

Access Arrangements Policy 2025/26

This policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the Access Arrangements process at The Purcell School is managed in accordance with current requirements and regulations. References in this policy to GR, ICE and AA refer to the JCQ publications General Regulations for Approved Centres, Instructions for Conducting Examinations and Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. The centre will ensure that approved adjustments can be delivered to candidates (AARA¹, Definitions).

*References to legislation are to the Equality Act 2010. Separate legislation is in place for Northern Ireland (see [AARA](#) 1.8).

Introduction

(AA 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 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'. ([AARA](#)¹, 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' ([AARA](#), Definitions).

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that The Purcell 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.

This policy is maintained and held by the Head of Learning Support alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

(Where the Head of Learning Support is storing documentation electronically they will create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder will hold each of the required documents for inspection (¹[AARA](#) 4.2).

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

General Principles

The Head of Centre/Senior Leadership Team will appoint a Head of Learning Support, or an equivalent member of staff, who will coordinate the access arrangements process within the centre and determine appropriate arrangements for candidates with learning difficulties and disabilities, candidates for whom English is an additional language, as well as those with a temporary illness or temporary injury. (GR 5.4).

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in [AARA](#) (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 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 disabled candidates.
- The Head of Learning Support will ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments will be processed at the start of the course.
- Arrangements will always be approved before an examination or assessment.
- The arrangement(s) put in place will 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.

- Equalities Policy (Exams).
- A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equalities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.
- The Access Arrangements Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail.

Equal Opportunity Policy (Exams)

A large part of the access arrangements/reasonable adjustments process is covered in the Equal Opportunities Policy (Exams) which covers staff roles and responsibilities in identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements and the conduct of exams.

The Equal Opportunities Policy can be found on the website along with all other relevant policies.

The Head of Centre/SLT will... recognise its duties towards disabled candidates, including private candidates, ensuring compliance with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010†, particularly Section 20 (7). This must include a duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates. Where the centre is under a duty to make a reasonable adjustment, the centre must not charge a disabled candidate any additional fee in relation to the adjustment or aid...

†or any legislation in a relevant jurisdiction other than England and Wales which has an equivalent purpose and effect (GR, section 5.4)

This Policy further covers the assessment process and related issues in more detail. 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 The Equal Opportunities policy.

The Assessment Process

At The Purcell School, 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)

The Purcell School currently commissions a specialist assessor to carry out exam access arrangements. The specialist assessor, Mrs Sally-Ann Whitty, holds a practising certificate and has a RQTU (Register of Qualifications in Test Use) membership number 467036.

- Appointment of Assessors

At the point an assessor is engaged/employed at The Purcell School:

- Evidence of the assessor's qualification is obtained and checked against the current requirements in [AARA](#).
- This process is carried out prior to the assessor undertaking any assessment of a candidate.
- A photocopy of the assessor's certificate(s) (or a printout of a screenshot of HCPC or SASC registration) is kept on file ([AARA](#) 7.3).
- The Head of Centre will ensure 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. Evidence of the assessor's qualification(s) must be held on file for inspection purposes and be presented to the JCQ Centre Inspector by the Head of Learning Support. ([AARA](#) 7.3).

Reporting the Appointment of the Assessor(s)

- 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 Officer.

- In the case of appropriately qualified psychologists (registered with the Health & Care Professions Council), or specialist 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 AA will be entered into Access arrangements online to confirm their status ([AARA](#)).

Process for the Assessment of a Candidate's Learning Difficulties by an Assessor

The Purcell School 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).
- 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 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. ([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](#)).
- Painting a 'Holistic Picture of Need' Confirming Normal Way of Working.

The Purcell School 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](#)).
- An independent assessor must contact the centre and ask for evidence of the candidate's normal way of working and relevant background information. This must take place before the candidate is assessed. Additionally, the independent assessor must be approved by the head of centre to assess the candidate.
- All candidates must be assessed in the light of the picture of need and the background information as detailed within Part 1 of Form 8.
- An independent assessor must discuss access arrangements/reasonable adjustments with the person appointed in the centre. The responsibility to determine and request appropriate and practicable access arrangements/reasonable adjustments specifically lies with the centre. ([AARA 7.5](#)).

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 publication Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.
- AAO is accessed through 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 will 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 Summary](#)).
- Deadlines apply for each examination series for submitting applications for approval using AAO.
- A Candidate Personal data consent form is a requirement for completion of the [Data protection confirmation by the examinations officer or SENCo](#), prior to the processing of the online application, which must be retained for 26 months from the date of the online application being approved.

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- The Head of Learning Support will keep detailed records for inspection purposes, whether electronically or in hard copy paper format, of all the essential information on file. This includes a signed candidate personal data consent form; a completed *Data protection confirmation by the SENCo* form; a copy of the candidate's approved application; appropriate evidence of need (where required); evidence of the assessor's qualification (where required). ([AARA](#) 8).

Centre Delegated Arrangements/Adjustments

- Decisions relating to the approval of centre delegated arrangements/adjustments are made by Sally-Ann Whitty, Head of Learning Support. Appropriate evidence, where required by the arrangement, is held on file by Sally-Ann Whitty, Head of Learning Support.

The Use of a Word Processor

- The Word Processor Policy details the criteria The Purcell School uses to award and allocate word processors in examinations/assessments.

Alternative Rooming Arrangements Policy

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 Head of Learning Support.

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](#), section 5.6).

In the case of alternative rooming arrangements, the candidate's disability is established within the centre (see Chapter 4, paragraph 4.1.4). It is known to a Form Tutor, 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.

Alternative rooming arrangements will reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal school tests and mock examinations.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation within the centre.

1:1 invigilation and the use of an alternative room would apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room. ([AARA](#) 5.16).

Modified Papers

- Modified papers 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](#)).
- Modified papers are individually prepared for candidates for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources. Therefore centres are required to provide the awarding bodies with early notification that a candidate will require a modified paper. ([AARA](#)).
- Modified papers must not be ordered for candidates unless the centre intends to enter them for the relevant examination series ([AARA](#)).

For the adjustment to be effective, the candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practise using an awarding body's past modified papers before his/her first examination ([AARA](#)).

Roles and Responsibilities

- When an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed on-line 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.
- 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.

It is the responsibility of:

- The Head of Learning Support to collect a candidate's consent (a completed candidate personal data).
- The Head of Learning Support to submit applications for approval using AAO.
- The Head of Learning Support 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).

- The Head of Learning Support to submit applications for approval directly to an awarding body for any qualification that does not fall within the scope of AAO.
- The Head of Learning Support or Exams Officer to order modified papers.
- The Head of Learning Support 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.

Policy reviewed by: Mrs Natasha Hodes and Head of Centre

Centre Name	The Purcell School
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Key Staff Involved in the Procedure

Role	Name
Head of Centre	Paul Bambrough
Exams Officer	Natasha Hodes
Senior Leaders	Thomas Burns
Head of Learning Support & Assessor	Sally-Ann Whitty