



ENERGY COAST UTC

EXAMINATION POLICY

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

2025-28

Approved: Chair of Governors

Signed:



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Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Energy Coast UTC 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, 5.5] This publication is further referred to in this policy as GR

The policy also documents the processes to check the qualifications of assessors and that correct procedures are followed as in Chapter 7 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

This policy is maintained and held 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.

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 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’. (¹AA, Definitions)

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'. (¹AA, Definitions)

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

General principles

The Head of centre will appoint a SENCo who will co-ordinate the access arrangement process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Exams office will be responsible for arrangements relating to temporary illness and injury and English as an additional language.

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These 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 him/her 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 disabled candidate.

The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.

Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.

Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.

The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.

The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination.

The Assessment Process

Students who may qualify for formal access arrangements are usually identified during the course of the autumn term of Year 10 or Year 12. A significant proportion of these students will already have been identified to the UTC via the SENCO's transition meetings with SENCOs in 'feeder' schools. Over the autumn term, adjustments are made to teaching within lessons, according to need, to enable each student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are involved in monitoring the adjustments to ensure a holistic picture of the student is created, this will include keeping a log of the 'normal way of working'. Needs of students not initially identified may become apparent at a later point; teaching staff are responsible for reporting any concerns to the SENCO who can then arrange for further investigation.

Use of assessment adaptations in logged during internal assessments (eg extra time / reader pen etc) and where this is used further investigation into student needs is carried out.

Through this process the SENCO will build a picture of the needs of each candidate and record this on Form 8 Section A prior to any formal assessment. [AA 7.5.2]

Assessments

Once students have been identified, assessments are carried out in the spring term. These assessments are carried out by a qualified assessor appointed by the head of centre. The assessor is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations in [AA 7.3]. As part of the recruitment process for assessors, evidence of appropriate qualifications are obtained. These are held on file with assessment records. The SENCO is responsible for overseeing the assessment process and ensuring it is administered correctly. The SENCO will obtain and check the qualifications of an assessor prior to the undertaking of any assessment.

Assessments are carried out by an assessor(s) appointed by the head of centre. The assessor(s) is appropriately qualified as required by JCQ regulations [AA 7.3].

Guidelines for the assessment of the candidates learning difficulties by an assessor are followed and Form 8 is completed as required in [AA 7.5, 7.6]

External privately commissioned assessments (where the centre has not been involved) **cannot** be used to process an application for Access Arrangements [AA 7.3]. They could be considered a starting point for internal assessment and gathering of evidence.

The qualification(s) of the current assessor(s)

Emma Jackson – PATOSS (Professional Association of Teachers Of Students with Specific learning difficulties)

A signed data protection notice is procured at this point. A copy of this notice is shown in Appendix A.

Appointment of assessors of candidates with learning difficulties

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed 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 qualifications of the assessor

Evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration is held on file for inspection purposes to evidence that assessors are suitably qualified [AA 7.3, 7.4]

Types of access arrangements

JCQ regulations are reviewed annually. The following are some of the standard practice of access arrangements:

- Extra time
- Rest breaks

- Modified papers
- A reader
- A scribe
- A prompt
- Use of word processor

Students are assessed for a range of their individual needs, including for example rate of writing, processing and reading.

A report is produced by the SENCO highlighting the outcomes, including a summary of need. This is added to the student's folder which will also contain details of the student's historical needs. The SENCO will work with the Examinations Officer to ensure the correct applications are made online to JCQ and the appropriate Examination Boards. The SENCO also ensures all teaching and support staff are familiar with the access arrangements agreed for each student. In collaboration with colleagues and students, the SENCO will monitor and ensure that the arrangements are the 'normal way of working' for eligible students, as far as resources allow. The SENCO is responsible for ensuring that all paperwork is available for inspection by JCQ.

Where formal access arrangements are determined and agreed, they become part of 'normal practice'. This means that the arrangements are taken into consideration in teaching as well as internal and external assessments, as far as reasonably possible. It is recognised that resources do not always allow for arrangements to be replicated precisely in every lesson or examination, e.g. a 'reader' may have to be a class teacher or support assistant, shared by more than one student. If a student chooses not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then the arrangements may be removed if appropriate.

Formal access arrangements expire after 26 months; after this period the student may be re-tested. The most recent assessment is binding and determines any subsequent access arrangements.

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 covered by the tool. This tool also provides the facility to order modified papers for those qualifications included. (Refer to AA, chapter 8 (Processing applications for access arrangements and adjustments) and chapter 6 (Modified papers)).

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 for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.

Online applications are completed in AAO by the SENCo.

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for the arrangement with the appropriate evidence. Applications must be made by the relevant deadline for each exam series.

