



# ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

| Document Control    |                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Manager Responsible | Wendy Crum, Student Services Manager |
| Version Number      | 1.0*                                 |
| Approved By         | SLT                                  |
| Approval Date       | 30 October 2020                      |
| Review Date         | July 2021                            |

# Access Arrangements Policy

The College's Policy for Access Arrangements is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations document: 'Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments' booklet, applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021. These are the regulations with which the college must comply, and this policy will outline how this will be achieved.

All formal assessments undertaken at Hereford College of Arts are completed by Specialist Assessors who hold the relevant qualifications as set out by the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) Regulations.

## Rationale for Access Arrangements

- Access Arrangements are intended to facilitate students with the required knowledge, understanding, and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment due to a difficulty or disability, to access the exam without changing the demands of the assessment
- The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled (within the definition of the Equality Act 2010) would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled
- Access Arrangements are intended to increase access to assessments, but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the assessment
- Access Arrangements are not intended to give an unfair advantage
- Access Arrangements may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands
- Access Arrangements should reflect a student's normal way of working, unless such arrangements would compromise the integrity of the assessment.

Access Arrangements encompass a wide range of provisions which may include: being allowed to sit examinations in a smaller room, supervised rest breaks, use of colour overlays, prompter, extra time, reader, scribe, use of a word processor, practical assistant, etc. An Access Arrangement may be unique to an individual and therefore not appear in a standard list.

## Identifying the need for Access Arrangements

### Stage 1: Early identification

Students who may qualify for formal Access Arrangements are identified early from information disclosed on the application form, at interview, information received from previous institution, or via documentation such as an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Adjustments to teaching within lessons are made according to need to enable a student to access their learning and make progress. All staff are informed about these reasonable adjustments at the start of the academic year.

## **Stage 2: Formal Testing**

Formal assessments begin during autumn term. Screening and ongoing monitoring determines the level of specific assessment required. These assessments are delivered in accordance with the JCQ guidelines. Permission to allow Access Arrangements expires after 26 months, after which the student may need to be re-assessed, depending on which particular arrangement(s) they have in place. Access Arrangements are always determined by the most recent assessments.

### **Further information:**

Access Arrangements cannot be applied for on the basis of a privately commissioned assessment, unless the assessor has received information about the student's current difficulties and support offered in college **before** the assessment is carried out.

Medical letters will prompt an investigation, but not override the evidence seen in college.

## **Stage 3: Formal Application for Access Arrangements**

Following assessment, the outcomes [for students who have learning difficulties] are recorded and summarised on JCQ Form 8 Part 2 by the specialist assessors. Completed forms are passed to the Student Services Manager for review, monitoring, and a signature; these form part of the evidence for online submission. Online submission is carried out by the specialist assessors. Feedback is instant and permission for the Access Arrangement will be recorded and held by the College; each student is notified in writing.

## **Stage 4: Ensuring Access Arrangements are the student's 'normal way of working'**

Where formal Access Arrangements are awarded, the Student Services Manager/Specialist Assessors, in collaboration with colleagues and students, will monitor and ensure that they continue to be normal working practice for the student. **This means that appropriate Access Arrangements need to be taken into consideration in everyday teaching and formally applied in any internal or external assessments.**

If a student chooses continually not to use the agreed access arrangements, either because their needs change, or they do not feel it aids their learning or achievement, then access arrangements can be removed.

It is the responsibility of the Student Services Manager and the Specialist Assessors to ensure all required information is collated and accessible to the Exams Officer, wider staff body. It is also their responsibility to ensure all paperwork required by JCQ, including data protection notices signed by the students, is accessible to JCQ inspectors for unannounced site visits.

# Staff Roles and Responsibilities Relating to Access Arrangements

## Examinations Officer:

- To ensure that the agreed Access Arrangement provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators
- To ensure the agreed Access Arrangement provision is updated in the College's exam software
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding Access Arrangement provision
- To deal with any emergencies, such as accidents or medical conditions, on the day of the exam (in conjunction with appropriate staff)
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.

## Student Services Manager:

- To encourage a 'whole centre' approach to Access Arrangements and to lead on the process within the centre
- To ensure that they, together with the Head of Centre, members of the senior leadership team and the Specialist Assessors are familiar with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidelines and regulations
- To support the Specialist Assessors to determine, apply for, and implement appropriate Access Arrangements with the support and help of teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team.

## Specialist Assessors:

- To identify who require diagnostic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision
- To administer all formal standardised assessment in line with JCQ guidelines after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews, and classroom observations
- To mark the formal assessments, and, based on all information gathered complete all the necessary paperwork required to apply for concessions
- To assist the Student Services Manager in the decision-making process about Access Arrangements.

## Teaching Staff:

- To provide information/evidence of candidate's persistent and significant difficulties
- To clarify how the candidate's disability/difficulty is impacting on teaching and learning in the classroom
- To provide the requested evidence of this impact directly to the Student Services Manager and Specialist Assessors in a timely manner
- To provide details of the candidate's normal way of working within the centre, the support given, and how this relates to the proposed arrangement. For example,
- Teaching staff must record any intervention or support regularly provided in the classroom

- To ensure 'normal way of working' is facilitated in class, for example use of a reader pen
- To ensure that the correct Access Arrangements are in place for controlled assessments.

## **Support offered to students with Access Arrangements**

- Students with Access Arrangements in place participate in small group sessions to ensure they can effectively use these arrangements
- Students who have access to a reader or scribe are shown how to use them appropriately in exam situations, and it is explained to them what they can and cannot ask a reader or scribe to do during the exam, and how much support the adult is allowed to give
- Students with extra time are offered sessions with an Additional Learning Support tutor on how to use the additional time allowance effectively. They are then encouraged to apply the techniques and strategies given to them in exams and assessments
- Students who qualify for assistive technology, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking and ClaroRead, are offered support to develop the skills necessary to effectively use them in exams
- Students who qualify for word processing as a result of slow handwriting speed or fatigue, must meet the criteria outlined in the word processing policy as having an average accuracy rate of 92% and a typing speed of 37 words per minute. Students are enrolled on a Typing Tutor course to develop these skills in preparation for exams
- All teachers are given access to the list of students with Access Arrangements
- All teachers must allow a minimum of three weeks' notice before they carry out 'in class' assessments with students. This is to enable guidance on how best to use Access Arrangements to those students who require it
- In the event that a student does not wish to make use of their Access Arrangement in any given exam, they will be required to sign a form to indicate that they were aware that the Access Arrangement was available to them, however, they have made the decision not to use it.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

### **Temporary Arrangements**

Temporary Access Arrangements may be required for a student suffering from unforeseen illness or injury. In these cases, the College must be informed at the earliest possible opportunity, and a letter from a GP, consultant, or other professional, detailing the problem and any arrangement deemed necessary should be obtained as soon as possible. The College will make every effort to accommodate these arrangements.

## **Alternative Accommodation**

On very rare occasions, a candidate may need to sit an examination at a residential address or hospital due to a severe medical condition or profound psychological condition, which prevents them from taking examinations within the centre. In this situation, the College will ensure that JCQ guidelines are followed with regard to conduct, procedures, and staffing.

The College must be satisfied that the candidate is well enough to take the examination, and appropriate evidence of need must be held on file.

## **Special Consideration**

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination or assessment. The candidate will have been fully prepared for the exams, but due to some unforeseen circumstance could not demonstrate what they knew, and is the responsibility of the Exams Officer with the support of the teacher and specialist assessors.