

Examination Access Arrangements Policy and Procedure

1. Scope and Purpose

The aim of this policy is to inform students, staff, and other parties of the procedures in place to make appropriate additional assessment and examination arrangements for disabled students or those with specific learning difficulties across the Colleges i.e., for Further Education, Higher Education and Apprenticeships. The policy also aims to ensure that appropriate, effective, and additional assessments and exam access arrangements are in place for disabled students and those with specific learning difficulties and that these arrangements are communicated to the student, Exams Team, Course Tutors, parents/guardians, and employers, as appropriate. Some adjustments may not be permitted by particular Awarding Bodies. In all cases, the Exams Team will request approval and confirmation from the relevant Awarding Bodies.

Loughborough College is committed to the success and achievement of all students, including those with additional learning support needs, learning difficulties and disabilities in accordance with and defined by the Equality Act 2010. This policy is written in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations document, which is updated annually, 'Adjustments for Candidates with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties: Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.' The policy and procedure set out how the college will comply with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) legislation to provide all students with fair and equal access to examinations and assessments for students at Loughborough College.

2. Policy statement

Loughborough College will take every opportunity to identify students' needs from their first contact with the College and throughout their time at the College. A student with a disability or difficulty, which has a substantial and long-term effect on performance in examinations, may qualify for access arrangements.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment or examination and before the published deadline dates. They allow a student with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access the assessment - 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 can only be applied for if the candidate meets all of the following criteria:

- They must be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010*
- The Access Arrangement/s being applied must be their normal way of working
- Their disability is persistent and significant
- There must be evidence of the student's current difficulties and how they substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom

Teaching staff must provide written evidence of the need and the provision of reasonable adjustments in the classroom to meet the student's needs due to their disability.

Written confirmation must be provided to say that without the Access Arrangement applied for, the student would continue to be at a substantial disadvantage.

Who is eligible for Examination Access Arrangements

Students who have been formally identified as having a condition, which adversely affects their ability to learn or take tests and examination, may be eligible for examination access arrangements. The criteria by which individuals are identified are set out clearly by the JCQ. The decision is based on whether the student has a substantial and long-term impairment, which affects their ability to display their knowledge within an assessment situation. Students may have a range of diagnosed conditions or disabilities requiring 'reasonable adjustments' to be made for them.

If a student has an issue or experiences anxiety on the day of, or in the days leading up to an examination, it may be unlikely that an access arrangement can be put in place in time. However if a small change can be made that is in line with the JCQ regulations and will assist the student we will endeavour to put this in place.

Students with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for access arrangements. For example, a student with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an examination may not meet the criteria for access arrangements.

However, when concerns are raised about a particular student, information from all teaching and support staff is sought to see if similar concerns are confirmed by others, prior to the implementation of access arrangements.

Access Arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subject areas. If this is the case, then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects or adapted and changed for other subjects. All access arrangements decisions are based in line with the student's normal way of working.

The Learning Support team and specialist assessors must work with teaching staff, support staff and exams office staff to ensure that approved access arrangements are in place for internal assessments/tests, mock exams, and exams.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the student. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, time frames or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

2.3 Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a student's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness, or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment requiring authoritative support and at the discretion of the examining body.

Who is eligible for exam access arrangements

Students who have been formally identified as having a condition, which adversely affects their ability to learn or take tests and examination, may be eligible for examination access arrangements. The criteria by which individuals are identified are set out clearly by the JCQ. The decision is based on whether the student has a substantial and long-term

impairment, which affects their ability to display their knowledge within an assessment situation. Students may have a range of diagnosed conditions or disabilities requiring 'reasonable adjustments' to be made for them.

If a student has an issue or experiences anxiety on the day of, or in the days leading up to an examination, it may be unlikely that an access arrangement can be put in place in time. However, if a small change can be made that is in line with the JCQ regulations and will assist the student we will endeavour to put this in place.

Students with special educational needs are not automatically eligible for access arrangements. For example, a student with a slight hearing impairment, a previous diagnosis of 'mild dyslexia' or a physical disability that does not affect performance in an examination may not meet the criteria for access arrangements.

However, when concerns are raised about a particular student, information from all teaching and support staff is sought to see if similar concerns are confirmed by others, prior to the implementation of access arrangements.

Access Arrangements may vary due to the different demands in some subject areas. If this is the case, then access arrangements may be awarded only for those subjects or adapted and changed for other subjects. All access arrangements decisions are based in line with the student's normal way of working.

