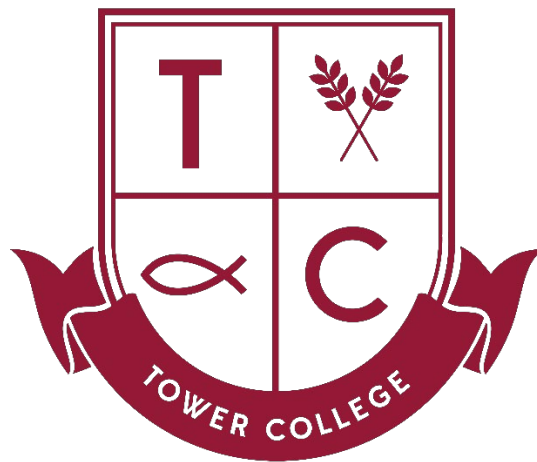


EXAMINATION POLICY

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS



Date of Policy: October 2018

Review Date*: October 2019

Coordinator (s): Mrs Knox

Governor: Mrs C Parr

*** Policy Review: Annually unless otherwise dictated by the FGB (Full Governing Body) or by changes in legislation.**

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PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to confirm that Tower College fulfils *"its obligations in respect of identifying the need for, requesting and implementing access arrangements."*

[JCQ 'General regulations for approved centres'Chapter5.5]

The policy is reviewed annually to ensure that arrangements are carried out in accordance with the current edition of the JCQ publication

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQCIC awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow pupils with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a pupil with a special educational need and/or disability would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AT TOWER COLLEGE

Tower College aims to ensure that all pupils are able to access examinations and are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over their peers by any long term, substantial special educational need and/or disability which fall into the following four categories: -

1. *Communication and interaction.*
2. *Cognition and learning.*
3. *Social, emotional and mental health.*
4. *Sensory and/or physical needs.*

We will achieve this by applying the rules for Access Arrangements as set out in the most recent Joint Council for Qualifications guidelines. These are updated every year on the 1st September and run through until 31st August. The currently released document will always be the first point of reference in determining the correct access arrangement for a pupil.

Access arrangements reflect the support that is usually given to the pupil in the classroom (within reason), internal exams and mock examinations. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'.

When might a pupil require Exam Access Arrangements?

An Exam Access Arrangement (EAA) is a provision or type of support given to a pupil (subject to exam board approval) in an exam, where a particular need has been identified and is provided so that the student has appropriate access to the exam.

What evidence is needed to apply for EAA?

There are a number of pieces of evidence that can be used to apply for EAA to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ):

- An Education, Health and Care Plan
- An Educational Psychologist Report
- Form 8 report from a Specialist Teacher or Specialist Assessor completed no earlier than the beginning of Year 9
- Previous EAA from Primary Schools/other education providers (*please note a Form 8 will still need to be completed for GCSE*)
- Subject teachers – examples of work as appropriate
- Results of baseline tests e.g. reading/comprehension age, writing tests, standardised psychometric testing.

Private Educational Psychologists' Reports

As an independent school, Tower College does not currently have access to the local authority educational psychology team or specialist teacher to assess for access arrangements. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to fund a specialist assessor or educational psychologist to carry out an assessment. The SENCo is available to provide advice and support.

Procedures

How pupils would be identified for Exam Access Arrangements:

- Parental referral
- Subject teacher referral
- CATS Scores
- Screening assessments
- Information from previous school/education provider
- Normal way of working
- Educational psychologist report
- Education, Health and Care plan

An important principle is that just because a pupil has received EAA in the past, it does not necessarily follow that they will continue to receive EAA as their needs may very well have changed. For example for whom baseline testing at KS2 shows a reading speed score below the threshold required for EAA may not qualify for the EAA at KS4 as their reading speed may have improved to the extent that it no longer meets the exam board criteria.

Parental Referral

Parents can contact the school to ask for advice about testing if they have concerns with the progress and learning of their child. Once contact has been made with the parent, the SENCO will investigate their concerns by talking to the child's teachers to gain information. Following this, a decision will be made as to whether it is appropriate to investigate further. Parents are also able to contact a specialist assessor or educational psychologist to assess their child if they feel it is appropriate to do so.

Teacher Referral

As with parental referrals, teachers can refer a pupil to the SENCO where they have concerns about the learning and progress of a pupil in their class. All of the pupil's current teachers will be asked to give feedback and following this a decision will be made as to whether to recommend that a pupil be assessed for EAA. Teachers are asked to refer pupils to the SENCO initially if they feel a child may be dyslexic rather than contacting the parents about their concerns. The SENCO will then contact the parents if further investigation is deemed necessary.

CATS Testing, PTE, PTM

Throughout their time at Tower College pupils are tested using Cognitive Ability Tests, Progress Tests in Maths and Progress Test in English. The tests provide standardised and UK-normed scores and can help identify pupils who may require EAA. If a major concern is uncovered at this stage, the SENCO will carry out further screener tests and contact the parents to discuss next steps.

