

OxfordAQA

Exam access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Policies and procedures

September 2026

1. What are exam access arrangements

Access arrangements are measures that can be arranged before the examinations or other assessments for disadvantaged students. Requesting access arrangements means that reasonable adjustments can be made for the student to access the assessment and give them as fair a chance as possible to demonstrate their knowledge and ability.

Students who may need exam access arrangements include those with:

- long-term physical disability;
- a psychological condition;
- a learning difficulty, behavioural or social difficulties;
- a temporary illness or injury.

The centre at which the student is entered is responsible for ensuring that such provision, or requests to OxfordAQA for provision, is based on genuine and verifiable information. It is also the responsibility of the centre to administer access arrangements during the assessments and examinations.

Access arrangements should always reflect the student's normal way of working in class.

For students with learning difficulties, where a standardised test score is required, for example, in reading or speed of writing, it must be supported in a report by an Educational Psychologist or specialist teacher. The results must be from tests conducted in the student's fourteenth year or later.

For students with a physical disability or illness, medical evidence documenting the diagnosis and its effect on the student must be kept on file at the centre.

With the exception of bilingual dictionaries, access arrangements cannot be given because English is not the student's first language.

With the exception of students that work one-to-one with a reader or a scribe, there must be an invigilator present during an exam that is not providing the access arrangement.

1.2 Access arrangements which must be approved by AQA

The following access arrangements are only permitted following approval from OxfordAQA. An application form must be completed by the Centre, submitted with the appropriate supporting evidence and approved by OxfordAQA **before** the exam.

Access arrangement	Criteria	Notes
Extra time of 25% Application form Evidence is submitted as part of the application	For students with a physical difficulty or learning difficulties. Students with learning difficulties should have a standardised test score of 84 or less for any of: speed of reading, speed of reading comprehension, speed of writing, or cognitive processing Can be applied for students with physical difficulties that show the need for extra time to complete tasks in their class work.	It is expected that such an allowance will meet the needs of most students that are disadvantaged.
Extra time of 25% to 50% - Application form Evidence is submitted as part of the application	If a student has very severe learning or physical difficulties, visual impairment, a speech impediment or other communication difficulty. For up to 50% of extra time, Students with learning difficulties should have a standardised test score of 69 or less for any of: speed of reading, speed of reading comprehension, speed of writing, or cognitive processing.	Extra time will not be allowed if a student's literacy difficulties are primarily caused by English not being their first language.
Extra time over 50% Application form Evidence is submitted as part of the application	For students with a severe vision impairment that are very slow in reading a modified enlarged /Braille paper and cannot access an electronic paper. In exceptional circumstances, up to 100% of extra time may be agreed for students with severe impairment. Must confirm that extra time of over 50% is the student's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.	The amount of extra time requested must be both reasonable and appropriate to the student's needs.
Readers (including computer readers) Application form Evidence is submitted as part	For a visually impaired student or for a student with learning difficulties. If a visually impaired student cannot use braille or a large print paper. For a student with learning difficulties, they should have a standardised score of 84 or less for	A reader will not be allowed if a student's literacy difficulties are primarily caused by English not being their first language.

of the application	reading accuracy, reading comprehension or reading speed.	Readers are not allowed in examination papers, or sections thereof, that assess a student's ability to read, though computer readers are allowed in all assessments. A reader may only read the questions or other material in the examination paper and may read back a student's answer if requested to do so. A reader may help a visually impaired student to extract information from diagrams, tables and graphs. Advice or explanation is not allowed.
Scribes / Word processor with spell-check and grammar-check functions enabled Application form Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection	If the student cannot communicate independently in handwriting or by using a word processor due to physical disability or learning difficulties. For students with Physical disability, either permanent or temporary which may prevent the student from being able to write or a student's writing may not be able to be read by others. If a student is unable to write due to learning difficulties, a standardised test score of 84 or less for spelling accuracy is needed to qualify. If a student has writing speeds of less than sixteen words per minute for a GCSE student or eighteen for a GCE student, they could also be allowed a scribe. Use of a scribe will also allow the provision of 25% extra time if it is necessary, or up to 100% extra time to spell words letter by letter if the examination, in whole or in part, is to test the ability to spell in a language other than English.	A scribe may draw or note on maps, diagrams or graphs to the student's instruction. In any questions for which there are marks specifically for spelling punctuation and grammar, the marks will only be given for spelling or punctuation if it is dictated in full. A scribe may read back the students work if requested, but without comment. An examination script written or typed by a scribe must be accompanied by a cover sheet signed by the scribe. This must provide a clear account of how any graphs, tables or diagrams were produced and when words or punctuation were spelt out.

