

Examination Access Arrangements

Purpose

The aim of this document is to ensure that there are clear guidelines and procedures in place for both staff and students regarding access arrangements. The term 'access arrangement' is used to describe arrangements that are put in place to ensure that all students have equal access to examinations. Students should not be disadvantaged due to any learning, physical, medical, sensory or psychological difficulty that they may experience. The aim is to remove barriers that may prevent students with identified needs from demonstrating their knowledge and to place them on an equal basis with their peers.

College has to comply with criteria for access arrangements as detailed in the most recent JCQ publication of 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties'. Access arrangements are intended to meet individual need, allowing students with substantial long term needs or short term injuries / illnesses, to demonstrate their skills and knowledge without comprising 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'.

*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 person 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.*

(JCQ Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties 2015 -2016).

Identification of candidates who might need access arrangements

Identification is through the following routes:

- Disclosure – students are provided with the opportunity to disclose support needs and previous examination arrangements when applying for college or during enrolment.
- Identification of potential need through screening assessment during induction to college.
- Subject tutors may raise concerns about a student with difficulties that have a significant impact and prevent them from completing written tests or practice papers in timed conditions.
- A parent / carer / student may raise concerns about significant difficulty with completion of written work in timed conditions.

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.

Candidates with a history of support needs

Students with identified needs are not automatically eligible for access arrangements following on from GCSE. The Study Support Manager or Progression and Welfare Manager will gather information from the student's subject tutors to establish whether there is ongoing impact of the learning difficulty and / or disability in the classroom to inform an application for access arrangements. If necessary, update assessment will be completed or update medical information requested.

Candidates with medical, physical, sensory, behavioural or complex needs

Where access arrangements are requested due to medical or physical difficulties, a letter from an appropriate healthcare professional is required. The Progression and Welfare Manager will ask parents/carers to obtain a letter with an outline of the student's condition or disability and the access arrangements that are deemed to be necessary. Parents/carers may be requested to obtain letters from other professionals when a student requires access arrangements due to their psychological, behavioural, sensory or communication difficulties.

Assessment for access arrangements –candidates with learning difficulties

A student with learning difficulties must be formally assessed by a specialist tutor 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 a Form 8 is completed to request access arrangements.

Parents may choose to arrange an assessment out of college. However, **private assessments do not guarantee arrangements without the 'picture of need' that is required before an application is made.** If a private assessment is carried out, it should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person, this then has to be approved by the college, as the name of the assessor must be included on the application. The parents should provide the college with a copy of the report, which should include a section laid out as Form 8.

A JCQ Data Protection Notice must be signed by the student, which enables the Examination Officer to make the online application using their information and the outcomes of assessment. The awarding bodies approve access arrangements only if the student's standard scores meet the criteria issued by JCQ. Supporting evidence must be filed and available for the purpose of inspection.

In all cases, access arrangements should reflect the support that is in place in the classroom, internal tests and mock examinations. This is referred to as 'normal way of working.' In addition to assessment outcomes, the decision to apply for access arrangements is based on evidence of a history of need / provision and reports from subject tutors or other professionals.

Students with no prior support history

There would normally be a history of learning difficulties and some indication of difficulty at GCSE. Late identification of learning difficulties can occur, but concerns should be raised early during a course leading towards an examination. JCQ publish deadlines for the processing of applications for access 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.

In addition to assessment, students with no previous history of support will require significantly more evidence of need. For instance, the evidence required for extra time must include:

- Comments from teaching staff as to why the student needs extra time and how s/he uses the time awarded.
- Evidence on the support in place to meet need – i.e. trials of extra time / word processor etc. which establish arrangements as the 'normal way of working'.

Notification of access arrangements

- Students are informed of approved access arrangements by their Study Support Tutor, the Targeted Support Mentor or the Progression and Welfare Manager.

- Parents / carers are informed by letter when formal applications for access arrangements have been approved.
- When access arrangements are approved, an 'A' is placed by the candidates name on the register. This is confidential for subject tutors who can then access further detail on the arrangements in place.

Accommodation for examinations

The Study Support Manager and Progression and Welfare Manager liaise with the Examinations Officer with regard to accommodation for students who have access arrangements in place.

In a room for candidates with extra time or rest breaks there may be more than one exam taking place and so the seating is arranged to accommodate the student's needs and to take into account the duration of each exam. Wherever possible, those with the shortest exam are grouped together and/or those with rest breaks are seated nearest to the door. Unless assessment or medical evidence has indicated that a separate room is an essential need and is in place as a normal way of working, candidates **cannot normally be seated alone** in a separate room.