3. Impact Assessments

This policy/procedure has been assessed for its impact on equal opportunities and will be informed by the aim to eliminate all forms of discrimination in all strands of the equal opportunities' legislation.

This policy/procedure has been assessed for potential risk on data subjects due to the processing of personally identifiable information. All processing has been reviewed and is in line with all current Data Protection laws and appropriate safeguards implemented to ensure that the policy has privacy by design as its underlying approach.

4. Procedure

4.1 Responsibilities

Students

The process for ensuring that the most appropriate classroom support and examination access arrangements are identified, assessed and put in place for all students for the right qualification and at the right time can take some arranging and relies on students, parent/carers, staff and sometimes partner organisations working together to get the very best possible support in place and outcome for our young people. In order to do this as smoothly as possible, it is essential that all parties engage with the assessment process, supplying information and attending appointments without delay.

- At the application stage, students are asked to provide details of any SEND or medical need on application forms; students will then be contacted by the Learning Support Team for further details. Contact may be made with previous school(s), college (s) or agency to provide further information. This evidence may include:
 - Information about exam access arrangements from their school or previous educational provider
 - Provide evidence of the specific need – this will look different for different types of specific need:
- Learning difficulties: Students should ask their school or previous educational provider for their Form 8 and details of their exam access arrangements.
- Physical, sensory, mental health or neurodevelopmental impairment: Students should provide their diagnosis letter/report or evidence from a medical professional or specialist.

- EHCP: We will have a copy of the plan; students should ask their school or previous educational provider for details of their exam access arrangements.
 - Inform the Learning Support team via their course manager if anything changes (e.g., new diagnosis of specific need or deterioration of condition) – this may have an impact on the recommended exam access arrangements.
 - Attend their appointment or inform the Learning Support team if they are unable to attend.

During induction, students are again provided with the opportunity to declare an additional learning need. If students do not provide the evidence prior to their exam deadline dates, it will result in exam access arrangements being declined or not being in place in time for the exams.

Head of Centre

Overall responsibility for examination policy.

Learning Support

- Complete the Access Arrangements Assessment
- Act in accordance with JCQ guidelines.
- Clearly communicate policies and procedures for exam access arrangements to students and curriculum teams.
- Gather evidence to clearly describe need and normal way of working.
- Produce Form 8, Form 9 reports or Centre notes as appropriate.
- Submit requests for exam concessions in a timely manner to the exams team outlining the difficulties the student presents within the assessment and classroom setting.
- Use standardised tests to assess eligibility and need.
- Store paperwork needed by inspection in shared drive.
- Provide readers and scribes as required by the exams team.
- Keep hard copies of test papers in a secure environment.

Exams staff

- Use the Form 8, form 9 reports or Centre notes to apply to exam boards for examination access arrangements in a timely fashion. It is the exam board who must approve the application before the arrangement can be put in place.
- Implement examination access arrangements once approved.
- Liaise with Learning Support regarding requests for readers, scribes etc.
- Inform curriculum staff, students, and parents / carers if appropriate when access arrangements are approved.
- Securely storing all access arrangements documentation and evidence.
- Inform students and parents / carers if appropriate of special arrangements for exams such as room numbers etc.
- Invigilation, rooms, and support for access arrangements candidates, as defined in the JCQ access arrangements regulations.

Curriculum staff

- Ensure that they are aware of students in their class who have examination access arrangements in place.
- Familiarise themselves with the adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments and overview of evidence requirements.
- Assist Learning Support and Exams in applying for access arrangements.
- Pro-actively refer students to Learning Support for an assessment.
- Respond in a timely manner to Learning Support requests for information regarding a student.

- To ensure that examination access arrangements are implemented in 'mock' exams as well as live ones.
- To liaise with exams/Learning Support if readers/scribes/extra time is required for 'mock' exams.

Parent / Carer responsibilities

Parents and carers may be required to obtain letters from other professionals to support an application when a student requires arrangements due to psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties.

Parents and carers should be aware that the regulations state that access arrangements cannot be put in place purely on the evidence of a medical professional. A medical letter will trigger an internal investigation, but there needs to be internal evidence found to support such an application.

