

Exam Access Arrangements Policy

2023/24 Academic Year

Policy Details			
Policy Owner	Head of Admission, Registration and Exam Services		
CE Sponsor	Vice Principal: Student and Information Services		
Date created this year	17 August 2023		
Version:	Approved by:	Date approved:	To be reviewed:
1	College Executive	12 September 2023	September 2024
2	College Executive	30 th January 2024	September 2024

Version Control	
Version Number	Changes from previous 12 months policy
1	Includes JCQ annual updates
	Changes to policy in year
2	Addition of submission and retention dates

Equality Impact Assessment Tool

		Yes/No	Comments
1	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race or ethnicity	No	
	Disability	No	
	Gender	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation	No	
	Age	No	
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	Maternity and Pregnancy	No	
	Gender Reassignment	No	
2	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
5	If so, can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	

1. Purpose and scope of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity to students, staff and parents/carers in relation to Colchester Institute's provision of Exam Access Arrangements (EAA) informed and guided by current legislation. The scope of this policy relates specifically to Further Education learners (including Access to Higher Education), and Apprentices, and those on government funded part time programmes. A separate policy applies to Higher Education, at University Centre Colchester.

2. Exam Access Arrangements

Colchester Institute's policy for access arrangements in examinations is determined by the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) which regulates the exam access arrangements available and the way these are applied to most examinations which are conducted for the Awarding Bodies. Exam access arrangements must reflect a student's normal way of working.

Exam access arrangements allow students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical conditions, disabilities or temporary injuries to access exams and assessments. In this way, the College acts as an agent of the Awarding Bodies to comply with the duty of the *Equality Act 2010* to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements included in this policy.

An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, unreasonable time frames, or affects the security of the assessment. *The College is bound by immovable deadlines for JCQ and the organisation/administration of examinations within the College.*

3. Key Principles

Colchester Institute will endeavour to follow this policy to apply for and implement EAAs for eligible students, however these key principles will ordinarily apply:

- a) Students must declare the requirements for EAA on their application or enrolment, or within the first 6 weeks of their programme.
- b) Although evidence for EAAs can roll over from school or a previous educational provider not all EAAs automatically carry over and Colchester Institute cannot guarantee that a student will continue to receive the same EAA.
- c) To receive EAAs students must meet one or more of the following conditions:
 - a. declare previous EAAs so evidence can be rolled over where applicable,
 - b. meet with college assessors and, where required, undertake a formal assessment,
 - c. have a current Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP),
 - d. provide appropriate medical evidence or,
 - e. demonstrated clear evidence of observed need reflected in "normal way of working" in their learning.

- d) Evidence must be obtained that EAAs represent a student's normal way of working and are not only applied in examinations and / or assessments.
- e) If students do not make use of their exam access arrangements during assessments and examinations, the College may withdraw the provision of them.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Students must:

- Declare their need for EAA within the first 6 weeks of their programme, and where requested provide the EAA team, any relevant information and evidence of their specific need, within the first 8 weeks of their programme, to enable them to make the appropriate assessment and recommendations for the learner. This evidence may include:
 - Information about exam access arrangements from their school or previous educational provider.
 - Evidence of the specific need – this will look different for different types of specific need:
 - ✓ Learning difficulties: Learners should talk to their school or previous educational provider and give permission for them to provide their Form 8 and details of their exam access arrangements.
 - ✓ Physical, sensory, mental health or neurodevelopmental impairment: Learners should provide their diagnosis letter/report or evidence from a medical professional or specialist. Such as: a letter/report from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT); or a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service†; A GP's letter or prescription evidence would not normally be sufficient for EAA's where formal application to the JCQ/awarding bodies is required.
 - ✓ EHCP: Where we have a copy of a current EHCP students should ask their school or previous educational provider to confirm which EAAs were implemented by them.
- Inform the College if anything changes (e.g. new diagnosis of specific need or deterioration of condition) – this may have an impact on the recommended exam access arrangements.
- Attend exam access arrangement assessment appointments provided and sign the required data protection consent forms. In the event of students not attending or missing appointments a further assessment will only be arranged in exceptional circumstances (for example, bereavement or medical emergency) as agreed by the Head of Additional Learning Support. Any student will only be offered a maximum of two opportunities to re-arrange an appointment.

- Make reasonable use of allocated exam access arrangements to allow them to follow through to subsequent exams and assessments,

If students with known existing support needs do not provide the evidence required within the first 8 weeks of their study programme, or if the necessary assessment appointment is missed, it will result in exam access arrangements being declined or not being in place in time for the exams.

Please see Appendix 1

Involvement of parents and Next of Kin

Where a student is aged 17 or younger on the 31st August 2023, or where they are aged 19 – 24 and have a current EHCP, the College will endeavour to include the students' named Next of Kin (NoK) in all communications about Exam Access Arrangements. This will be through emails sent to the address held on the College system. It is the students' responsibility for ensuring up to date information is held and updated as necessary.

