



BHASVIC

Requests for Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs)

Guidance for Students and Parents/Carers

2023-24

Exam Access Arrangements are for students who experience '*substantial disadvantage*' and '*persistent and significant difficulties*' in accessing examinations.

(Joint Council for Qualifications - JCQ)

Key Points:

1. A student must declare EAAs on application.
2. EAAs do not automatically carry over from school to BHASVIC and must be reapplied for at 6th form college. Therefore, we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAAs.
3. BHASVIC cannot accept an Educational Psychologist's report as evidence to automatically entitle a candidate to EAAs. However, EP reports will be useful to show history of need.
4. For Joint Council for Qualifications JCQ approved EAAs, you must be assessed (or re-assessed) by BHASVIC assessors and have substantial current supporting evidence from teachers or provide appropriate medical evidence.
5. Young people with *long-term* sensory needs, medical or psychological conditions must provide appropriate evidence from an accredited professional/medical consultant to request a continuation of their EAAs at BHASVIC.
6. The JCQ issue deadlines for applications for Access Arrangements for Examinations. (This is in October for GCSE resits & January examinations and March for June examinations).

If you require further information about Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs), please contact:

Linda Lab - SENDCo, Head of ALS and ESOL: [mail to: l.lab@bhasvic.ac.uk](mailto:l.lab@bhasvic.ac.uk)

General Policy and procedure for assessment of EAAs:

- If a young person has had EAAs at school, they will be invited to be reassessed in September before their courses start to see if they still need the same arrangements for their Level 3 qualifications. This will be processed and uploaded onto the college system in the first term.
- EAAs at BHASVIC are based on assessments carried out by our own qualified assessors in accordance with the JCQ recommendations. We cannot accept an Educational Psychologist's (EP) report for this purpose. EP reports make recommendations for school/college to consider. Please note that often private educational psychologists recommend that the student should receive EAAs which can be in conflict with what the centre tester (Specialist Assessor) recommends and can also be in conflict with the current JCQ regulations.
- Educational Institutions are required to follow tightly regulated guidelines from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). **The JCQ updates the EAA regulations annually** and the college must adapt its criteria and methodology for assessing student entitlement each year to ensure compliance. This means that we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAAs they have had at school.
- Following submission of an internal referral for EAAs and following provision of supporting teacher evidence, an assessment will be carried out by one of our qualified assessors to finalise a decision and provide necessary evidence of need to the JCQ.
- Students who have November or January external exams must inform us at the start of September in order to meet the JCQ deadline for application.

General Policy for Medical Evidence for EAAs:

Where exam arrangements (such as 25% extra time) are requested for conditions other than a learning difficulty e.g. autism, ADHD or other medical condition:

'Supervised rest breaks should always be considered before processing an online application for 25% extra time, since they may be more appropriate for candidates with an impairment other than a learning difficulty. The SENCo should have explored and trialled the option of supervised rest breaks through timed internal tests and mock examinations before making an application for 25% extra time.'

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments **JCQ 2023/2024**

- Where JCQ approved arrangements (extra time/scribe) are agreed, 'specialist evidence confirming the candidate's disability' must be given for example, by a medical consultant or specialist (*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* **JCQ 2023/2024**).
- For college centre approved arrangements (e.g. smaller room) evidence will be requested from an accredited professional medical source (e.g. consultant, mental health professional, CAMHS, GP etc.)
- **NB** Medical letters can help to provide evidence of need for a student, but a note from a medical professional does not mean an automatic entitlement to EAAs.

Guidance in relation to specific categories of Exam Access Arrangements

Alternative Rooming Arrangements/Smaller Room

Please note: 'Alternative Rooming Arrangements' is sitting the examination outside of the main examination hall/room – a room for a smaller group of candidates which could contain 40+ students.

Please note: The JCQ regulations state that nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about exams is NOT sufficient grounds for alternative rooming arrangements/smaller room within the centre.

You may be eligible for alternative rooming arrangements under the following categories:

- 'Long term' mental health issues.
- 'Long term' social or emotional needs.
- A medical/physical condition/impairment requiring alternative rooming arrangements. This includes students with diabetes who use digital alerts from their mobile phone as normal practice.
- Eligibility for access arrangements necessitating alternative rooming arrangements.

The SENDCo/college assessment team will consider arrangements for a candidate to sit their examination in a smaller room if:

- The candidate provides written evidence of need from an accredited professional medical source outlining their condition and explanation of need.
- A candidate with mental health and/or social/emotional needs is accessing support within college or from an external agency e.g. CAMHs.
- The college is aware of history of need through pastoral and the candidate is known to the Additional Learning Support department.