4.2 Procedure

See appendix A for the procedure flow chart

4.2.1 Guidelines for the assessment of the candidate's learning difficulties by an assessor at Loughborough College

- Only assessors appointed by Loughborough College with the relevant qualifications will conduct assessments.
- Assessors must personally conduct the assessments and must not sign off assessments carried out by another professional. Assessments will normally be carried out face to face, however, remote appointments may be provided where an application is unable to get into college.
- Before the assessment, the assessor will check the candidates background information and history of need to paint a picture as required in Part 1 of the Form 8.
- The assessor will carry out tests which are relevant to support the application and only use current editions of nationally standardised tests which produce standardised scores.
- The candidate's chronological age must be less than the test ceiling unless there is no published test for the candidate's age.
- All results must be given as standardised scores which use a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.
- Form 8 or Form 9 must be used to record information about a candidate's access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments and be available to be presented for inspection.
- JCQ regulations for the completion of forms must be adhered to at all times.

4.2.2 Information for students with a learning support need who require an exam access arrangement request:

- **Learning support need declared prior to enrolment**

Students are asked to declare at application and enrolment whether they need support to help them achieve their studies; this includes prior support and exam concessions they may have had at school.

When a student declares a support need at application, they will be sent a form to gather more information about their support need and how this may affect their learning. This form will be sent twice, and a reminder sent to the student and parent/ carer (if under 18 years of age). Once the College has received the completed form, they will be invited into college for an initial assessment of support needs, where a learning support plan will be written.

At the learning support meeting with the student, where an exam access arrangement is identified as being required, the student may be asked to provide evidence to support the request. An exam access arrangement appointment will be booked in after the student has enrolled. If there are pre-existing diagnosed condition, evidence will be required to support an application for an exam arrangement. Students will be required to bring this to the meeting with them.

- **Student support need declared or identified after enrolment:**

- **Onsite students:**

If the student declares a support need at enrolment, the Learning Support team will be informed by the enroller, or the curriculum team and an initial assessment of need meeting will be arranged.

If the student declares a support need or a support need is observed by staff after enrolment, a referral can be made, using the learning support referral form located on the staff Dashboard. Evidence of normal ways of working will be required at the point of referral.

If there are pre-existing diagnosed condition, evidence will be required to support an application for an exam arrangement. Students will be required to bring this to the meeting with them.

- **Apprentices and full-time off-site students** can also declare a support need at application. It is the responsibility of the apprenticeship team and Enrolment team for offsite students to inform the Learning Support team of the student's support need and request an initial assessment of need meeting. The learning support team will arrange the meeting and a learning support plan will be written and shared with the relevant teams.
- Any student can declare a support need at any time and be referred by the relevant curriculum area to learning support for an assessment.

Prior to submitting a request for an exam access appointment, teachers will identify and provide evidence of a student's normal way of working. Students will be assessed for their exam access arrangements in a timely manner to allow sufficient time for approved concessions to be put in place prior to the exam.

4.2.3 Supporting evidence.

- Students will be required to provide the college with evidence such as medical reports outlining significant medical needs and disability; an educational psychologist report which explicitly identifies a learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or CAMs. The evidence required by the student will be clearly stated prior to or at the exam access arrangements appointment.
- The college will provide evidence of normal way of working (including medical evidence) and information provided within an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) where a student has one.
- Students that have previously had exam arrangements in school will need to be reassessed or provide a previous form 8 or 9 from their previous school for their access arrangements to be put in place. JCQ regulations state that the supporting evidence for access arrangements must come from within the Centre or a Centre approved assessor.

Exceptions to the timeline apply for apprentices/short courses or other courses that start at different times of the year, where their entry date for exams and timeline vary

All examination arrangements awarded have to be supported by documentary evidence kept on file. JCQ inspections take place annually and must have the requested evidence available; failure to comply with the regulations can result in institutional malpractice, which may affect the candidate's result(s)

The College will hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Supporting statements from teaching staff and the Inclusive learning team, if applicable, identifying the student's current difficulties in classroom and examinations, and the adjustments that are in place in the classroom and exams

- Educational Psychologist reports
- Speech Therapist reports
- Occupation Therapist reports
- Letters from hospital consultants and other medical practitioners in support of e.g. epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.
- Reports from Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) advisory teachers
- Copies of Statements of Educational Needs, or Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Permission from the exam board for the arrangement
- A signed copy of the Form 8 or Form 9 by College's designated assessor
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health)
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAHMS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and other mental health professionals"

In cases where a GP has provided medical letters for anxiety or depression, then the normal way of working evidence must show that the College has been working with this student to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage. If the teaching staff are unable to provide this information, then the access arrangement cannot be awarded.