How do staff and parents know whether a student has EAA?

The information about results of assessments for EAA are kept confidentially in line with school policy and are shared on a need to know basis.

Parents will be contacted by the SENCO to discuss what they are entitled to, why and when.

There are some considerations with this access arrangement application:

- The authorisation granted by the Awarding Bodies lasts 26 months, therefore it is prudent to assess and apply for EAA in the April/May of Year 9 in order that any permitted exam access arrangements are in place for the full GCSE period of both Year 10 and 11.
- “Normal way of working” is a very important principle, sometimes even considered the *most* important. An application for EAA made late in Year 11 lacks validity as there is little evidence of whatever EAA is granted being the “normal way of working”.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING AN APPLICATION?

Once the tests have been conducted and there is a recommendation from the tester for EAA, the SENCO or Exam Officer then applies to the Awarding Bodies. The feedback is instant at this point the EAA is added to the SEN list and the parents are informed of the EAA.

The application will require evidence of need, and the centre needs to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. This can include:

- Recommendations by teachers
- Educational psychologists’ reports
- Letters from outside agencies such as CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services), hospitals or doctors
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Permission from the Awarding Bodies for the arrangement(s) requires:

- A signed copy of the Form 8 report by the designated tester
- A data protection form signed by the pupil

DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND MODIFIED PAPERS ON-LINE FOR GCSE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Access arrangements may cover the entire course and for GCSE qualifications **must** be processed using access arrangements online **as early as possible**.

From referral to point of access arrangements being awarded may take up to 4 weeks.

The deadline set by the JCQ is final, late entries may incur further inspections by the JCQ.

The decision to apply for access arrangements is based upon evidence of a history of need, history of provision and a specialist assessor access arrangements report.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment requiring authoritative support and at the discretion of the examining body.

APPENDIX 1 - COMMON ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

25% Extra Time – the student is granted an additional 25% extra time for the examination, usually to compensate for a below average processing, reading or comprehension speed (a score of 84 or less in appropriate standardised testing). This is evidenced by Form 8 and work gathered in school to demonstrate the normal way of working. This arrangement can also be granted by medical evidence or other evidence from appropriate third parties, such as CAMHS. In these cases, the student does not require the Form 8, but does require a signed, authorised letter (i.e. on headed paper) from the representative of the agency making the request.

Rest breaks – these are non-evidenced. The student is allowed to “pause” the exam for brief periods of time. This is often to compensate for physical issues (e.g. a recently sprained wrist causing discomfort when writing), calming down (e.g. if the pupil is prone to panic attacks, or suffers from ADHD and needs to re-focus) or extreme cases of exam anxiety.

Separate invigilation – the pupil is invigilated separately from the rest of the pupils sitting the exam. While it is very common for educational psychologists to recommend this, it is viewed as a “last resort” option, due to the impact upon rooming and staffing. Students who have been granted this arrangement have received it due to medical issues (e.g. visual impairment requiring specific environmental adjustments), and specific learning needs (e.g. complex combinations of multiple severe learning needs such as ADHD, ASD and OCD).

Use of assistive technologies - In all cases, the pupil must be used to using the assistive technologies, and must ideally have started no later than the beginning of Year 10. It is envisioned that where possible, the provision for the use of assistive technologies is in place from Year 9 onwards. Reader Pens - if “reader pens” are to be used, they must be of a type approved by the JCQ. Currently the preferred option is the “C-Pen” reader. Students using this are allowed to plug headphones in so that the pen “reads” the words to them without disturbing others. As such, they are allowed to use it in the main exam hall.

IPads – these are allowed for use on a case by case basis and permission must be sought from the Awarding Bodies. The iPad must be locked into Guided Access Mode, preventing the pupil from accessing anything outside of the specific app required for the exam (normally iBooks or an equivalent PDF reader). The iPad must be placed in Airplane Mode (i.e. all radios switched off) and the Guided Access Mode will be PIN-locked by the SENCO. This PIN will be made known to the Exams Officer, and the ICT staff.

Laptops – if a pupil uses a laptop in day to day lessons then it is her normal way of working and she may be allowed the use of one in an examination. The laptop will not be her

“usual” one and will be provided with a “clean” image, with external communications disabled, and spelling and grammar checking disabled.

Scribes and Readers – these are very often recommended by external educational psychologists, however, they are increasingly being discouraged as an examination access arrangement. Both arrangements require a degree of familiarity between the pupil and the scribe/reader and need to be in place from Year 9 onwards at the very latest in order to be effective. There is also the concern that there is an implication for marks that are based on quality of communication, which are generally not attainable for the users of these arrangements. The recommended alternative to a scribe arrangement is the use of a laptop, and the recommended alternative to a reader arrangement is the use of a reader pen.