

Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments

Candidate information and frequently asked questions

Our commitment

SIEVEMK Gateway is committed to enabling candidates to access examinations fairly and in accordance with JCQ regulations and applicable equality legislation.

Access arrangements are agreed before an examination or assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, including special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to show what they know and can do without changing the demands or integrity of the assessment.

Examples may include:

- 25% extra time
- supervised rest breaks
- use of a word processor
- a computer reader, reader or scribe
- modified examination papers
- alternative rooming arrangements
- access to a mobile phone for medical purposes

The evidence and approval process depends on the arrangement. Some arrangements require an application through Access Arrangements Online and supporting evidence. Other arrangements are delegated to the Centre and do not require an online application. The 2026/27 evidence overview lists alternative rooming, examination reading pens, supervised rest breaks, non-electronic ear defenders or headphones, and an ordinary word processor with spelling and grammar checking switched off among the centre-delegated arrangements.

Where required by JCQ, an arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working. Different rules can apply to a temporary illness or injury.

Contacting the Centre

Tell us about any disability, medical condition, learning difficulty, temporary injury or potential access need at the point of enquiry or enrolment. Early contact gives the Centre time to discuss needs, gather evidence and plan appropriate arrangements.

Late or temporary needs: A late diagnosis, late manifestation of an impairment or temporary illness or injury may be considered after a published deadline as the need arises. Evidence is still required where specified, and practical arrangements may depend on the time available.

Fees, Services & Deadlines

How examination delivery charges and application dates are handled

Fees and reasonable adjustments

The standard examination entry fee covers administration of entries, standard invigilation and allocation in a shared examination room.

The Centre will not charge a disabled candidate an additional fee for an adjustment or aid where the Centre is under a duty to make that reasonable adjustment. This includes any rooming, staffing, equipment or other delivery measure that is required as the reasonable adjustment.

A charge may apply only for an optional examination-delivery service that is genuinely requested for personal preference and is not required because of a disability or other protected need. The Centre will clarify the basis of any proposed charge before booking.

Assessment charges: If an assessment is needed for a reasonable adjustment, the Centre will confirm whether charging is prohibited. No fee will be charged for granting or implementing a required reasonable adjustment. Any genuinely optional assessment fee will be explained in writing.

Published deadlines- 2026/27

These are JCQ final dates. The Centre may set earlier internal deadlines so that evidence can be gathered, reviewed and processed in time.

Exam series	Arrangement	JCQ final deadline	Centre Deadline
GCSE November 2026	Modified papers	20 September 2026	11 September 2026
GCSE November 2026	Other access arrangements via AAO	1 November 2026	30 October 2026
VTQ January 2027	Modified papers	4 October 2026	25 September 2026
VTQ January 2027	Other access arrangements	21 October 2026	14 October 2026
June 2027	Modified papers	31 January 2027	22 January 2027
June 2027	Other access arrangements via AAO	21 March 2027	12 March 2027

The Centre may set an earlier internal deadline so that it can gather and review evidence. Any earlier date will be clearly described as the Centre's internal deadline, not as a JCQ final deadline. Candidates should provide all requested information as early as possible.

After an entry is made, the Centre may email from exams@sievmk.org.uk to request relevant information. Check junk or spam folders and contact the Centre if no message is received.

Access Arrangements FAQs

Evidence, assessments and examination-day arrangements

Is the evidence I supplied enough?

Evidence requirements vary by arrangement and by the candidate's circumstances. For 25% extra time relating to a physical disability, sensory impairment, medical condition or learning difficulty, the 2026/27 overview requires the relevant completed Form 8 or Form 9, a sample of internal tests or mock examination papers across relevant subjects showing use of the extra time, and comments and observations from teaching staff explaining why it is needed and how it is used.

For a computer reader or reader relating to learning difficulties, centre-based evidence from the SENCo must confirm the nature of the impairment and that the arrangement reflects the candidate's normal and current way of working. The Centre will advise what is required for the individual case.

Is a GP letter sufficient?

For a physical disability, sensory impairment or medical condition where specialist evidence is required, the JCQ 2026/27 evidence overview states that the candidate's persistent and significant difficulties must be confirmed by a formal diagnosis from a registered specialist, such as a clinical paediatrician or hospital consultant, not a GP.

Different evidence may be appropriate for a temporary illness or injury. The Centre will advise what is required for the individual case and will check the full 2026/27 AARA when it is published.

Why might I need to complete a timed practice or mock assessment?

For 25% extra time, the 2026/27 evidence overview requires samples of internal school tests or mock examination papers across relevant subjects showing how the extra time is applied, together with comments and observations from teaching staff explaining why it is needed and how it is used.

The evidence may come from suitable internal timed tests; it does not necessarily require a separate full mock examination arranged solely for the application. Different provisions may apply to temporary illness or injury once the full 2026/27 AARA is published.

What is Form 8?

Form 8 is the JCQ Profile of Learning Difficulties. It is used for specified arrangements where a candidate has learning difficulties.

The SENCo completes Part 1 to record the picture of need before assessment. The Centre's appointed assessor conducts the relevant standardised assessments and records the results in Part 2. The SENCo completes Part 3 and determines the appropriate arrangements by considering the assessment, the qualification requirements and the candidate's normal way of working. Form 8 is not required for every type of disability or access arrangement.

