



**Parental Guidance
regarding
Exam Access Arrangements
2017-18**



The college receives a large number of requests each year regarding Access Arrangements for students taking examinations; for example, extra time, rest breaks or use of word processor. Every year the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) update their guidance relating to Exam Access Arrangements. The guidance the college receives is in excess of 200 pages, so we have created this document in order to give parents a useful **brief** outline about what is required for Exam Access Arrangements to be granted and the evidence the college needs to provide to the Examination boards in order to support this request.

Exam Access Arrangements

When applying for Exam Access Arrangements we are obliged to work within the framework laid down by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ).

These regulations are very complex and there have been major changes for 2016-17. The current guidance can be viewed at www.jcq.org.uk

Where a student is referred to Study Support, we will do an in-house assessment for exam arrangements if appropriate. **PLEASE NOTE: Privately commissioned assessment reports cannot be accepted by the College as they will not be based on evidence of need from the teachers who know the student's work.** Should you choose to provide the college with a privately commissioned report from an educational psychologist or specialist teacher assessor you need to be aware of the following:

Before a private assessment is undertaken, the educational psychologist or specialist teacher assessor must contact study support and ask for evidence of a student's normal way of working and relevant background information.

This must take place before the candidate is assessed.

(JCQ Regulations 2017-18)

Students who feel they have cause to query the outcome of a referral to Study Support should contact the Study Support dept. in the first instance who will be able to explain the outcome and/or resolve the matter. Alternatively, students can talk to their Tutor, Lead Tutor or Head of Faculty if they do not wish to talk directly with the dept.

All queries should be raised within five working days of being notified of the outcome of a referral. The college endeavours to respond to all queries within fifteen working days.

Unresolved issues can be pursued through the College Complaints Procedure, which is available from the Student Services dept.

In all cases the college's decision is final.

An outline of evidence needed for the most common request of Extra Time

As extra time is the Access Arrangement requested most often we will look at some of the associated regulations here. JCQ lay down similar guidance for each of the other possible arrangements.

Extra time

The college has to present a 'compelling' case that the student's learning difficulty has 'a substantial and adverse effect' on the student's performance in exams. This will generally require statements from subject staff that a student is underperforming in classroom tests, as well as evidence in the form of incomplete mock examinations or similar.

The student must also have made use of extra time over a substantial period of time in both classroom tests and mock examinations before the arrangement can be used in external examinations. This is referred to as the 'normal way of working'.

JCQ set specific guidelines regarding the standard scores that enable a student to be eligible for Access Arrangements; these are not set by the Study Support Department. A student may find, for example, completing tests in a fixed time period difficult but without the appropriate evidence or scores below a certain level, they will not be eligible for Access Arrangements.

Extra time on medical grounds

In order for a student to be granted extra time on medical grounds, the college has to be able to:

- Show that a student has **an impairment** which has a **substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her speed of processing**
- Confirm that he or she has **persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information**
- Show evidence of how the disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom
- Show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the need for 25% extra time
- Confirm that without the application of 25% extra time the candidate would be at a **substantial disadvantage**
- Confirm that 25% extra time is the candidate's normal way of working within the centre **as a direct consequence of their disability.**

In addition to the above, the college requires up to date medical evidence:

- A letter from a Health Professional involved in the student's care
- A Statement of Special Educational Needs / Education and Health Care Plan relating to the candidate's secondary education **which confirms the candidate's disability and level of need**

The second most common request is for the use of a word processor.

An outline of evidence needed for the use of a word processor:

Under certain circumstances a student may be allowed to use a word processor in exams. This will normally be a word processor with spellcheck disabled, unless the student is also entitled to a scribe, in which case they will have the choice of using a word processor with spellcheck enabled. Note that in the latter case, marks available for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in certain papers will not be given if spellcheck is used.

The principal criteria when the college is deciding whether to grant the use of a word processor are that it should be **the candidate's normal way of working** and that it should be **appropriate to their needs**.

In assessing the latter, the college will need to have observed that the candidate has, for example:

- a learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly
- a medical condition
- a physical disability
- a sensory impairment
- poor handwriting
- planning and organisational problems when writing by hand

Please contact Study Support for further information:

Tel 01962 857556

Email studysupport@psc.ac.uk

Please note this information may be subject to change in line with updates from JCQ.