4.3 Processing exam access arrangements and adjustments requiring awarding body approval

- Student is seen by specialist assessors who will conduct appropriate standardised assessments, examine existing paperwork to gather evidence of need.
- If assessors are not satisfied that there is enough evidence of need/provision/normal way of working, they will liaise with appropriate staff to gather evidence:
 - **Teaching staff:** evidence of normal way of working within the classroom
 - **Welfare and Development team:** mental health difficulties
 - **Learning Support assessors:** ASD (where cannot be assessed) medical conditions, sensory impairments, physical disabilities
- Once supporting evidence is gathered the specialist assessor will fill in form 8, form 9 or Centre note, sign a paper copy, scan in data protection form, and save all paperwork to the student's folder within shared drive. Email Exams office with concessions request.
- The exams office will:
 - Use the form 8, 9 to apply to exam boards.
 - Inform students via their ILP and tutors of the outcome of an application and input the information onto Pro Solution
 - Arrange and implement the exam access arrangements for the student.

4.4 Separate invigilation within the Centre

Due to Mental Health

- The Learning Support assessment team will be required to provide form 9 or Centre note for the Examinations team confirming:
 - A comprehensive Learning Support Plan has been produced by the welfare team which outlines a student's needs.
 - A referral has been completed including evidence of normal way of working.
 - Some exam arrangements will require additional medical evidence of mental health needs.
- In all cases, the student will be offered a smaller room with others (no more than 10). Only in exceptional circumstances will they be offered a room to themselves. Substantial evidence of need will be required for this.

Due to ASD/ADHD/behavioral problems

- The appointed member of support staff will be required to provide a letter-headed statement or Centre note confirming:
 - The student is known to the college support team
 - There is sufficient evidence that a separate room is required.

Due to a medical condition/sensory impairment or physical disability/temporary disability (injuries and accidents):

- The assessor will be required to provide a letter-headed statement or Centre note confirming:
 - The student is known to the college support team.
 - There is sufficient evidence that a separate room and/or recommended concessions are required.
 - There is evidence from a medical professional e.g., doctors' letter confirmed the need.

Rest breaks

- The appropriate assessor (mental health, ASD, physical difficulties etc.) will be required to liaise with the student to provide the appropriate evidence.
- The appropriate assessor will need to meet with the student to discuss the length of a rest break and to determine the type of rest break activity that will be taking place.
- The length of the rest break is to be communicated to the exams team when sent for processing
- Where the rest break is outside of the exam room, the content of the exam cannot be discussed.
- The amount of time taken for rest breaks will be added to the end of the exam.

Use of a Word Processor (laptop) with spellcheck disabled

- Students must be assessed by Learning Support.
- Students might be entitled to this exam arrangement due to slow handwriting speed or illegible handwriting but also due to an underlying need such as a medical condition or mental health.
- Students cannot have this exam arrangement in place just because they prefer typing or they work faster on a word processor.
- Evidence must be provided by the teaching staff that this is normal way of working.

Withdrawal of access arrangements

Where a student does not use the agreed access arrangements, or their circumstances have changed the allocated exam access arrangements may be withdrawn.

Exams that are not regulated by JCQ.

Students entered for an examination set by an awarding body that is not regulated by JCQ, may find that the rules regarding access arrangements are different. The awarding bodies set their own rules regarding access arrangements and their use in specific subjects.

Failure to comply

- Failure to comply is defined as putting into place Access Arrangements not agreed by the awarding bodies or permitting Access Arrangements within the centre which are not supported by appropriate evidence may constitute malpractice which may impact on the candidate's result'.
- Failure of Reader/Scribe/prompt to abide by the regulations can lead to the disqualification of a student

