



Requests for Exam Access Arrangements (EAs)

Guidance for Students and Parents/Carers

2026-27

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 EAs on application.
2. 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.
3. EAs **do not** automatically carry over from school to BHASVIC and must be reapplied for through the JCQ at 6th form college. Therefore, we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAs.
4. BHASVIC cannot accept an Educational Psychologist's report as evidence to automatically entitle a candidate to EAs. However, EP reports will be useful to show history of need and/or recommendations. For JCQ approved EAs, you must also be assessed by BHASVIC assessors (or provide appropriate medical evidence) in addition to having substantial current supporting evidence from college teachers.
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 EAs 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). The JCQ deadlines **cannot** be changed and impact on the earlier internal deadlines set by college to be able to apply and have the appropriate evidence for relevant EAs within the published deadline.

General Policy and Procedure for Assessment of Extra Time:

- If a young person has had extra time at school through assessment, their entitlement to extra time does not automatically carry over and college will have to gather appropriate evidence to establish whether the same arrangements are still appropriate for their Level 3 study/qualifications. Therefore, students will be asked to **provide their completed Form 8 report** from their school by a specified date. Alongside this, we will also need appropriate teacher and assessment evidence from college staff in line with JCQ regulations. Please note we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAAs they have had at school. This might be because they are not appropriate for their subject choices.
- We have an internal referral system for potential extra time. Teachers are the only people who can make a referral. Following submission of an internal referral from a teacher for a request for extra time, and the gathering of supporting evidence from other subject teachers, then provided the appropriate teacher and assessment evidence is substantial and in line with JCQ regulations, an EAA assessment will be carried out at college by one of our qualified assessors. They will finalise a decision and provide further necessary evidence of need to the JCQ.
- Extra time at BHASVIC is based on assessments conducted 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 conflict with the evidence gathered by the centre and can also conflict with the current JCQ regulations.
- Students who have November or January external exams must inform us of any previous EAAs at the start of September to meet the JCQ deadline for application. Failure to do so means we cannot guarantee that EAA can be awarded in time for these exams.

General Policy & Procedure for Medical Evidence for Extra Time & other 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 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'. (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments -JCQ 2026/2027)

- If a young person has had extra time at school for medical reasons (including ADHD & ASC), their entitlement to extra time does not automatically carry over and college will have to gather appropriate evidence to establish whether the same arrangements are still appropriate for their Level 3 study/qualifications. Therefore, students will be asked to provide appropriate medical evidence by a specified date. Alongside this, we will also need appropriate teacher and assessment evidence from college staff in line with JCQ regulations. Please note we cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAAs they have had at school.
- Where JCQ approved arrangements (extra time/scribe) are agreed for medical reasons, 'specialist evidence must confirm that the candidate has a disability' from 'an appropriate specialist working within either the NHS or a private practice.' (*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ 2026/2027*). A GP letter cannot be accepted for extra time.
- 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.** 'Although a specialist, e.g. a medical consultant, may recommend specific access arrangements, it is the SENCo who must determine the arrangements for the candidate's examinations. It is the SENCo's professional judgement which is based on their knowledge of the candidate's disability, the candidate's normal way of working in timed assessments and comments and observations from teaching staff.' (*Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ 2026/2027*).

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.

A candidate **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**.

*'The use of an alternative room with one-to-one invigilation **must only** apply where the candidate has a serious medical condition, such as frequent seizures, Tourette's or significant behavioural issues which would disturb other candidates in the examination room' (Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments JCQ 2026/2027).*

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 & that there is a genuine need for the arrangement" (Access Arrangements and Reasonable adjustments - JCQ 2026-2027).

The SENDCo/college assessment team must 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 a candidate has a serious medical condition, e.g. type 1 diabetes. Medical evidence is required.
2. Diagnoses of ASC or AD(H)D - if a candidate has a diagnosis, we will look at the recommendations and consider whether rest breaks will be helpful in exams. Evidence of a candidate's 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 causes significant discomfort/difficulty. Medical evidence from an accredited professional is required.

Students will usually be expected to stay at their desks during a rest break. 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.

In exceptional circumstances the candidate may be allowed to leave the room. If they do need to leave the room, they must be accompanied by an invigilator and must stay outside the examination room.

A student may need to check blood sugar levels and administer insulin if required.

'The duration of the supervised rest break must be determined by the SENDCo.'

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 2026-2027).

At BHASVIC assessors will consider and gather evidence for:

- 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
- Extremely 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:

From the JCQ: For visual arts subjects & other practical subjects, extra time **will only be allowed** in exceptional circumstances:

- Typically, where there is:
 - a **physical disability**,
 - **sensory impairment**, or
 - **medical condition affecting manual dexterity/coordination** i.e. the candidate is **genuinely slower at the physical process** (e.g. painting, drawing).

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