When an access arrangement has been processed online and approved, the evidence of need (where relevant) must be made available to a JCQ centre inspector upon request. An awarding body can also request evidence when considered necessary. This evidence can be in paper format or electronic.

Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder must be created for each candidate. The candidates e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection. [AA 4.2]

It is the responsibility of the SENCo to

- Collect the candidate's consent (*Candidate personal data consent form*)
- Complete the *Data Protection confirmation*
- Submit applications for approval on AAO
- Maintain detailed records for inspection purposes (electronically or in hard copy) of all essential information on file. This includes a signed *Candidate person data consent form*, a completed *Data Protection confirmation*, a copy of the candidate's approved application, evidence of need (where required).

Centre-delegated access arrangements

Where students are eligible for access arrangements which are not required to be submitted through AAO the SENCO will keep a record of these arrangements and evidence confirming the need for these arrangements and history of established difficulties and normal working practices.

Modified Papers

Modified papers are ordered through AAO.

Modified papers must be ordered in advance of each exam series, no later than the published deadline for the series concerned. Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant exam series. [AA 6.1]

The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding bodies past modified papers before their first examination. [AA 6.1]

Word Processor Policy

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

A statement from senior leadership regarding word processors is given in Appendix B

"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]

"It is strongly recommended that a centre has a policy on the use of word processors which it can articulate to parents/carers. Principally, that a word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write 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 the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations." [AA 5.8]

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 which may include
 - 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 (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 4.2.4)
- ▶ 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 4.2.4)
- ▶ where a subject within the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

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

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated in the main exam hall where possible, unless additional needs mean a smaller room is appropriate. Candidates are seated at the rear of the hall where power sockets are available.

In compliance with the regulations the centre

- ▶ provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- ▶ ensures a candidate is to be seated with the use of a power point (ICE 14.21)
- ▶ ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that his/her centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g. 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22)
- ▶ ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g. page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ▶ ensures the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals. (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet)
- ▶ instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing in order to assist examiners when marking (ICE 14.24)

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 (ICE 14.25)

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 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)

Alternative Rooming arrangements

Online applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the students who require alternative accommodation for medical reasons or safeguarding reasons will be allocated a seat in a smaller exam room

Students who request an alternative seating arrangement will be decided by the following guidelines in order of preference. There are a limited number of seats available and priority will be determined as below.

1. Students with an anxiety or mental health issue for which they have specialist support or intervention from CAMHS, NHS Psychiatrist etc (not a letter from GP or parent) can be considered for specific seating arrangements, including a smaller exam room if required and requested.
2. Students whose normal way of working includes specific seating arrangements and withdrawal facilities may be considered for specific seating arrangements, including a smaller exam room if required and requested
3. Other students with difficulties completing exams in the hall will be considered based on their usual way of working and evidence collected by SENCo and pastoral staff will be seated accordingly.
4. Students with extenuating circumstances on the day of the exam will be considered by the exams officer on an individual basis.

SENCo and pastoral staff will make requests in writing to the exams officer for arrangements, and decisions will be made by the exams officer. If there is an appeal against the exams officer's decision the Head of Centre will make the final decision. These guidelines apply to internal exams and no arrangements should be put in place which have not been agreed.

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 [AA 5.16]*

In the case of separate invigilation, the candidate's difficulties are established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4, page 16) and known to a Form Tutor, a Head of Year, the SENCo or a senior member of staff with pastoral responsibilities.

Separate invigilation reflects the candidate's normal way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations as a consequence of a long-term medical condition or long term social, mental or emotional needs."

[AA.5.16]

APPENDIX A

Data Protection Notice

So that we can process your application for access arrangements electronically via the Access arrangements online system we need your consent to share some of your personal data with a number of organisations. This data may relate to your health, medical condition or disability. In some cases, we may need to provide more detailed personal information to support the application for access arrangements being made on your behalf.

These organisations are the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the participating awarding bodies (currently AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC).

Your application will be processed in line with the common standards, regulations and guidance developed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the participating awarding bodies.

If you are happy for us to share your data please provide your consent by completing the declaration below. We will not use your data for any other purpose without your consent (unless authorised to do so by law).

Declaration

For the purpose of processing my access arrangement application, I consent to the use of my name, date of birth and other relevant data as set out above. I understand that this information will not be used for any other purpose without my consent unless authorised by law.

Signed Date

Print Name.....

APPENDIX B

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Word Processor Statement

A member of the centre's senior leadership team must produce a statement for inspection purposes which details the criteria the centre uses to award and allocate word processors for examinations." [AA 5.8]

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 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.

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

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. The security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7 of ICE.