that seating is appropriate and comfortable for those who may have a disability which affects seating and posture.

Signage -

- Make sure that all the signs for the exam and those provided by JCQ are suitably sized and adapted to meet the needs of disabled students.
- Sign content should be simple, short and easily understood.
- Text and lettering should be in a clear, uncomplicated and reasonably sized (12pt).

Emergency evacuation -

- Ensure that all staff, including invigilators, know the procedures in place for disabled staff or students, in particular for those who may need assistance to leave a building.
- Procedures should be in place so that staff and invigilators know who is responsible for responding to emergency calls.
- Make sure that when evacuation and emergency procedures are being explained to students, appropriate explanation is given to disabled staff and students whose arrangements may be different.

Resources -

- Where computers are being used for an exam, ensure that hardware and software have been properly adapted and tested for those who may use them, such as people with a visual or aural impairment.
- Ensure that there are backups and alternatives in case support equipment ceases to function.

In addition to the above practical steps which ensure that the centre is appropriate for disabled students, a range of adjustments can be made to ensure there is a level playing field for disabled students. The Exams Officer will be very familiar with making adjustments to existing exam arrangements. These are not 'concessions' for the individual students but adjustments designed to reduce/remove unfair disadvantage.

These adjustments include:

- Modified test papers, for example enlarged print or Braille
- Up to 25 per cent extra time (or considerably more depending on the nature of a student's disability)

- A reader or scribe. Be sensitive to the fact that many people, for example those with autism, will find it hard to relate to someone who is a stranger. Take steps to introduce these support workers to students before the exam.
- Supervised rest breaks. Students with hyperactivity or obsessive compulsive disorders may need opportunities to take a break and rest during an exam. This may also be the case for students who experience fatigue because of their impairment or long-term conditions such as cancer. We will ensure that these rest areas are suitable, while still remaining secure for the purposes of the exam process.
- Different coloured scripts
- Use of a bilingual dictionary
- A prompter. In some cases where a student may have difficulty with time (e.g. a student with autism), a prompter will be able to assist the student to move on and not become fixated with a particular question at the expense of the whole paper.
- Use of a computer or other technology
- Use of an individual room

On results day, exam students receive their results in the school dining hall, which is accessible for all.