



Children and Young People's Services

Examination Board Resource

Access arrangements for Examinations - paper one

Time: 10 minutes

Instructions

You should attempt all questions.

Do not attempt to answer more than one question at the same time.

No cheating, spitting or sharing

The examiners' word is final.

Access arrangements

1. Opening papers an hour before the exam is not an access arrangement in itself but when is it possible?

There are only three reasons that an examination paper may be opened early, prior to a GCSE or A-level. There is also only a very short period, prior to the beginning of the examination, in which this can take place.

Broadly speaking there are three key reasons for the early opening of the papers, which are:

To enlarge the papers, if they have not already been done, from A4 to A3 paper size, which is preferred by some learners. This may also increase the font size, to sizes, which are not normally offered by the examination board.

To change the colour of the paper, to specifically meet the needs of the candidate

As an oral language modifier, which is often only completed by learners who have a significant hearing impairment and use sign language



However, in the case of SATS examinations, there is far more flexibility, owing to the weight of the examination. Here the school may be offered several days to amend the paper to specifically suit the needs of the candidate.

2. What is the official status of the JCQ's book of regulations?

The official status of the information in the JCQ book of regulations is simply guidance. They are recommending options for alterations in an examination situation, but specific situations can be looked at on a case by case level, which if justified and realistic, can be implemented to meet the needs of the candidate.

Put simply, they are obliged to listen to the requests of the school and candidate to allow full and true access to the examination.

3. Who is responsible for requesting access arrangements in a centre?

Within an educational centre, it is almost always the SENCO (Special Education Needs Coordinator), who would be responsible for the examination alterations and requests for a learner. However, it can also be undertaken by a member of the senior management team. It is not the responsibility of the examination coordinator in the school, as their role is centrally administrative.

4. What factors other than the needs of the candidate may determine whether an access arrangement is reasonable or not?

Broadly speaking there are four reasons to implement alterations to an examination. Obviously the needs of the learner are the main factor to be considered, but there is also:

The impact the alteration could have on themselves and other learners, i.e. security of the examination papers and conditions

Cost is also considered when a request is submitted, to ascertain if there are alternative options that could be offered that would not negatively impact on the candidate's performance

The effectiveness of the intervention requested will also be taken into consideration, i.e. a learner may request N76 font, but is this a sustainable format for a long academic examination paper?



5. Give an example of an access arrangement which can be implemented by a centre without external approval.

Centres can at times make alterations to the examination conditions, but this is largely for what would be deemed 'low risk' actions. This could include things such as rest breaks for a candidate or the permission to use technology, such as a word processor or CCTV. However, this decision must be approved by a SENCO or senior member of staff and justified in writing, should the JCQ wish to seek evidence.

Again, alterations for SATS examinations have more flexibility for the school, owing to the weight of the examinations.

6. What should you include when 'painting a picture of need' for a candidate?

You may wish to include evidence from a number of sources to paint the picture of need. It may be stated that the more evidence the better, but be careful of the evidence you use. Normally you would use things such as, QTVI reports, outcomes of a FVA (Functional Vision Assessment), reports from the medical sector, such as from opticians, optometrists and ophthalmologists.

Reading speeds for the learners does not need to be included, as this is non-applicable for learners with a vision impairment.

7. What is an exemption and when is it possible?

Exemptions are very rarely used today. However, this may be put into place for things such as where there has been a significant medical impact, which would make completing the examination very difficult, i.e. following a sudden loss of a significant amount of sight, where the candidate could not reasonably undertake the examination. It may also be offered, when the examination type would not allow the candidate to demonstrate their understanding or competency in this field. If exclusion is offered, with the candidate being able to complete other aspects of the course, the part of the completed course will be taken as 100% and marked accordingly. However, on the final examination certificate, it will be noted that the candidate did not complete all aspects of the course.



8. What is the largest print size listed as a modified format in the JCQ booklet?

The largest print size offered by JCQ is size N24. However, on enlarging this to A3, this size is increased to N36. Other sizes can be requested, but this would be looked at on a case by case basis, with the JCQ asking the question, 'would this negatively impact on the candidate's ability to demonstrate their competency and understanding of this subject area?' In the case of SATS examinations, there are far more font size options, though paper size is largely controlled to B4.

9. In what circumstances can a candidate use a computer reader but not a human reader?

A candidate can use technology in all subjects, to allow them true and full access to the examination being undertaken. However, the use of a human reader is sometimes controlled, as the JCQ states that a human reader could have an impact on the security of the examination, both positive and negative, as they may influence the understanding a candidate may take from the examination instructions. For this reason, a human reader would not be permitted, where the candidate is required to independently undertake the reading exercise, commonly in English literacy or language examinations.

10. What are the rules governing the use of technology in examinations?

In general, any technologies that are used in the classroom can be used in the examinations of a learner, if they can be proved to not unfairly offer an advantage or hinder the performance of a candidate. The technology being used should also not affect the level of security to the examination being undertaken. There should be no access to the internet, dictionaries or spell check facilities. However, this would be looked at on a case by case basis, depending on the nature and type of examination being undertaken.

An examination should be seen as an extension of the classroom learning. For this reason, if there are to be technologies used in an examination, these should be items that are familiar to the learner and something that they have a working knowledge of using. It would be significantly unfair to introduce technologies which the candidate is unable to function. Therefore, taking time to prepare for and



practise in examination conditions would be very useful for learners who are going to make use of such devices.

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