

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

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Version and Date		Actions/Notes
1.0	September 2024	Included guidance from the Exams Office.
2.0	September 2025	Amendments made to the referral process Data Protection Notice no longer required Addition of Definitions of disability and SEN

Approved by SMT: **October 2025**

Approved by Corporation: **NA**

Date of Next Review: **August 2026**

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable:
 Examinations Policy
 Additional Learning Support Policy
 Exam Word Processing Policy
 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy:
 JCQ
 Awarding bodies
 Government Publications on GOV.UK
 The Exams Office

To be published on College Website: Yes

To be published on Student Hub: Yes

EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

1. What are access arrangements and reasonable adjustments?

Access arrangements are agreed **before** an assessment. They allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an individual candidate without affecting 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 candidate 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.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on several factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled candidate;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment; **and**
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the candidate and other candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involves unreasonable timeframes; **or**
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years. Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions, such as asthma, cancer, diabetes and epilepsy. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Macclesfield College has a written record which clearly shows the centre is leading on the access arrangements process and is complying with its ...obligation to identify the need for, request and implement access arrangements.

This policy is maintained and held by the Head of Exams and ALS Lead alongside the individual files/e-folders of each access arrangements candidate. Each file/e-folder contains detailed records of all the essential information that is required to be held according to the regulations.

The policy is annually reviewed to ensure that processes are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication 'Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties - **Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments**'.

3. General Principles

The principles for the centre to consider are detailed in AA (section 4.2). These include:

- 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 due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidate.
- The SENCo, or an equivalent member of staff within a FE college, **must** ensure that the proposed access arrangement/reasonable adjustment does not unfairly disadvantage or advantage the candidate.
- Access arrangements/reasonable adjustments should be processed at the **start** of the course.
- Arrangements **must** always be approved **before** an examination or assessment.
- The arrangement(s) put in place **must** reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre.
- The candidate **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before his/her first examination.

4. The Assessment Process - Request / Referral for EAA's

All learners are entitled to apply for Exam Access Arrangements (EAA's).

All staff must be aware of the College policy and referral procedures surrounding EAA's.

Access arrangements must be the learners normal way of working in the classroom.

EAA's are not transferable from one educational establishment to another. Therefore EAA's that were applicable at High School, or any other educational setting will not be valid at Macclesfield College.

Each learner will need to refer themselves for EAA's or a learner may be referred by their Personal Tutor, curriculum or learning Facilitator. The ALS department must receive these referrals in advance of the dates below:

