

# Exam Access Arrangements Policy

## 1. Purpose and scope of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity to students, staff and parents/carers in relation to Colchester Sixth Form College's provision of Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) informed and guided by current legislation. The scope of this policy relates to all learners taking national exams within our centre.

## 2. Exam Access Arrangements

Colchester Sixth Form College's policy for access arrangements in exams is determined by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) which regulates the exam access arrangements available and the way these are applied to most exams which are conducted for the Awarding Bodies. Exam access arrangements must reflect a student's normal way of working.

Exam access arrangements (EAA) allow students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical conditions, disabilities or temporary injuries to access exams and assessments. In this way, the College acts as an agent of the Awarding Bodies to comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

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

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, unreasonable time frames, or affects the security of the assessment. The College is bound by immovable deadlines for JCQ and the organisation/administration of exams within the College.

## 3. Key Principles

Colchester Sixth Form College will endeavour to follow this policy to apply for and implement EAAs for eligible students, however these key principles will ordinarily apply:

- a) Students must declare the requirements for EAA on their application or on enrolment, or within the first 2 weeks of their programme.
- b) Although evidence for EAAs can roll over from school or a previous educational provider not all EAAs automatically carry over and Colchester Sixth Form College cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAA.
- c) To receive EAAs students must meet one of the following conditions:
  - a. declares previous EAAs so evidence can be rolled over where applicable,
  - b. meet with college assessors and, where required, undertake a formal assessment,

- c. have a current Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP),
- d. provide appropriate medical evidence **AND**,
- have demonstrated clear evidence of observed need reflected in “normal way of working” in their learning;
- evidence must be obtained that EAAs represent a student’s normal way of working and are not only applied in exams and / or assessments.

**If students do not make use of their exam access arrangements during assessments and exams, the College may withdraw the provision of them.**

#### **4. Responsibilities**

Students must:

- Declare their need for EAA within the first 2 weeks of their programme, and where requested provide the EAA team, any relevant information and evidence of their specific need, within the first 4 weeks of their programme, to enable them to make the appropriate assessment and recommendations for the learner. This evidence may include:
  - Information about exam access arrangements from their school or previous educational provider.
  - Evidence of the specific need – this will look different for different types of specific need:
    - Learning difficulties: Learners should talk to their school or previous educational provider and give permission for them to provide their Form 8 and details of their exam access arrangements. The EAA team will request paperwork from schools once a learner has declared access arrangements were in place at their previous educational provider.
    - Physical, sensory, mental health or neurodevelopmental impairment: Learners should provide their diagnosis letter/report or evidence from a medical professional or specialist. Such as: a letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service†; A GP’s letter or prescription evidence would not normally be sufficient for EAA’s where formal application to the JCQ/ awarding bodies is required.
    - EHCP: Where we have a copy of a current EHCP the EAA team will ask the school or previous educational provider to confirm which EAAs were implemented by them.

- Inform the College 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 exam access arrangement assessment appointments provided and sign the required data protection consent forms. In the event of students not attending or missing appointments a further assessment will only be arranged in exceptional circumstances (for example, bereavement or medical emergency) as agreed by the Head of Learning Support. Any student will only be offered a maximum of two opportunities to re-arrange an appointment.
- Make reasonable use of allocated exam access arrangements to allow them to follow through to subsequent exams and assessments.

**If students with known existing support needs do not provide the evidence required within the first 4 weeks of their study programme, or if the necessary assessment appointment is missed, it will result in exam access arrangements being declined or not being in place in time for the exams.**

## **5. The responsibilities of the College:**

The EAA Team will:

- Comply with the current regulations as set out by JCQ Regulations, Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration, or other Awarding Bodies as required.
- Coordinate the exam access arrangements process within the College (see assessment process below).
- Complete and submit relevant documentation required by JCQ Regulations and appropriate Examination Boards by the set college Internal Deadlines and/or JCQ/Awarding Body External Deadlines in order to allow the Exam Office to prepare for the exams.
- Explain and agree exam access arrangement recommendations with the learner and inform staff via appropriate College systems.
- Comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure protection of learners' personal data.
- Arrange an appointment as required for an assessment with an EAA assessor where needed to review EAAs. All endeavours will be made to arrange this on a students' normal timetabled day and the student will be released from classes to attend if needed.

