



Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE

Exam Access
Arrangement
Policy

2019/20

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Contents

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Rationale | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| What are Access Arrangements | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| How are students identified as needing EAA? | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Candidates with a history of SEND & the process of awarding EAA | 4 |
| What are the procedures for the processing an application | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| What type of EAA can a student at SV have..... | 5 |
| Parental Referral | 6 |
| The role of the SENDCo | 7 |
| How do staff & parents know whether a student has EAA..... | 7 |
| Internal subject specific tests..... | 7 |
| Arrangements for completing examinations | 7 |
| Deadlines..... | 7 |

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

Rationale

The Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) Policy explains the actions taken to ensure inclusion throughout the school for all students with additional learning needs, including those with formally diagnosed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The policy forms an integral part of our teaching and learning philosophy, which seeks to create a learning environment whereby every individual student may fulfil his/her full potential.

What are exam access arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a student (subject to exam board approval) in a national/ public exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam.

Access arrangements are a form of additional learning support that ensures that a learner is not significantly disadvantaged during assessments due to an additional educational need, thereby ensuring equal opportunities. Access arrangements are not intended to give candidates an unfair advantage, but to give all candidates the equal opportunity in which to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. Procedures and practices relating to the awarding of access arrangements are governed by the statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments to provision under guidelines produced by the Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ).

Soar Valley College is only able to put access arrangements in place within the time frames stipulated by JCQ. JCQ adjusts its regulations periodically and the school is bound to comply with the current regulations. The Examination Officer is responsible for all procedures relating to the conduct of Public Examinations at Soar Valley College. In accordance with JCQ regulations, the school will exercise its judgement regarding a pupil's eligibility for access arrangements.

How are students identified as needing EAA?

Access arrangements will be put into place at the end of Y9 so that full use of them can occur for the whole KS4 course.

There are several ways in which this might occur:

1. Information from primary school
2. A teacher may voice a concern about a student with difficulties that prevent them from completing tests or practice papers.
3. Students have a history of need that is well known and evidenced in school, for example a special educational need or disability.
4. Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate and support given in class or evidence from tests or mocks.
5. Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests.

In all cases, there must be a genuine need for the arrangement. The college must be satisfied that the candidate has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant

difficulties. 'Long term' means the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so. 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, the SENDCo will gather information from all the student's teachers to see whether they have similar concerns. If the initial concerns are echoed by others, the student will be assessed for access arrangements.

Candidates with a history of SEND and the process of awarding EAA

There would normally be a long history of learning difficulties. In all cases, access arrangements should reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal tests and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as the '**normal way of working.**'

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need, history of provision and reports from teachers or other professionals.

A candidate may require access arrangements in all his/her written examinations, or they may only need arrangements in those requiring extended answers. The college must compile evidence that supports each candidate's particular need for arrangements.

Arrangements should not be requested just before or at the time of a candidate's examinations, unless they are to be temporary and due to illness or injury. A student with learning difficulties must be formally assessed by a specialist teacher or an educational psychologist. The assessment must have taken place no earlier than the start of Year 9. An approved range of standardised tests are used and Form 8 is completed.

A Data Protection Notice must be signed by the student, which enables the Examinations Officer to make the online application using their information and results. An application is made online, and the awarding bodies approve access arrangements only if the student's scores meet the criteria issued by JCQ. Supporting evidence must be filed and available for inspection.

What are the procedures for processing an application?

Once any diagnostic tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation for EAA, the SENDCo then applies to the exam boards. The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice.

This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologist reports
- Letters from outside agencies CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Information from SALT (Speech and Language Team)
- Statement of Educational Need or Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Permission from the exam boards for the arrangement/s
- Notes from observations.
- EHCPs

What type of exam access arrangements can students at Soar Valley College have?

This can be in the form of:

- **A scribe:** a trained adult who writes for the student. The student would dictate their answers. The scribe would write exactly what they say.
- **A reader:** a trained adult who would read the question and any relevant text (with the exception of Section A of an English GCSE Exam) for the student. The student would then write the answer/s themselves.
- **Word processor:** access to a computer for an exam (if appropriate – not for subjects such as Maths) so the student would word process their answers. Spelling and grammar checks would be disabled and a special exam account would be used with no internet access. Word processors cannot be used because a student prefers to use one. It has to be the normal way of working within the classroom and it does not necessarily mean that a student will have extra time.

If a student sustains an injury prior to an exam, it may be necessary for a word processor to be used. For example in the case of a broken/fractured/sprained/bruised hand or arm.