Autumn Resits : **1st November**
All other Exams : **21st March**

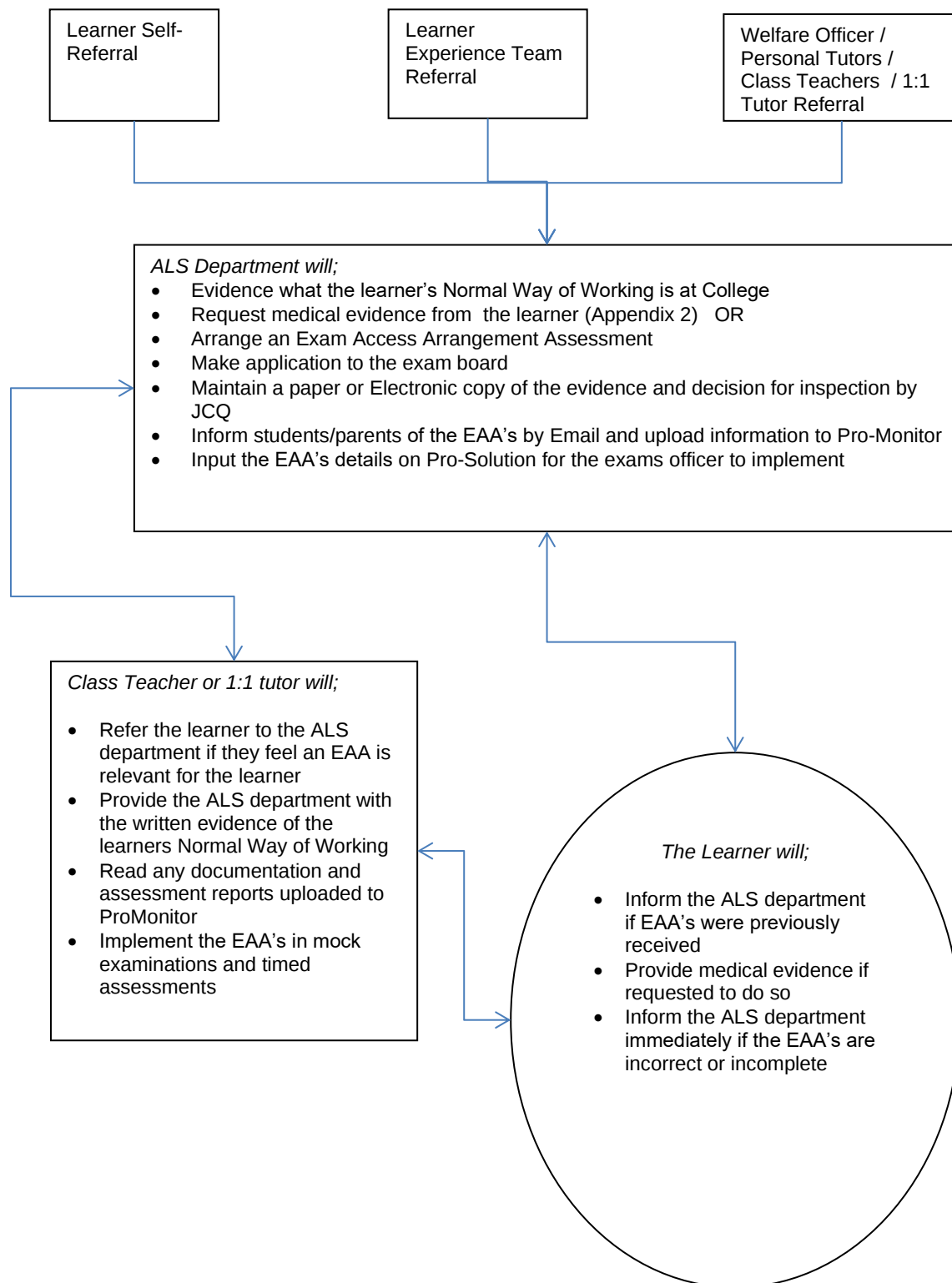
Referrals can be made by the learner, tutor or their parent/carer by contacting the Access arrangement team via email to accessarrangements@macclesfield.ac.uk
Tutors must complete a Normal Way of Working form when making a referral.

Once the referral has been received by the ALS department, each learner will be assessed based on the learners "current evidence of need" as defined by current JCQ regulations. This initial assessment will decide which EAA's are relevant for the learner, based on their current course and level of study and current need. Refer to Appendix 1.

EAA's currently available at Macclesfield College are;

- Extra time
- Use of coloured / enlarged paper
- Use of coloured screen overlay
- Reader/computer reader
- Scribe
- Prompt
- Supervised rest breaks
- Word Processor / Laptop - refer to Exam Word Processing Policy
- Alternative Rooming Arrangements
- Mobile Phones for medical Purposes
- Use of White noise / listening to music
- Digital Clocks

Appendix 1 - Referral Process



Appendix 2 - Formal Evidence

To apply for access arrangements using Form 9 on the grounds of any of:

- candidates with communication and interaction needs
- candidates with a medical condition (formally diagnosed by a registered specialist)
- candidates with sensory and/or physical needs
- candidates with social, emotional and mental health needs
- candidates with speech, language and communication needs
- candidates with learning difficulties who are subject to a current EHCP (England), Statement of Special Educational Needs (Northern Ireland) or IDP (Wales)

The College will request that the learner provides us with Formal evidence of their diagnosis.

The medical evidence needs to be signed and dated by a doctor/specialist and the following is a list of evidence that is acceptable to the exam boards;

- hospital consultant, CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a psychiatrist; or
- A letter from a Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service; or
- A letter from a Speech and Language Therapist; or
- A statement of Special Educational Needs relating to the candidates secondary education, or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) which confirms the candidates disability.

In addition, the College must be able to prove that the access arrangements reflect the learners normal way of working within the College.

Appendix 3 - SpLD screening reports

For access arrangements that require the College to submit a form 8 to JCQ the following procedure must be followed, in order as it is stated below;

- Part 1 must be completed by the Designated Exam access arrangement Coordinator/Assessor, detailing the learners current need/s. It must also include the learners normal way of working in the classroom at College.
- Part 2 must then be completed (signed and dated) by the College's Assessor. Please note that the College will not accept any external reports supplied by learners from other sources as evidence of scores for Part 2 unless this has been agreed in advance with Designated Exam access Arrangement Assessor and the author of the report has an established relationship with the College and their qualifications have been verified.
- Part 3 must be completed by Designated Exam Access Arrangement Coordinator/Assessor making recommendations for access arrangements, taking into account the information in Part 1 and 3.

