

Assessment and Examinations Policy and Procedures 2023-24

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Statement of intent

Reflective School Support provides a 1:1 tuition service to support children and young people who are unable to attend school due to illness, exclusion or SEND. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child we believe all children have a right to an education. (Article 28).

Despite being unable to access full time school, many of our students will benefit from the opportunity to achieve qualifications to support them to access further education, employment, or training. We develop entirely bespoke programmes of study for each individual student to meet their academic and social needs. Appropriate programmes of study could include;

- core subjects of English, Maths and Science at GCSE or A Level
- Foundation subjects such as History or Art at GCSE
- Vocational courses such as 'Employability Skills', 'ICT for Digital Users', 'Coding' and 'Caring for a child'.

The following policies and procedures explain the arrangements for various aspects of the assessment and examination process.

Special Consideration and reasonable adjustments policy

The Equality Act 2010 requires Awarding Organisations to make Reasonable Adjustments to ensure a learner who has a disability as defined in the Act are not placed at a **substantial** disadvantage in comparison to learners with no disabilities.

Assessment should be a fair test of a learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable.

The provision for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments are made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are neither concessions to make assessments easier for learners nor advantages to benefit the learners.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be achieved, these are through:

- **Access Arrangements** – allow learners with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an Access Arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- **Reasonable Adjustments** – Reflective School Support tutors are required to make Reasonable Adjustments where a learner, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. Reflective School Support are required to take all reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

Definition of Access Arrangements

An Access Arrangement is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Awarding Organisations and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications, and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Access Arrangements must not affect the integrity of what is being assessed.

Access Arrangements are approved or set in place **before** the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the assessment activity. The use of an Access Arrangement will not be taken into consideration **during** the assessment of a learner's work.

Application for access arrangements

Applications will be made in accordance with JCQ guidance and will reflect the reasonable adjustments required to ensure that a young person is not unfairly disadvantaged during the assessment or examination process based on a protected characteristic.

Applications will be made and agreed in advance of assessments and examination awarding bodies such as AQA or NCFE will be notified of the intention to employ access arrangements or reasonable adjustments. Awarding bodies will be notified in no less than 10 days prior to the date of examinations or assessments of the need to use non-centre related adjustment such as a reader, scribe or braille.

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Evidence for the need for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments will be provided following assessment made by a suitably qualified professional and is likely to follow the requirements set out in a student's EHCP. This evidence will be retained to be shared on request with external moderators or External Quality Assurers.

The application process will be supported by one of the Reflective School Support Sensors.

Plagiarism and malpractice policy

Definition of plagiarism:

“The reproduction or appropriation of someone else's work without proper attribution; passing off as one's own the work of someone else.”

(Plagiarism.org - Best Practices for Ensuring Originality in Written Work, 2016)

Examples of plagiarism are likely to be where students have copied word for word from printed or online resources, very closely paraphrased or used someone else's ideas or conclusions as their own – with none or insufficient referencing.

Referencing

Tutors should ensure that students use appropriate referencing systems to attribute the original author of writing and should be vigilant for any examples of this kind of malpractice. In more complex, higher-level writing such as at A Level it may be appropriate to check any suspected plagiarism with an appropriate software tool.

Any instances of plagiarism would expect to be identified prior to assessment pieces being passed to awarding bodies such as AQA or NCFE but if they are not identified by tutors and are noted by such an external awarding body this malpractice would also expect to fall within the procedures in their policies.

Poor academic skills and mistakes in referencing could negatively impact on the achievement awarded but will not be considered as plagiarism.

Consequences of plagiarism

Any examples of suspected plagiarism or other malpractice would be investigated by tutors in collaboration with Reflective School Support Directors.

Where deliberate plagiarism is believed to have taken place then learners may be removed from courses or not entered for examinations or assessments as a consequence. Any decisions of this type will be taken after thorough discussion with candidates, parents, and Reflective School Support Directors. The final decision will rest with Reflective School Support Directors.

Any disputes regarding decisions will be handled according to the Reflective School Support Complaints Policy.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of recognising previous learning or attainment to meet current requirement.

RPL may be appropriate if a learner can demonstrate that they have knowledge, skills or understanding such that they do not need to carry out an assessment stipulated in a course they have been entered for.

RPL is a matter for tutors with the support of Reflective School Support tutors but where this policy has been applied then EQAs should be notified.

Evidence for acceptance of RPL could come from

- Examination of documents
- Expert testimony
- Reflective accounts
- Professional discussion.

Any additional assessments to support RPL should be planned with the learner and assessed against clear criteria with feedback clearly provided.

The NCFE policy on RPL should be specifically adhered to.

<https://www.qualhub.co.uk/media/1115/recognition-of-prior-learning-rpl-credit-accumulation-and-transfer-cat-policy.pdf>

RPL should only be appropriate if the evidence provided is valid, sufficient, authentic and reliable. It is important that the candidate can show that their prior learning meets current assessment needs of the course concerned.

Appeals policy

A student may wish to appeal directly to Reflective School Support to make a request for re-consideration of a decision related to assessment or examination for a number of possible reasons e.g. perceived unfairness regarding a decision to not enter a student for an examination or regarding a decision by a tutor regarding the grading of an assessment.

If a student makes an appeal against a decision made by an individual tutor this will be investigated by a Reflective School Support Director and a decision made with reasons given within 5 working days. Any further concerns may be investigated through the Reflective School Support Complaints Policy.

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made by an EQA or regarding the outcome of an external assessment or examination this will be conducted according to the appeals procedure set out on the external organisation's website.

Please see [NCFE Appeals Policy](#) specifically.

Conflict of interest policy

For the purpose of this policy a conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which an individual, or organisation, has, or may be perceived to have competing interests or loyalties which could lead to a potentially subjective, biased or corrupt decision being made by that individual or organisation.

Where individuals involved with Reflective School Support have an invested or pecuniary interest which may affect individuals – particularly regarding fairness and equal opportunity this must be declared. It is vital in terms of the outcomes for our students and for the reputation of the business that all dealings with examination awarding bodies and commissioners are open, honest, and legal. All people employed directly or as sub-contracting tutors by Reflective School Support are expected to act with the highest integrity.

If a conflict of interest is reported which is related to an examination or assessment process, then this will be referred to the relevant awarding body and dealt with according to their policies. Situations should be reported using the JCQ conflict of interest form. <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations>

Please see [NCFE Conflict of interest Policy](#) specifically

Data protection, GDPR and retention of records.

We may need access to confidential information and where this is necessary we will ensure that such information is kept secure, only used for the purposes of the relevant request and handled at all times in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. We do not disclose confidential information to third parties unless we are required to do so, for example by our regulators, law enforcement or statutory bodies.

When requesting copies of valid supporting evidence of learner need for inspection purposes, we will do this via a secure file transferring platform. Any learner evidence provided for inspection will be reviewed only for inspection purposes and will be retained for no longer than **30 working days**.

We aim to access and retain original evidence or information; if original records cannot be retained, we will photocopy the original and record the copy as authentic.

Assessment information held by Reflective School Support will be retained for a period of at least 3 years. Information will be held securely, electronically on Dropbox where possible. Any written information in paper form will be held securely in filing cabinets at Reflective School Support's registered address.

Please also see Reflective School Support [Data Protection and Information Security policy](#).

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Deb Barnes (Director) 1.8.22

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