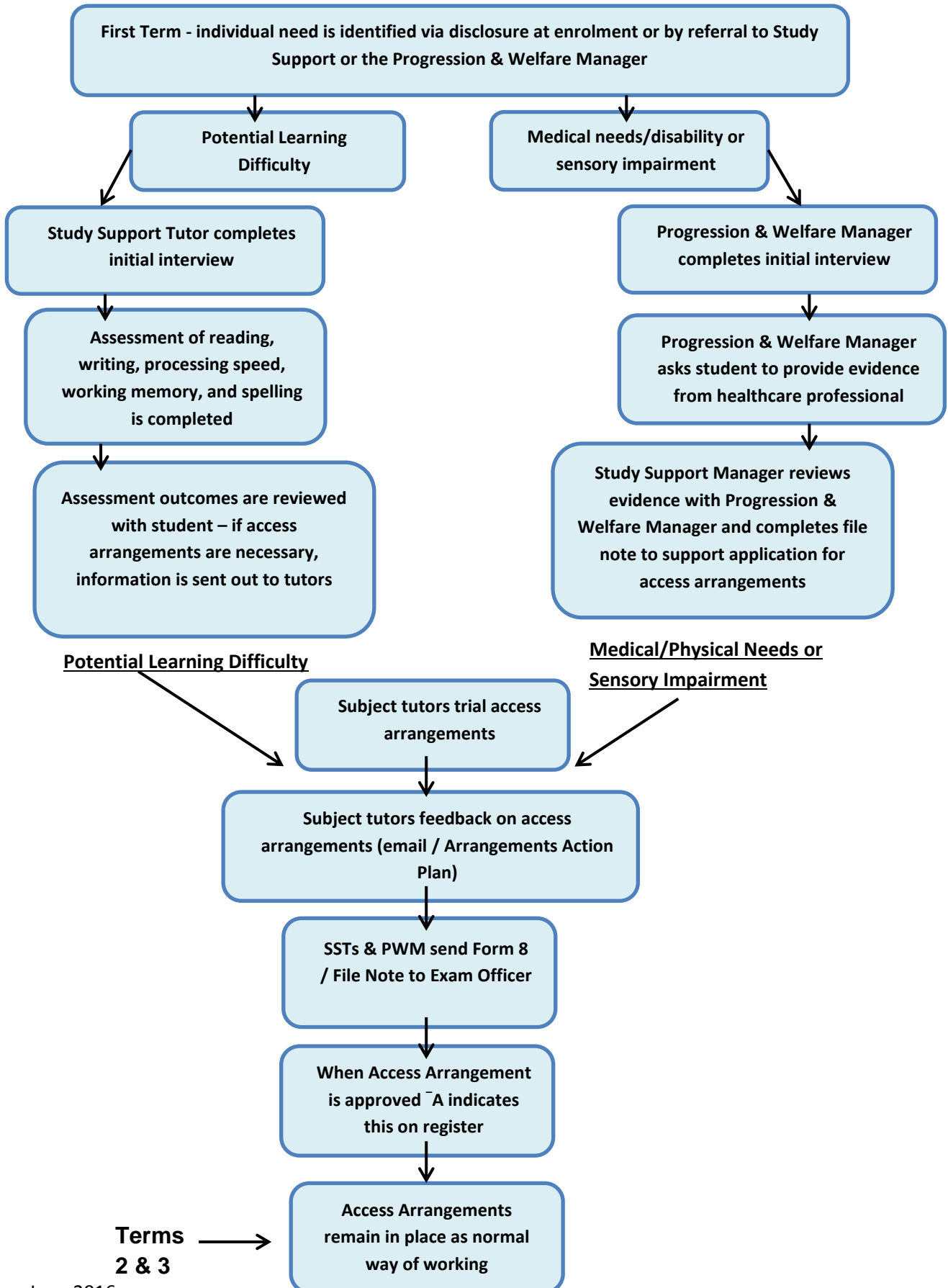
Use of word processors

Candidates may be allowed the use of word processors in written examinations. This should be appropriate to the candidate's needs and may only be allowed when a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to write is the result of:

- a learning difficulty
- a medical condition
- physical disability
- a sensory impairment

Candidates are informed that they have no access to spell / grammar check in examinations and are expected to complete all work associated with their course of study in these conditions.

Access Arrangements for Examinations - the Process



2016-17 deadlines

Date	Action	By whom
Induction Days	All AS students complete Quickscan	Supervised by ILAs, SSTs and PTs
By 16 th Sept	Analysis of Quickscan results Students who have disclosed support needs and students identified with indicators of dyslexia / dyspraxia via Quickscan have appointments with LJ/LB/SGU. Study skills needs (QS) - appointments with ILAs	Study Support Referral Assistant to arrange appointments
By half term	All assessments / interviews for students identified via QS / disclosure conducted	LJ/LB/SGU/AG
Friday 21 st October	Names and details to teachers of students who should have extra time etc. in class	LJ/LB/SGU/AG
31 st October onwards	Teachers allow access arrangements in class so is 'normal way of working'	Teachers
By 23 rd December	ALS Access Arrangement Action Plans completed	Teachers with students
February Half term	ALS Access Arrangement Action Plans completed for any students assessed in Term 2	Teachers with students
February half term	Final deadline for referrals of students who demonstrate persistent and significant difficulty with the completion of work in timed conditions who are sitting exams in summer 2017	Study Support Referral Assistant to arrange appointments

- Students have two opportunities to attend an assessment appointment and then the offer of support is withdrawn
- All communication by email with students copied to PT and parent
- No additional time to be allowed by teachers before sign off by LJ/SGU which will be at the end of the first half term for students identified via disclosure / Quickscan.