When will I hear the outcome?

The Centre will confirm the outcome when it has reviewed the evidence and completed the appropriate process. Some Access Arrangements Online applications receive an immediate result; some are

referred to an awarding body; and Centre-delegated arrangements do not require an online application. The Centre will confirm agreed Centre-delegated arrangements in writing.

Examination-Day FAQs

Medical items, reading pens, rooms and technology

I have diabetes. Can I use my phone to monitor my blood glucose?

Potentially, yes. For qualifications covered by JCQ's deadlines, the Centre must process an application through Access Arrangements Online. The SENCo must complete Form 9, and formal evidence must confirm the medical condition and the need to access the phone.

During the examination, the phone will be held and handed to the candidate by an invigilator, and the candidate will be individually supervised while checking it. The Centre will confirm the required device settings and examination-day procedure in advance. Medically necessary glucose drinks, tablets or food will be considered individually and agreed on before the examination.

Can I bring snacks or sweets to the examination?

Ordinary snacks and sweets are not permitted. If food or glucose is medically necessary, tell the Centre in advance so that an appropriate reasonable adjustment and safe examination-day procedure can be agreed. Water is normally permitted in a clear, label-free bottle.

Can I use an examination reading pen?

A candidate who only requires occasional words or phrases to be read may use an examination reading pen where this is appropriate to their needs and normal way of working. This is a Centre-delegated arrangement and does not require an online application, but the SENCo must establish the need.

The Centre must check that the device is suitable for examination use and does not provide prohibited assistance or connectivity. JCQ does not endorse a particular commercial brand.

Can I have my own room?

Alternative rooming is considered individually. It must be based on an established disability or impairment and reflect the candidate's normal and current way of working in internal tests or mock examinations. Nervousness or low-level examination anxiety alone is not sufficient.

A one-to-one room may be appropriate for a serious medical condition, frequent seizures, Tourette's syndrome, significant behavioural needs or another established need that would affect the candidate or other candidates. A reader or scribe does not automatically require an individual room; in some circumstances candidates may share a reader or be accommodated in a small group.

Can I sit my examination at home?

An invigilator attending a candidate's home is an alternative-site arrangement. It may be considered where a candidate has a serious medical condition, social, emotional or mental-health needs, a substantial and long-term impairment, or a temporary illness or injury that prevents attendance at the Centre.

The decision is individual. The SENCo or a senior pastoral member of staff, must be satisfied that the candidate can take the examination, and the Centre must submit the required alternative-site notification through the Centre Admin Portal. Capacity and security requirements will be considered, but a disability-related request will not be refused solely because another candidate applied first.

Technology, Sensory Needs & Assistance Dogs

How individual requests will be considered

Can I use a laptop or word processor?

A word processor with spelling, grammar checking, predictive text and AI tools disabled may be provided where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working and meets the Centre's published word-processor policy. An application through Access Arrangements Online is not required, and JCQ does not require evidence for inspection for this ordinary word-processor arrangement.

Use of a laptop at home, preference for typing or faster keyboard speed alone is not sufficient. However, poor handwriting, a learning difficulty, a medical or physical condition, sensory impairment, planning or organisational difficulties, or electronic curriculum delivery may support its use. Required reasonable adjustments will not be allocated solely on a first-come, first-served basis, and a candidate who requires a word processor will not simply be told to handwrite because Centre equipment is limited.

Can I listen to music or white noise?

The March 2026 JCQ update introduced this arrangement for a candidate with a substantial impairment, supported by Form 9, formal evidence and an application through Access Arrangements Online. The Centre will check that this provision is retained and whether any details have changed in the full 2026/27 AARA before confirming it for a 2026/27 examination.

Where permitted, the Centre must control a suitable device and check that any playlist does not give the candidate an advantage.

Can I use ear defenders or non-electronic headphones?

Non-electronic ear defenders, earplugs and non-electronic headphones are Centre-delegated arrangements. They do not require an Access Arrangements Online application. The SENCo must decide that the arrangement is appropriate based on the candidate's substantial and long-term impairment and normal way of working.

Can I bring an assistance animal?

Ordinary pets are not permitted in examinations. A request involving a trained assistance dog connected to a disability will be considered individually as a potential reasonable adjustment. The Centre will discuss the candidate's needs, examination security, welfare, rooming and the effect on other candidates, and will consider reasonable practical measures rather than applying a blanket refusal.

Important

Individual decisions: Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are based on the candidate's individual needs. An arrangement must not change the assessment objectives or compromise the security or integrity of the examination.

Official sources

- JCQ, Overview of evidence requirements for access arrangements, effective from 1 September 2026: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/knowledge-hub/overview-of-evidence-requirements-for-access-arrangements-effective-from-1-september-2025/>
- JCQ, Key dates in the examination cycle - GCSE November 2026 series: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/12/Key_Dates_GCSE_Nov2026_Series.pdf
- JCQ, Key dates in the examination cycle - VTQ January 2027 series: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/08/Key_Dates_VocationalTech_January2027_FINAL-1.pdf
- JCQ, Key dates in the examination cycle - June 2027 series: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2026/05/Key_Dates_June2027_FINAL.pdf