### **Process for teaching staff:**

- Teaching staff (as required) will complete an online tutor referral form to document students' normal way of working (the differentiations in place to support learning and the difficulties the learner is having).
- Where an EAA is declared within the first 4 weeks of the programme commencing, teaching staff will be asked to complete a tutor referral form which will include the evidence of normal way of working in order to support the roll-over of exam arrangements or a further assessment.
- Where a member of teaching staff identifies previously undiagnosed evidence of a learning support need, through observation or assessment of written work, they will complete a tutor referral form and collect evidence to request an EAA assessment.
- When notified by the EAA team of a student's meeting or assessment for EAAs, teaching staff and personal tutors will encourage the student to attend by reminding them of the appointment time and, where applicable, releasing them from a timetabled session to attend.
- Teaching staff (as required) will be advised of the outcome of any meeting or assessment and informed of agreed EAAs for their students.

### **6. Assessment process**

Students are asked to declare their SEND and access arrangements when applying to the College and/or at enrolment, and to confirm whether exam access arrangements were provided at their school or previous education provider.

Within the first 4 weeks of the start of their programme students who have declared a need for EAA's schools or previous educational providers will be contacted to provide relevant evidence in support of their request.

- If a medical condition or disability is declared, appropriate evidence will be requested (see students' responsibilities); Information can be sent electronically to the EAA team: [learningsupport@colchsfc.ac.uk](mailto:learningsupport@colchsfc.ac.uk)
- If a current EHCP is in place students' previous educational providers will be asked to send evidence confirming the exam access arrangements that were applied.

**Once the appropriate evidence has been received it will either be processed so that EAA can be applied for or an appointment to assess for EAAs can be made.**

If the required evidence is not received by the end of the first 6 weeks of the programme of learning, the College may not be able to process any exam access arrangements request in time for exams, except in extenuating circumstances (for example bereavement or medical emergency). For BTEC and GCSE subjects this will need to be received within 4 weeks.

The College will endeavour to process exam access arrangement requests at the earliest opportunity, based on the expected date of a student's first assessment or examination.

### **Late diagnosis of specific learning difficulty (SpLD) and temporary arrangements**

In cases of a newly identified SpLD or where a student has a temporary illness or injury at the time of an examination, the College can review cases on an individual basis. Whilst the College will endeavour to put suitable adjustments in place, this may not be possible if there is insufficient time or evidence to organise the EAA prior to the exam.

### **Late diagnosis of a medical condition such as ASD and ADHD**

In cases of a newly identified medical condition such as ASD or ADHD the College can review cases on an individual basis. Whilst the College will endeavour to put suitable adjustments in place, this may not be possible if there is insufficient time or evidence to organise the EAA prior to the exam.

**N.B: a medical diagnosis alone is not sufficient evidence for EAA, where a student receives a late diagnosis of ASD or ADHD evidence will be sought from teaching staff regarding normal way of working and whether the learner has faced challenges in the classroom or in exams up to the point of diagnosis.**

## **7. Centre Delegated Access Arrangements**

Organisations are able to implement a range of exam access arrangements without application to the JCQ / Awarding Body approval for the arrangements listed below, however the College must be satisfied that:

- The student has, or presents as having, an impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties, and the candidate is or is likely to be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. This must be evidenced by the student holding a current EHCP, medical evidence of disability, evidence or history of learning difficulties or through a significant history and/or current and compelling observed difficulties in learning reflected by reasonable adjustments and normal way of working. In all cases this arrangement must reflect the student's normal way of working.
- The student has a need on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury. This must be evidenced by medical evidence in the form of a letter from a consultant or treatment centre.
- A student who has extenuating circumstances that occurs in the lead up to, or during the exam period, that are likely to impact on their usual exam performance will be considered for special consideration. This must be supported by a Senior Tutor.

Centre approved arrangements can include:

- Use of a word processor
- Alternative rooming arrangements
- Supervised rest breaks

## 8. Examples of specific needs and available access arrangements

This list is not exhaustive. All exam access arrangements are assessed based on the needs of the individual learner, their normal way of working, supporting evidence and what is considered reasonable by the College.

Examples of specific need	Examples of available access arrangements (not exhaustive as dependent on the specific need)
Cognition and learning  Communication and interaction  Medical condition Sensory impairment Physical impairment Social, mental and emotional	Extra time Reader or reader pen Scribe (writer) Word processor Supervised rest breaks either inside or supervised outside the room * Prompter Coloured or modified examination papers/text Coloured overlays Smaller examination rooms or in <b>exceptional</b> circumstances an individual room

~~\*Coloured paper for those with visual stress can be provided from a standard range of colours known to be clinically effective. These colours can be supplied on the basis of known prior needs and current normal way of working. Students whose needs cannot be met from the standard available range can be offered a screening test to determine the appropriate colour shade. An assessor will check the colour necessary with the student.~~

\* This will be based on an individual candidate's needs and the learners normal way of working within the centre.