5 Location and Access to Policy and Procedure

- Website, SharePoint

6 Person Responsible for Policy and Procedure

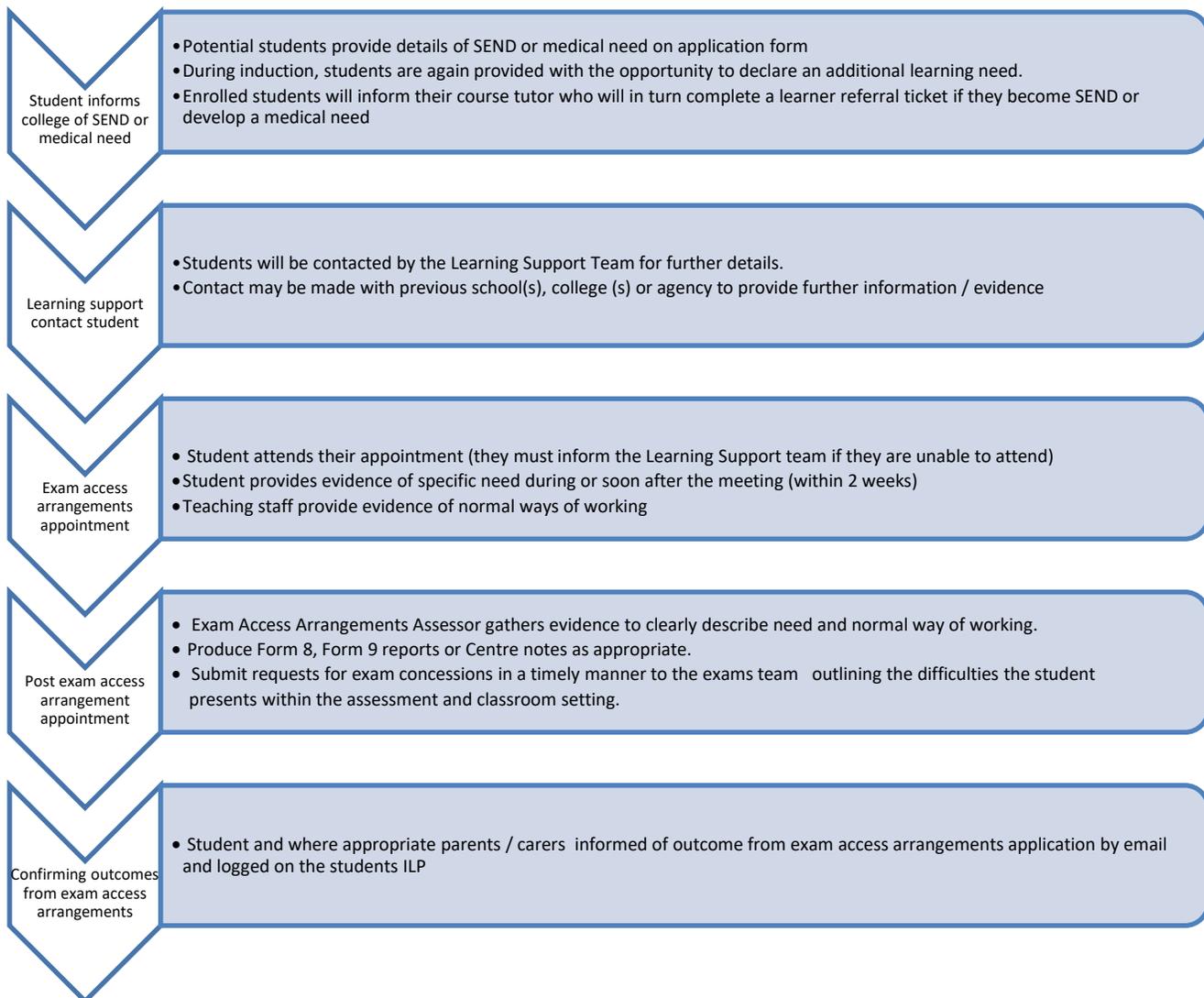
- Assistant Principal, Student Services, Inclusion and International

7 Linked Policies and Procedures

- Equality Act (2010)
- JCQ Exam access and reasonable adjustments 2024-25

8 Appendix

- **Appendix A: procedure flow chart**



9 Change Log

Date	Version	Details of change	Review / Revision by	
			Name	Title
13/01/2020	1.0	Footer amendments	James Kilby-Brooks	Senior Timetabling & Registers Officer, and Data Protection Advisor
7-10-21	2.0	Student Services amendments	Des Gentleman	Student Services Manager
11/10/2022	2.0	Minor amendments to header and footer. Edited reference to match records and title format changed.	Hayley Dobson	ISO Administrator
01/09/2022	2.0	LS amends	Des Gentleman	LSM
10/09/2024	2.0	Amendments to match changes in procedure and referrals. Student changed to Student JCQ guidance updated to reflect current year Student expectations added Process for exam concessions updated in line with the revised college process	Zena Aherne	LSM