		A student with permission for a scribe may be allowed the use of a word processor with the spell check enabled if preferred. The computer must not have access to the internet or any other source of information. Scribe Cover Sheet
Practical Assistants Application form Detailed information must be provided listing the tasks which the practical assistant would perform.	If the student has temporary injury or long-term difficulty that restricts manual ability or the safe and accurate use of equipment	They must only provide the necessary physical assistance and not help the student with any information. Work produced with the help of a practical assistant must be accompanied by a cover sheet signed by the assistant detailing the help given.
Exemptions Application form Evidence is submitted as part of the application	For students with hearing impairment or speech difficulties may need to be exempt from units that require listening or speaking	Must only be granted as a last resort when no other access arrangement is available. They may only be exempt from units totaling no more than 40% of the complete subject specification. Application for an Exemption

OXFORDAQA EXAM ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS –
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Braille or Modified Enlarged Print papers Centres must order modified papers in advance of a specific examination series We do not require evidence	For students who are visually impaired, modified large print papers are available in 18 point text on A4 paper and 24 point text on A3 paper.	Centres must order modified papers in advance of a specific examination series, Centres must not order modified papers for students unless they intend to enter them for the relevant examination series.
---	--	--

1.3 Access arrangements that do not require approval by OxfordAQA

The following access arrangements can be given at the discretion of the Centre, no application form is completed but appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre in case of an inspection or enquiry.

Access arrangement	Criteria	Notes
Word Processor no application Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection	For a student where it is their normal way of working within the centre. It may not be used by other students as a preference. can be awarded on account of: • 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; • planning and organisational problems when writing by hand; • poor handwriting.	The spell check and grammar check facility must be disabled and the computer must not have access to the internet or any other source of information.
Supervised Rest Breaks no application Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection	For students that cannot work for long periods without excessive fatigue or loss of concentration. Supervised rest breaks can be awarded on account of: • cognition and learning needs; • communication and interaction needs; • a medical condition; • sensory and physical needs; • social, mental and emotional needs. Consider if supervised rest breaks would be more appropriate before making an application for 25% extra time.	Students are allowed the usual time in the examination and must be accompanied by an invigilator during the breaks to ensure that work does not continue therein and that contact is not made with others.
Bilingual Dictionaries no application No evidence is needed to support the arrangement	For students whose first language is not English.	They may <u>only provide a word-for-word translation</u> and nothing more. They must not be used if ability to use one of the languages of the dictionary, or a similar language, is being assessed.

Early opening of examination papers no application No evidence is needed to support the arrangement	Early opening of examination papers is allowed in order to photocopy an examination paper to enlarge it or to print it onto coloured paper	Early opening of examination papers up to 90 minutes before the published start time of the examination.
Sign-Language Interpretation no application No evidence is needed to support the arrangement	For students with hearing impairment.	The signer must not provide any information not in the text of the examination. Source material for questions or questions in English or foreign language examinations may not be signed.
Separate invigilation no application No evidence is needed to support the arrangement	For when a student is using many of the other access arrangements.	In order to not disturb other students.
Prompter No application No evidence is needed to support the arrangement	A prompter may be approved by the SENCo where a candidate experiences difficulties such as limited time awareness, reduced concentration, or behaviours (e.g. OCD) that prevent effective progression through an exam.	A prompter is a trained, appropriate adult who supports the candidate in maintaining focus and time awareness. Their role is strictly to encourage engagement with the exam, not to assist with content. A prompter should not normally be the candidate's subject teacher, teaching assistant, relative, peer, or private tutor. The prompter may: • Use brief verbal or written prompts (e.g. “focus on the question”, “15 minutes left”). • Use subtle reminders (e.g. tapping

		desk/arm where this reflects normal practice). • Use the candidate's name to regain attention. The prompter must not: • Provide subject guidance or influence question choices or order. • Offer explanations, factual help, or any additional communication beyond approved prompts. • Deviate from regulations, as this may lead to candidate disqualification.
--	--	---

1.4 How to apply for exam access arrangements

The appropriate form from the options below should be completed in full, including supporting evidence, and then emailed to oxfordaqaapproval@aqa.org.uk

- ***Application form for access arrangements for a student with a physical impairment***
- ***Application form for access arrangements - Profile of learning disabilities***

You will need to provide the following information for each individual student:

- evidence of learning disability, for example, an educational specialist's diagnosis;
- evidence of normal way of working in class, for example, mock exams;
- test scores shown as a standardised number, for example, 84

1.5 Deadlines for applications

Deadlines for applications can be found in the *Key Dates calendar* published on the [Dates and Timetables](#) page of the OxfordAQA website.