Exam Access Arrangements Policy 2019-20

The Rationale for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)

- EAAs are designed for candidates with the required knowledge, understanding and skills, who are unable to demonstrate these in an assessment in its normal format due to a difficulty or disability.
- EAAs should reflect the normal way of working for which there is evidence of need, unless such arrangements would affect the integrity of the assessment.
- EAAs 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.
- Credit is only given for skills demonstrated by the candidate working independently.
- EAAs are not intended to give an unfair advantage.
- EAAs will not be permitted if they compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.
- EAAs may vary between subjects because different subjects and methods of assessments may have different demands.
- An alternative assessment route may be available within the specification.
- 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 Exam Access Arrangements that are available

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time
- Computer reader/reader
- Scribe
- Word processor
- Prompter
- Live speaker for pre-recorded examination components
- Alternative site for the conduct of examinations
- Other arrangements for candidates with disabilities
- Bilingual translation dictionaries
- Modified papers (e.g. coloured/enlarged paper)

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

All of the above EAA have to be a student's normal way of working with evidence provided. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) prefers all other EAA to extra time (an inspection in 2015 confirmed this).

Evidence needed for Exam Access Arrangements

Various pieces of evidence are required to apply for an Exam Access Arrangement from JCQ, depending on the arrangement required. These include:

- Form 8 report from Access Arrangements Assessor
- Previous Access Arrangements from other schools
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension scores, writing tests etc.

Staff roles in determining and managing EAA

Examinations Officer:

- To ensure that the agreed EAA provisions are in place for exams and are communicated to the invigilators.
- To ensure the agreed EAA provision is updated in Sims Exams tool.
- To manage any on the day questions and queries regarding EAA provision.
- To put in place (in conjunction with the SEND department) any on day provisions – such as medical emergencies.
- To ensure students are roomed suitably for their Access Arrangement and to ensure zero disruption for other students also sitting exams.

SENCO:

- To ensure there is a 'whole centre' approach to access arrangements it is therefore the responsibility of the head of centre, members of the senior leadership team and the specialist assessor(s)/SENCO within the centre to familiarise themselves with the entire contents of the latest JCQ guidance.
- The SENCO, fully supported by teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team, must lead on the access arrangements process within his/her centre.
- Teaching staff and members of the senior leadership team must support the SENCO in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements.
- Ideally, the SENCO will also be the in-house specialist assessor and will thus assess candidates, process applications on-line and hold the evidence for inspection purposes for GCSE and/or GCE qualifications. At The Burgate School we currently have a separate specialist assessor.

Specialist Assessor:

- To work with students at KS3 to do basic assessments, give strategies and build a picture of need and provision.
- To administer recognised psychometric testing after gathering evidence from teachers, student interviews and classroom observations.
- To assist the SENCO in the decision making process about EAA.

Teaching Staff:

- To provide relevant information/evidence of the candidate's **persistent and significant difficulties.**
- To show how the candidate's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom. Provide evidence of this for the SENCO.
- Detail 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 support regularly provided in the classroom.
- To ensure that the correct EAA are in place for controlled assessments.

Deadlines for making EAA applications

Year 11

The deadline to raise concerns about a student in Year 11 is October half term. This allows the SENCO and the Examinations Officer time to plan the Year 11 mock examinations which are the last opportunity to trial any EAA. The Year 10 examinations provided an opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

Year 13

Year 13 is too late to make requests for EAA as no history of need or provision is in place. The deadline for sixth form EAA requests is July of Year 12, as long as body of evidence has been collected by teachers.

Timelines towards being awarded an EAA

Year 7-11

1. Year 6 – The junior school and parents notify the SENCO of any history of need/provision and provide supporting paperwork.
2. KS3 - Teachers monitor students closely and gather evidence of need for EAA. EAA trialled in tests/exams.
3. Year 9 summer term – Form 8 completed based on evidence supplied by teachers. Specialist Assessor then tests students. SENCO applies online and informs the examinations officer.
4. KS4 – EAA in place and being used regularly.
5. Oct of Year 11 – final deadline for teachers to submit evidence and requests for EAA. Mock examinations are the last chance to trial EAA. **Students must use them then or lose them**.
6. Summer Year 11 – exams completed with correct EAA in place as 'normal way of working'.

Years 12-13

1. Students declare EAA they had at KS4 when they apply to The Burgate Sixth Form or in the first half term of attending.
2. For students new to Burgate the SENCO will write to feeder schools for evidence of EAA at KS4. Students who have come up through Burgate should already have EAA in place.
3. Teachers monitor students closely in the autumn term of Year 12, gather evidence from initial assessments and feedback concerns and evidence to the SENCO.
4. In light of evidence received from teachers and previous schools, the Specialist Assessor carries out any testing necessary during the autumn and spring terms and the SENCO applies/reapplies for EAA.
5. Trial EAA are put in place for the internal examinations in Year 12. Teachers give feedback from these exams to the SENCO (did students use them? Were they effective?). These internal examinations also provide a final chance to identify any other students who have not been identified or who haven't declared a difficulty with examinations.
6. If teachers have a body of evidence gathered throughout Year 12, they should see the SENCO or Specialist Assessor by July of Year 12. We accept that students can slip through the net, be undiagnosed or struggle with the transition to A level. However, the Year 12 summer exams provide a final opportunity to identify any difficulties a student may have.

Procedure for medical letters

Letters from medical professionals will trigger an investigation but the medical condition also needs to be supported by evidence from within the school otherwise it is considered malpractice. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a medical letter.

Private assessments/Ed Psych reports

We may choose not to accept these as it is discriminatory against students who cannot afford a private report. We can only accept private reports as part of wider school evidence. A student's 'normal way of working' in school is paramount. EAAs cannot be awarded purely on the basis of a private assessment/Ed Psych report. In line with JCQ guidelines, where we choose to accept or reject a privately commissioned report from an external professional, the head of centre or a member of the senior leadership will provide a brief, written rationale to support this decision which will then be available for inspection purposes.

External Candidates

We do not enter external candidates for examinations.

Policy for the use of Word Processors

A word processor cannot simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home. The word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre. Candidates who would benefit from the use of a word processor might have:

- 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

This list is not exhaustive.

Malpractice

Schools are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations – usually in the spring or in the summer during the examination season. The consequences of malpractice can be severe. These may include disqualification for the student from one or more examinations, disqualification for a whole cohort of students, or even the centre being closed down for up to 5 years. Examples of malpractice include:

- Students being granted EAA which are not their normal way of working
- EAA being 'suddenly' granted before examinations
- EAA being granted when a student has no history of need or provision
- EAA being granted without sufficient evidence
- Students not using their EAA in a mock examination and still being allowed it in the real examination

Further Information

Further information can be found at the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/

Any questions about exam access arrangements, please phone the SENCO on 01425 652039