4.2 The responsibilities of the College:

The EAA Team will:

- Comply with the current regulations as set out by JCQ Regulations, *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*, or other Awarding Bodies as required.
- Coordinate the exam access arrangements process within the College (*see assessment process below*).
- Complete and submit relevant documentation required by JCQ Regulations and appropriate Examination Boards by the set college Internal Deadlines and/or JCQ/Awarding Body External Deadlines in order to allow the Exam Office to prepare for the exams. A single application for approval is required for each candidate regardless of the awarding body used.
Deadlines apply for each examination series and each awarding body. Please note applications cannot be submitted less than 10 working days before the exam takes place.
- Explain and agree exam access arrangement recommendations with the learner and inform staff via appropriate College systems.
- Comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure protection of learners' personal data.
- Arrange an appointment as required for an assessment with a Specialist Support and Exam Access Tutor to review EAAs. All endeavours will be made to arrange this on a students' normal timetabled day and the student will be released from classes to attend.

Please see Appendix 2

Process for curriculum and apprenticeship staff:

- Course leaders and/or English and Maths tutors (as required) will complete an online tutor referral form to document students' normal way of working (the differentiations in place to support learning).
- Where an EAA is declared within the first 6 weeks of the programme commencing, course leaders and/or English and maths tutors (as required) will complete a tutor referral form to request an EAA assessment or to match student needs with rolled over evidence, which will include the evidence of normal way of working and the date of the students' first assessment / examination.
- Where a course leader and/or English and maths tutor identifies previously undiagnosed evidence of a learning support need, through observation or assessment of written work, they will complete a tutor referral form to request an EAA assessment.
- When notified by the EAA team of a student's meeting or assessment for EAAs the course leader and / or English and maths tutor will encourage the student to attend by reminding them of the appointment time and, where applicable, releasing them from a timetabled session to attend.
- Course leaders and/or English and Maths tutors (as required) will be advised of the outcome of any meeting or assessment and informed of agreed EAAs for their students.

Please see Appendix 3

5 Assessment process

Students are asked to declare their SEND and access arrangements when applying to the College and / or at enrolment, and to confirm whether exam access arrangements were provided at their school or previous education provider.

Within the first 6 weeks of the start of their programme students who have declared a need for EAA will be contacted to provide relevant evidence in support of their request. Where applicable this request will also be sent to the students' next of kin.

- If a medical condition or disability is declared, appropriate evidence will be requested (see students' responsibilities); Information can be sent electronically to the EAA team: EAA@colchester.ac.uk.
- If a current EHCP is in place students will be asked to provide evidence from their previous school or education provider confirming the exam access arrangements that were applied.

Once the appropriate evidence has been received it will either be processed so that EAA can be applied for or an appointment to assess for EAAs can be made.

If the required evidence is not received by the end of the first 8 weeks of the programme of learning, the College may not be able to process any exam access arrangements request in time for exams, except in extenuating circumstances (for example bereavement or medical emergency).

The College will endeavour to process exam access arrangement requests at the earliest opportunity, based on the expected date of a student's first assessment or examination.

Learners (and NOK if applicable) will be notified if an Awarding Body does not approve an application for an EAA. The College can appeal this decision on the learner's behalf.

A learner can appeal an Awarding Body's decision by completing the online Appeal Request form that is available on the College Portal.

Late diagnosis of specific learning difficulty (SpLD) and temporary arrangements

In cases of a newly identified SpLD or where a student has a temporary illness or injury at the time of an examination, the College can review cases on an individual basis. Whilst the College will endeavour to put suitable adjustments in place, this may not be possible if there is insufficient time or evidence to organise the EAA prior to the exam. In the event that EAAs cannot be applied the College can consider submitting a Special Consideration form at the time of the examination / assessment.

6 Centre Delegated Access Arrangements (including Centre Notes)

Organisations are able to implement a range of exam access arrangements without application to the JCQ / Awarding Body approval for the arrangements listed below, however the college must be satisfied that:

- The student has, or presents as having, an impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties, and the candidate is or is likely to be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. This must be evidenced by the student holding a current EHCP, medical evidence of disability, evidence or history of learning difficulties or through a significant history and / or current and compelling observed difficulties in learning reflected by reasonable adjustments and normal way of working. In all cases this arrangement must reflect the student's normal way of working.
- The student has a need on a temporary basis as a consequence of a temporary injury. This must be evidenced by medical evidence in the form of a letter from a GP or treatment centre.
- A student who has extenuating circumstances that occurs in the lead up to, or during the exam period, that are likely to impact on their usual exam performance will be considered for alternative arrangements. This must be supported by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Centre approved arrangements can include:

- ✓ Use of a word processor
- ✓ Alternative rooming arrangements Supervised rest breaks

7 Examples of specific needs and available access arrangements

This list is not exhaustive. All exam access arrangements are assessed based on the needs of the individual learner, their normal way of working, supporting evidence and what is considered reasonable by the College.