## 9. Word processor statement

See word processing policy appendix 1

## 10. Use of Alternative rooming arrangements statement (Classroom sized or individual room)

A classroom sized room may be awarded in a classroom accommodating a smaller number of students where it can be evidenced that sitting an exam in a large exam room would place a candidate at significant disadvantage to their peers and that this is their normal way of working, and where the EAA assessment indicates that:

- candidates need exam access arrangements, which would not disturb other candidates.

- candidates need or use strategies, which would not disturb other candidates.
- candidates have a medical condition not needing privacy.
- candidates have a long-term mental health condition – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- candidates have a physical condition – either temporary or permanent not needing privacy.

An individual room (learner and invigilator in a room entirely separate from other learners) may be recommended where it can be evidenced that a small group provision would put them at a 'substantial disadvantage' to other candidates, where this is their normal way of working and where the EAA assessment indicates that. This is an **exceptional** arrangement which will require specific evidence and each case will be considered on an individual basis.

**Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about exams is not sufficient grounds for an individual room.**

## **11. Retention of evidence**

Colleges are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations; the College is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the College will keep copies of evidence of need, appropriate forms, letters from outside agencies, record of access arrangements used, together with a data protection form signed by the learner. All information and data, whether electronic or paper based, will be stored in accordance with the College's GDPR policy.

## **12. Linked policies**

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Admissions Policy

Data Protection Policy

Word Processing Policy

Alternative Rooming Policy

## **Appendix 1**

### **Word Processing Policy**

#### **Introduction**

The use of a word processor in exams and assessments is an available access arrangement/reasonable adjustment.

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing him/her from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The following principles are applied to access arrangements at The Sixth Form College Colchester:

- 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 as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for a disabled candidate. (AA 4.2.1)
- Although access arrangements/adjustments are intended to allow access to assessments, they are not granted where they will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question. (AA 4.2.2)
- Candidates may not require the same access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in each specification. Subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of the candidate. ALS leads/SENCoS must consider the need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments on a subject-by subject basis. (AA 4.2.3)
- The Additional Learning Support lead/SENCo must ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage a candidate. (AA 4.2.1)
- The candidate must have had appropriate opportunities to practice using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustments before his/her first examination. (AA 4.2.7)

#### **Purpose of the policy**

This policy details how The Sixth Form College Colchester complies with AA, chapter 4 (Managing the needs of candidates and principles for centres), section 5.8 (Word processor) and ICE, sections 14.20-27 (Word processors (computers, laptops and tablets) when awarding and allocating a candidate the use of word processor in exams.

The term 'word processor' is used to describe for example, the use of a computer, laptop or tablet.

#### **The criteria The Sixth Form College Colchester uses to award and allocate word processors for exams and assessments**



The 'normal way of working' for exam candidates, as directed by the head of centre, is that candidates handwrite their exams unless there are exceptions.

## **Exceptions**

A candidate may be awarded the use of a word processor in exams where:

- the candidate may have an approved access arrangement in place, for example the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology
- the candidate has a firmly established need, it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and by not being awarded a word processor would be at a substantial disadvantage to other candidates

The Sixth Form College Colchester will:

- allocate the use of a word processor to a candidate with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) where it is their normal way of working within the centre (AA 5.8.1)
- award the use of a word processor to candidates where appropriate to their needs (AA 5.8.4)
- For example, a candidate with:
  - a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her 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)
- only permit the use of a word processor where the integrity of the assessment can be maintained (AA 4.2.1)
- not grant the use of a word processor where it will compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question (AA 4.2.2)
- consider on a subject-by-subject basis if the candidate will need to use a word processor in each specification (AA 4.2.3)
- process access arrangements/reasonable adjustments at the start of the course, or as soon as practicable having firmly established a picture of need and normal way of working, ensuring arrangements are always approved before an examination or assessment (AA 4.2.4)
- provide the use of word processors to candidates in non-examination assessment components as standard practice unless prohibited by the specification (AA 5.8.2)

The Sixth Form College Colchester will not:

- simply grant the use of a word processor to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in exams or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home (AA 5.8.4)

Additionally, the use of a word processor would be considered for a candidate:

- in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course (AA 4.2.4)
- where the curriculum is delivered electronically and the centre provides word processors to all candidates (AA 5.8.4)

Other centre specific information relating to the use of a word processor:

### **Arrangements at the time of the assessment for the use of a word processor**

A candidate using a word processor is accommodated as follows:

- We do not use laptops for exams. Students are always in smaller rooms with computer access. These are either classroom sized rooms or individual rooms depending on other assess arrangements.

