

Exam Access Arrangements

Hills Road Sixth Form College guide

Exam Access Arrangements are arrangements approved by the awarding bodies to enable candidates with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injury/illness to access an assessment. The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. According to the Equality Act 2010 a disability is a “physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. The impairment must have lasted, or be likely to last, for 12 months or more.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) is responsible for setting and monitoring the regulations on behalf of the awarding bodies. All exam centres, including Hills Road, are inspected annually by JCQ to check that we are following the regulations correctly for both our enrolled students and our private candidates, as allowing unauthorised or unevidenced access arrangements is considered malpractice and may lead to the candidate’s disqualification.

EAs generally need to be put in place some months before the examinations take place. They must be the candidate’s normal way of working, and evidence of need, tutor feedback and samples of work must be supplied at the time you apply for private exams.

Common EAs

- **Extra time**: Usually 25%, although this may be higher in exceptional circumstances.
- **Reader or scribe**: Due to resourcing constraints, we are unable to offer human readers or scribes, but we may be able to offer equivalent assistive technology such as a computer reader, or a computer with the spellcheck enabled.
- **Rest breaks**: These are supervised breaks during which the minutes taken are recorded and added to the exam finish time, so no working time is lost.
- **Word processor**: Students who have been assessed and found to have a specific learning difficulty will be allowed to use a word processor in examinations if this is recommended by the SENCo. Other students who might benefit from the use of a word processor include students with a physical disability or medical condition. The use of a word processor during examinations cannot simply be granted to students because they prefer to type rather than write or because they can work faster or because they use a word processor at home or in lessons.
- **Alternative seating arrangements**: Most of our exams are held in the Sports and Tennis Centre, but smaller halls and classrooms may also be used on occasion. We are unable to offer individual rooms. Exam anxiety is not considered by JCQ to be sufficient reason for a smaller room or other access arrangements since it is assumed that all candidates are experiencing some degree of exam anxiety.
- **Modified papers**: Papers in modified formats (eg. large print, braille) for candidates with visual impairment must be ordered well in advance of the exam.

Evidence required

All evidence must be reviewed and approved by the college SENCo before a new application can be made to the JCQ. The SENCo makes the decision on the most appropriate EAA for each candidate. Applications for access arrangements requiring JCQ approval will be processed using Access Arrangements Online, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Important: Although a specialist, e.g. a medical consultant, may have recommended or suggested specific access arrangements, it is the college **SEnCo** who must determine the arrangements for each candidate's examinations, based on their professional judgement, knowledge of the regulations and the examination system. Where required, a private candidate may be required to attend the college for an assessment, as would be the case for our full-time students.

Rest breaks require supporting evidence such as a GP/hospital/therapist letter outlining the need for breaks.

Some EAAs (eg. **extra time, reader, scribe**) require external approval from the JCQ. For these we would need evidence such as a JCQ Form 8, an EHCP, or medical evidence from a consultant (not a GP). When applying for extra time for medical reasons, we must also prove that rest breaks have been trialled exhaustively but were insufficient for the candidate's needs.

To roll forward a JCQ Form 8 from a candidate's previous school or to accept an independent assessment, the assessor must be recognised by Hills Road and we must have a copy of their assessor's certificate.*

In addition to the evidence of need, we also require confirmation that the EAAs requested constitute the candidate's normal way of working, with supporting tutor feedback as to why extra time is needed, and samples of work in relevant subjects showing how extra time is used (eg. a timed task showing a change in pen colour to show work completed in the extra minutes).

***Note: To arrange an independent assessment and gather evidence can take some time.**

Qualified bodies recognised by Hills Road include:

PATOSS <https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/Tutor-Index-Landing>

British Psychological Society <https://www.bps.org.uk>

Checklist:

- ☐ Evidence of need (eg. Form 8, Form 9, specialist medical evidence)
- ☐ Normal way of working/tutor feedback/samples of work

Hills Road Sixth Form College Key Closure Dates:

3rd January (prior to following summer exams): exam entry* and supporting evidence required.

31st January: JCQ deadline for requesting modified papers.

1st March: processing of information before awarding body deadline to approve EAA.

* Applications for summer exams usually open in November and each subject closes when it is full. It is advisable to apply early as we may be full by January.

A note about Special Consideration

Special Consideration should not be confused with Exam Access Arrangements. Special Consideration is a post-exam adjustment made by the exam board to mitigate circumstances beyond the candidate's control at the time of assessment, such as bereavement, serious illness or accident.