Examples of specific need	Examples of available access arrangements (not exhaustive as dependent on the specific need)
Cognition and learning Communication and interaction Medical condition Sensory impairment Physical impairment Social, mental and emotional	Extra time Reader or computer reader Scribe (writer) or scribe typist/speech to text software Word processor Supervised rest breaks either inside or supervised outside the room Prompter *Coloured or modified examination papers/text Coloured overlays Smaller examination rooms or in exceptional circumstances an individual room

*Coloured paper for those with visual stress can be provided from a standard range of colours known to be clinically effective. These colours can be supplied on the basis of known prior needs and current normal way of working. Students whose needs cannot be met from the standard available range can be offered a screening test to determine the appropriate colour shade.

Should this screening not identify an appropriate colour, students will be advised to seek an intuitive colorimetry test with a suitably qualified optometrist.

7.1 Word processor statement

Students with approved access to word processors are allowed to do so to remove barriers which prevent them from being placed at a substantial disadvantage as a consequence of persistent and significant difficulties.

The use of word processors is only permitted whilst ensuring that the integrity of the assessment is maintained, , and where it will not compromise the assessment objectives of the specification in question.

Students may not require the use of a word processor in each specification. As subjects and their methods of assessments may vary, leading to different demands of students, the need for the use of a word processor is considered on a subject-by-subject basis.

The use of a word processor is requested either as part of a JCQ8 or an application from tutors providing reasoning and evidence as to why use of a computer is appropriate for the student and includes evidence that this is their normal way of working.

A student will not be granted the use of a word processor just because he/she prefers to type rather than write or can work faster on a keyboard or because he/she uses a laptop at home.

Students can only be granted the use of a word processor if it is appropriate to their needs (for example, poor/illegible handwriting; the quality of language significantly improves as a result of using a word processor due to problems with planning and organisation when written by hand).

When in use in an examination, word processors must be:

- used as a type-writer, not as a database, although standard formatting software is acceptable
- cleared of any previously stored data
- either connected to a printer so that a script can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium at the end of the exam.
- unconnected to an intranet or any other means of communication
- cleared of predictive text software or automatic spelling and grammar check, unless the candidate has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology.

7.2 Use of Alternative rooming arrangements statement (Small or Separate Room)

A small group may be recommended in a classroom accommodating up to 20 students where it can be evidenced that sitting an exam in a large exam room would place a candidate at significant disadvantage to their peers and that this is their normal way of working, and where the EAA assessment indicates that:

- candidates need exam access arrangements, which would NOT disturb other candidates.
- candidates need or use strategies, which would NOT disturb other candidates.
- candidates have a medical condition NOT needing privacy.
- candidates have a long-term mental health condition – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- candidates have a physical condition – either temporary or permanent NOT needing privacy.

A separate room (learner and invigilator in a room entirely separate from other learners) may be recommended where it can be evidenced that a small group provision would put them at a 'substantial disadvantage' to other candidates, where this is their normal way of working and where the EAA assessment indicates that:

- candidates need exam access arrangements which would disturb other candidates e.g. reading aloud.
- candidates have a medical condition needing privacy – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- candidates have a mental health condition needing privacy– with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.

- candidates have a physical condition – either temporary or permanent needing privacy.

In order to provide a separate room, evidence is required from the learner.

Evidence can be in the form of:

- History of provision at a previous Examination Centre e.g. school.
- Medical recommendation from a Consultant or Specialist.
- Mental health recommendation from a Consultant or Specialist.
- EHCP recommendation.

Nervousness, low level anxiety or being worried about examinations is not sufficient grounds for separate invigilation at Colchester Institute.