- **Extra time:** students may be entitled to an allowance of up to 25% depending on the history of evidence of need and the recommendation of the designated Specialist Teacher. In some exceptional circumstances students may be entitled to an allowance up to 50%.
- **Rest breaks:** where students are permitted to stop for short break/s during the exam and the time stopped is added to the finish time, with the effect of elongating the exam but not actually using any extra time.
- **Prompter:** where a student has little sense of time or loses concentration easily, a trained adult can prompt them with a few permitted phrases to refocus, move the student on to the next question or indicate how much time is left.
- **Bilingual dictionary:** students can use a bilingual dictionary if they routinely use them in the classroom. They cannot be used for English, History, Geography, and RE exams. The school issues the dictionary for the exam. A pupil has to have lived in the UK for no longer than 2 years to qualify.

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| Scribe | <p>Where there is a physical disability; where their writing:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • Speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time |
| Reader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by Specialist Teacher (100 is the average). |
| Word processor | <p>Where there is a physical disability; their writing would be:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegible and may hamper their ability to be understood • Speed is too slow to be able to complete the exam in the allotted time <p>Word processors may be used in the case of a concession due to an injury. For example, a student may sustain a sports injury prior to an exam, meaning they need access to a word processor as they cannot</p> |

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| | write. This would be awarded as an emergency concession even though it is not the candidate's normal way of working. |
| Extra time | Where a student's ability to process information is slower than average. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a standardised score of below 85 in a test delivered by Specialist Teacher (100 is the average). |
| Supervised rest breaks | Where a student has a physical disability or one which prevents them from concentrating for long periods of time. This is now the recommended option from the exam boards before considering extra time. |
| Prompter | For a student who loses concentration/focus, and is not aware of time. |
| Separate room | For a student with a medical condition such as epilepsy/diabetes where it isn't <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate for them to sit an exam in the main exam hall. Students who are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agoraphobic/have a psychological condition may also need to sit an exam in a separate room. |
| Bilingual dictionary | For a student who has recently (within the last 2 years) arrived in the UK and routinely needs a bilingual dictionary to help them to understand the written content in an exam. |

Parent Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. The SENDCo will investigate their concerns by sending a "round robin" to the child's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to test a student. Any outside professional or agency must consult with the SENDCo to establish a relationship with the school and acquire a picture of need. Failure to do so constitutes malpractice under JCQ guidelines.

As not all parents can afford private reports, we **do not** accept them. We have our own internal testing process.

If we require a letter from a medical specialist requesting access arrangements for students, JCQ regulations state that in order for such an access arrangement to be awarded the school has to have evidence that the student has historically received the extra support. The access arrangement should not "suddenly be granted to the candidate at the time of his/her examinations". If the said student has shown no signs of requiring said support, and has successfully sat their exams independently it would be considered malpractice to award the access arrangement.

The role of the SENDCo

- The SENDCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs and any special arrangements that individual candidates will need during the course and in any assessments/exams.
- Ensuring there is appropriate evidence for a candidate’s access arrangement is the responsibility of SENDCo/specialist teacher. If a student has never made use of an EAA the SENDCO will withdraw it.
- Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Exams Officer.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has Exam Access Arrangements?

- All subject teachers and support staff are given access to the Exams Access Arrangements (EAA).
- The SEND register and Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) are updated whenever students become entitled.
- Staff are informed of any changes to the SEND register and Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) via internal school communication systems.
- It is updated whenever changes have been made to the student’s entitlements. The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy and are shared on a need to know basis.
- Parents will be informed of any tests results via a letter home which states what they are entitled to, why and when.

Internal subject specific tests

Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the student in the classroom, internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as a ‘normal way of working.’ All mock examinations are carried out in the training centre in order for pupils to practice and have a realistic experience of using their concessions.

Arrangements for completing examinations

All students who are eligible for EAA will sit their exams in the Soar Valley Training Centre which is the building located just inside the gates next to the car park.

Trained invigilators will supervise all examinations. Student will sit all mock examinations in the Training Centre as this will be classed as their normal way of working.

Deadlines

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| Y9 – Summer term | Base line tests completed. Information collated about students need and history of need looked at by SENDCo and Learning Development staff |
| August teacher training days | Staff provided with a list of students who may be eligible for EAA. |

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| <p>Y10 Autumn term H/T 1</p> | <p>Teaching staff return information via HoF to SENDCo requesting EAA in their curriculum areas. Concerns raised about students who are not currently on the list.</p> <p>Deadline: 30th September</p> <p>Requests for EAA cannot be made after this time.</p> <p>SENDCo collates any additional information and carries out any assessments of students who have had EAA requests.</p> <p>SENDCo issues a final list of all EAA.</p> |
| <p>Y10 Autumn term H/T 2</p> | <p>All arrangements must be in place and reflect student's normal way of working. Students and parents informed.</p> |
| <p>Y10 Spring term</p> | <p>SENDCo will request evidence from subject staff that students are using EAA.</p> |
| <p>Y10 Summer term</p> | <p>EAA used for Y10 examinations that will take place in dance studio.</p> |