(N.B - Evidence from an accredited professional medical source will be required)

For class assessments students with alternative rooming arrangements /smaller room allocation will be expected to remain in their class as it is considered a smaller room.

Individual Invigilation (student sits exams in individual room)

Individual Invigilation can only be accommodated in **highly exceptional circumstances**.

Individual Invigilation would only be granted where, in addition to the evidence required for a smaller room, the candidate can provide evidence of need from a consultant or specialist which provides details of the student's condition and states exactly why Individual Invigilation is necessary.

Following submission of this evidence, the SENDCo/college assessment team will make a final decision and communicate this back to the applicant and parents or carers.

Supervised Rest Breaks

The college's policy for supervised rest breaks is in line with current JCQ regulations, which state:

"The SENDCo 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; and the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010".

Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments - JCQ 2023-2024

The SENDCo/college assessment team will always consider if supervised rest breaks would be more appropriate before making an application for 25% extra time.

We cannot make any arrangements for internal or external exams without the required evidence.

Supervised rest breaks could be awarded on account of:

1. Medical conditions – rest breaks can be agreed if you have a serious medical condition, e.g. type 1 diabetes. Medical evidence is required.
2. Diagnoses of ASC or AD(H)D - if you have a diagnosis, we will look at the recommendations and consider whether rest breaks will be helpful in exams. Evidence of your diagnosis is required.
3. Social, emotional & mental health needs where current written evidence of need is provided from an accredited professional medical source outlining the condition and explanation of current need.
4. Sensory or physical needs where sitting or writing/reading for an extended period of time causes significant discomfort/difficulty. Medical evidence from an accredited professional is required.

Rest breaks are used in different ways:

- A student may take a short break to rest an injury or physical disability and sit quietly in the exam room.
- A student can leave the exam room supervised to take a short walk.
- A student may go to the toilet or have a snack.
- A student may need to check blood sugar levels and administer insulin if required.

NB: A Rest break is for taking a rest from the exam, not for thinking time or processing information, therefore the exam paper will not be on show and the student must not engage with the exam during this time.

BHASVIC's policy is that a student be allowed rest breaks totalling **5 minutes per hour**. Therefore, a student sitting a 2-hour examination will be allowed a maximum of 10 minutes' rest break.

Deviations from this will be discussed and agreed with the candidate in advance of their exam.

Use of a Word Processor in Exams

The JCQ provides the following guidelines on when it is acceptable for individuals to be given access to word processing during examinations:

'A word processor cannot be simply granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in examinations or can work faster on a keyboard, or because he/she uses a laptop at home.'

Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments - JCQ 2023-2024

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long-term effect on their ability to write legibly e.g. dyspraxia.
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand (to be assessed)
- Very poor handwriting/illegible handwriting

At BHASVIC we will review requests for the use of a word processor in exams if one of the following conditions is met:

1. A medical, physical or sensory disability that confirms use of a word processor as necessary. (We require confirmation in writing by an accredited medical specialist or consultant).
2. Slow handwriting speed (confirmed by an internal assessment by one of our qualified staff at BHASVIC).
3. Planning and organisational problems when writing by hand (supported by teacher evidence)
4. Extremely poor handwriting (Examiners are adept at deciphering poor handwriting, so it must be extremely difficult to read, not just messy.) Proof is required from subject teachers.
5. If a student has a history of need using a word processor in exams at their previous school and it is therefore their 'normal way of working,' and there is evidence that the provision of a word processor is still appropriate.

In all cases, the use of a word processor must reflect the candidate's normal way of working within the centre and be appropriate to the candidate's needs.

The candidates will have the spell/grammar check disabled.

Please note - re: Maths - The use of a word processor in exams is for students who need to do extended writing. Unless there is a medical reason or a specific need, we do not permit the use of a word processor for Maths.

Procedure for Examinations where a word processor is used.

- Computers will be logged onto before the exam with spellcheck disabled and internet access prohibited.
- Candidates must not use their own computer/lap-top for exams,
- Candidates are responsible for frequently saving their work during the exam time.
- Candidates must ensure that they know how to do the following: set up headers, footers and page numbers so that each page has a centre number, candidate number & unit/component code and that the script is typed in minimum of 12-point font with 1.5 line spacing.
- At the end of the exam, the candidate will print off a copy of their work and it is their responsibility to check that all the pages have printed and that they are happy that all the printed copies are complete.

Practical Examinations

Students who do the following subjects will not qualify for extra time in the practical element of their exams or assessments for these courses:

- BTEC courses which require the performance of a practical skill or task.
- Dance
- Drama and Theatre studies
- Fine Art
- Graphic Design
- Music
- Photography
- Science practicals
- Sport
- Textiles

For any further information, please refer to the college's SEND and Examinations Policies both available on the college's website.