In compliance with the regulations, The Sixth Form College Colchester:

- provides a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) unless an awarding body's specification says otherwise (ICE 14.20)
- (Where a candidate is to be seated with the main cohort without the use of a power point) checks the battery capacity of the word processor before the candidate's exam to ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the exam (ICE 14.21)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to ensure that the centre number, candidate number and the unit/component code appear on each page as a header or footer e.g., 12345/8001 – 6391/01 (ICE 14.22)
- if a candidate is using a software application that does not allow for the insertion of a header or footer, once the candidate has completed the examination and printed off their typed script, he/she is instructed to handwrite their details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22)
- ensures the candidate understands that each page of the typed script must be numbered, e.g., page 1 of 6 (ICE 14.23)
- ensures the candidate is reminded to save his/her work at regular intervals (or where possible, an IT technician will set up 'autosave' on each laptop/tablet to ensure that if there is a complication or technical issue, the candidate's work is not lost) (ICE 14.24)
- instructs the candidate to use a minimum of 12pt font and double spacing to make marking easier for examiners (ICE 14.24)

The Sixth Form College Colchester will ensure the word processor:

(ICE 14.25)

- is only used in a way that ensures a candidate's script is produced under secure conditions
- is not used to perform skills which are being assessed
- is in good working order at the time of the exam
- is accommodated in such a way that other candidates are not disturbed and cannot read the screen
- is used as a typewriter, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- is cleared of any previously stored data
- is not used on the candidate's behalf by a third party unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe does not give the candidate access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), e-mail, the Internet, social media sites, spreadsheets
- does not include graphic packages or computer aided design software unless permission has been given to use these
- does not have any predictive text software or an automatic spelling and grammar check enabled unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using speech recognition technology (a scribe cover sheet must be completed), or the awarding body's specification permits the use of automatic spell checking
- does not include computer reading (text to speech) software unless the candidate has permission to use a computer reader
- does not include speech recognition technology unless the candidate has permission to use a scribe or relevant software

### **Portable storage medium**

The Sixth Form College Colchester will ensure that any portable storage medium (e.g. a memory stick) used:

(ICE 14.25)

- is provided by the centre
- is cleared of any previously stored data

### **Printing the script after the exam has ended**

The Sixth Form College Colchester will ensure:

(ICE 14.25)

- the candidate is present to verify that the work printed is his/her own

- a word-processed script is attached to any answer booklet which contains some of the answers
- the word processor is either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium
- where an awarding body may require a word processor cover sheet, this is included with the candidate's typed script (and according to the relevant awarding body's instructions) (ICE 14.26)
- if a candidate omits to insert the required header or footer, he/she is instructed to handwrite the details as a header or footer; the candidate is supervised throughout this process to ensure that he/she is solely performing this task and not re-reading their answers or amending their work in any way (ICE 14.22)

The Sixth Form College Colchester:

- may retain electronic copies of word-processed scripts as the electronic copy of a word-processed script may be accepted by an awarding body where the printed copy has been lost. However, the centre would need to demonstrate to the awarding body that the file has been kept securely. The head of centre would be required to confirm this in writing to the awarding body (ICE 14.27)

Other centre specific information relating to arrangements at the time of the assessment:

Word processors are either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. Documents are printed off at the end of the examination.

### **Allocating word processors at the time of the assessment**

Appropriate exam-compliant word processors will be allocated by:

the IT department in liaison with the ALS lead/SENCo and the exams officer

In exceptional circumstances where the number of compliant word processors may be insufficient for the cohort of candidates approved to use them in an exam session:

- the cohort will be split into two groups
- one group will sit the exam earlier than or later than the awarding body's published start time
- the security of the exam will be maintained at all times and candidates will be supervised in line with section 7.2 of ICE

Other centre specific information relating to allocating the use of a word processor:

### **Changes 2023/2024**

No changes applicable.