8 Retention of evidence

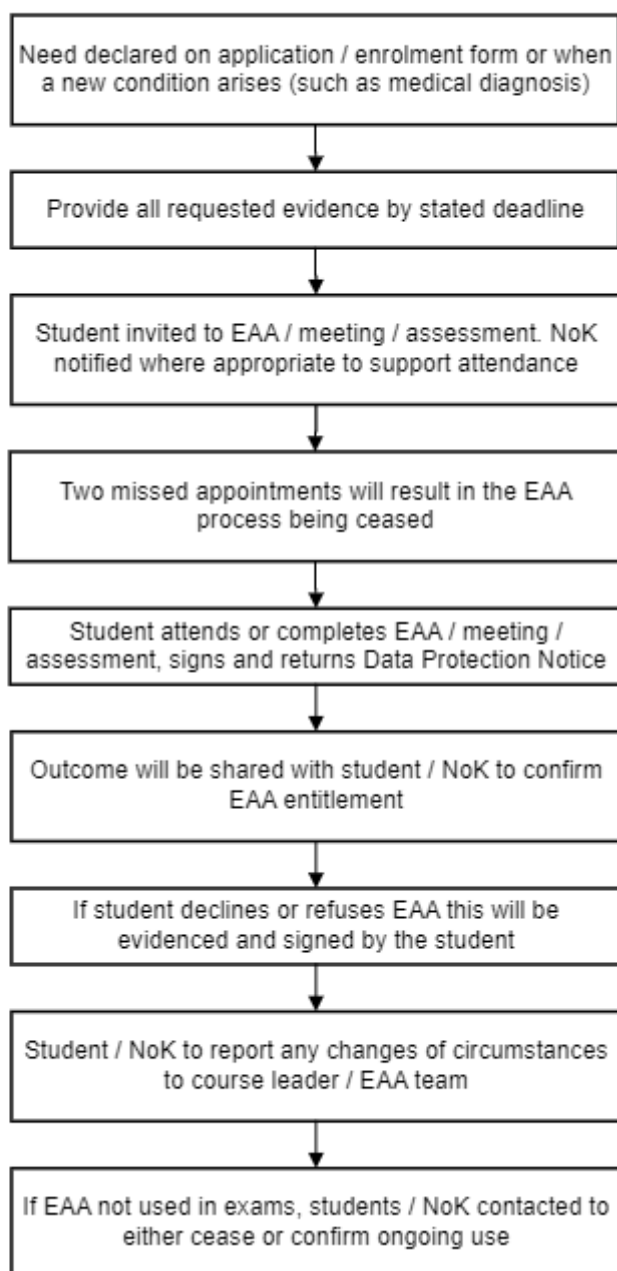
Colleges are regularly inspected to ensure they have followed JCQ regulations; the College is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, the College will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, centre notes, letters from outside agencies, record of access arrangements used, together with a data protection form signed by the learner for a minimum of 3 years. All information and data, whether electronic or paper based, will be stored in accordance with the College's GDPR policy.

9 Linked policies

Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Admissions Policy
Data Protection Policy

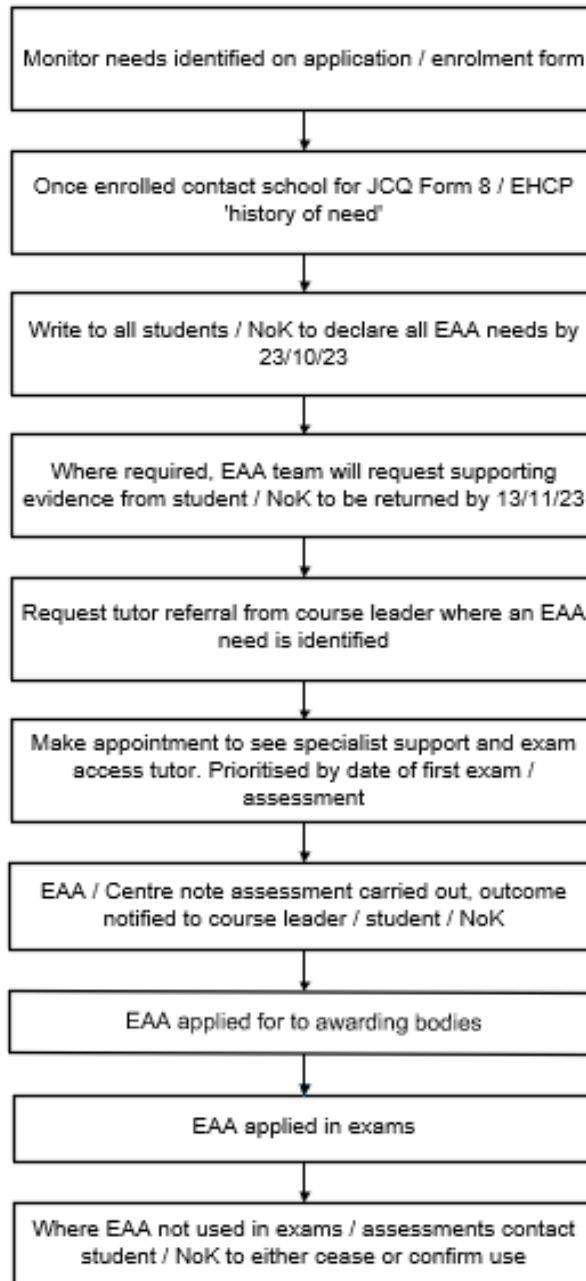
Appendix 1

Student / Next of Kin Responsibilities



Appendix 2

EAA Team Responsibilities



Appendix 3

Process for Curriculum Staff including Apprenticeships

