



Policy on

Examination Access Arrangements (FE)

Approved

September 2022

by

Senior Leadership Team

Policy Title	Examination Access Arrangements (FE) Policy
Document Owner	Head of Student Support & Student Engagement

Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure	All Staff
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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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1. Rationale

The reason for the development of this policy is derived from the College's commitment to meeting the individual needs of students by providing reasonable adjustments and promoting non-discriminatory practices across the functions of the organisation.

The College is committed to ensuring, where appropriate, the availability of a range of access arrangements. This is to meet the needs of students who have special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries that may affect their ability to access provision and to participate in examinations and controlled assessments. The intention of an access arrangement is to meet the needs of students without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access arrangements are considered reasonable adjustments which enable the College and awarding bodies to comply with our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The policy is written in line with current legislation relating to provision of reasonable adjustments for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments regulations.

2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline the principles of the use of examination access arrangements as a reasonable adjustment, the appending procedure outlines the way in which access arrangements will be administered. This policy also defines the responsibilities of students, teaching staff and support staff in the implementation and application of access arrangements.

The key principle of access arrangements is that there is a **history of support** provision which determines a students' 'normal way of working' and that the arrangement is not suddenly being granted at the time of the examination, unless the student has recently had an injury/illness.

3. Student Entitlement

The purpose of an access arrangement is to ensure that potential barriers to assessment are removed for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, to prevent them being disadvantaged as a consequence of their persistent and significant difficulty.

Students who may benefit from access arrangements include students with:

- a learning difficulty and/or disability;
- a medical condition;
- a physical disability;
- a sensory loss;
- poor or illegible handwriting (where use of a PC in-class is normal way of working);
- a temporary injury.

Under the terms of this policy all students at the College are entitled to:

- A. an assessment of need to identify individual learning support requirements including access arrangements where a student has a **learning difficulty and/or disability**;
- B. provision of additional learning support and access arrangements as identified by the assessment of need.

Students who qualify for use of access arrangements must:

- C. have a persistent and significant difficulty and are disabled **within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010**;
- D. use access arrangements as 'normal way of working' within the College (in the classroom; small working group, internal college tests, controlled assessments and mock examinations).

Examples of Access Arrangements

- a. Extra time
- b. Reader
- c. Scribe
- d. Prompter
- e. Separate invigilation
- f. Modified materials
- g. Sign Language Interpreter/Communication Support
- h. Practical Assistant
- i. Bilingual dictionary
- j. Rest breaks¹
- k. Assistive Technology and/or equipment; including Word Processor, Computer Reader and Speech Recognition Technology (only where this is an assessed need and 'normal way of working').

4. Student Responsibilities

This policy requires students to fully acknowledge and engage in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- a. giving a full disclosure of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and detail of support previously accessed at the point of enrolment.
- b. providing evidence which confirms their disability or learning difficulty.
- c. attending any assessments organised by the College on their behalf. Failure to attend two or more assessments will result in any further assessments being funded and scheduled by the College.
- d. actively using the access arrangements implemented by the College, as normal way of

¹ The College will not approve rest breaks in advance for anxiety/worry/stress caused by taking an exam. It is normal to feel stressed and worried about exams. Please be reassured invigilators are experienced and trained to deal with students who are upset and worried on the day.

working.

- e. understanding a delay in disclosure may impact on the Colleges ability to process Access Arrangements

5. Teaching and Coaching Staff Responsibilities

This policy requires teaching and support staff to ensure that:

- a. early identification of students who may require access arrangement is made to facilitate the use of reasonable adjustments and assistive technology within lessons;
- b. the opportunity for students to regularly disclose learning difficulties and/or disabilities is provided;
- c. they will support the Learning Support (LS) department in determining and implementing appropriate access arrangements by actively monitoring and recording 'normal way of working' through Pro Monitor
- d. they support students to provide evidence of their disability;
- e. they rescind access arrangements where a student is not 'actively' using the approved arrangements in lessons; and
- f. they give due regard to the College Malpractice policy in relation to the application of access arrangements.

6. Learning Support Team Responsibilities

The Learning Support Team should ensure that:

- a. they carry out a formal assessment and/or support students to access appropriate evidence which confirms their disability or learning difficulty;
- b. students receive access arrangements appropriate to their needs;
- c. all staff involved in the facilitation of access arrangements are appropriately trained;
- d. they maintain evidence of approved access arrangements for inspection purposes;
- e. they keep up to date with relevant regulations and guidance;
- f. they rescind access arrangements where it cannot be demonstrated that the student is 'actively' using access arrangements as their normal way of working;
- g. they make applications for access arrangements to the appropriate awarding body; and
- h. they give due regard to the College Academic Malpractice policy in relation to the application of access arrangements.

7. Exams Office Responsibilities

The Exams Office should ensure that:

- a. they implement approved access arrangements;
- b. they keep up to date with relevant regulations and guidance;
- c. all staff involved in the facilitation of access arrangements are appropriately trained; and
- d. they inform Learning Support where students have not used their Access Arrangements

8. College Management Responsibilities

College Management should ensure that:

- a. all staff are fully conversant with this policy and the demands it places on them;
- b. all staff are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities for the delivery of access arrangements, whether academic or support staff;
- c. that teaching and support staff meet the responsibilities outlined in this policy and appending procedure; and
- d. adequate staffing resources are allocated to provide support during examinations, to carry out assessment and attend training.

9. Standards by which the success of this policy can be evaluated

The following standards/measures will be considered when evaluating the success of this policy:

- a. achievement rates for students receiving access arrangements are at, or above, the College benchmark;
- b. student feedback, including questionnaire responses, show high levels of satisfaction with the quality of access arrangements support they receive;
- c. staff feedback on the quality of access arrangements support provided by the College to enhance competence and independence in students is positive;
- d. students development of independence in their learning is measurable and positive; and
- e. positive self-assessment outcomes across Schools for the standards achieved for learning support provision.

10. Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

The nominated Vice Principal, Head of Student Support and Engagement and Quality have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy. Other key posts of responsibility include:

- a. the SENCO and Access Advisors to lead and co-ordinate the provision of examination access arrangements across College;
- b. Personal Development Coaches to identify students requiring Access Arrangements (through tutorial) and co-ordinate evidence from all teaching staff involved with the student;
- c. Access Advisors and Specialist Assessors to provide support to teaching staff and additional learning support staff and ensure they are aware of the up-to-date assistive technologies and reasonable adjustments available;
- d. Administration personnel to facilitate the application for access arrangements to the appropriate awarding body; and
- e. Heads of School, Curriculum Managers and teaching staff are to ensure that this policy is articulated to students and parents/carers.

11. Associated Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting/related documentation:

Appendices:

Appendix	Document
A	<i>Equality Impact Assessment</i>
B	Access Arrangements Approval Procedure
C	Quick Guide for Staff
D	Guidance for Student Receiving Access Arrangements
E	Guidance on Range Access Arrangements

Linked Policies:

FE Academic Malpractice Policy
Policy on Use of Word Processors in Examinations