Exam Access Arrangements Policy

2026/27 Academic Year

Policy Details			
Policy Owner	Head of Admission, Registration and Exam Services		
CE Sponsor	Vice Principal: Curriculum Innovation and Business Transformation		
Date created this year	25th September 2026		
Version:	**Approved by:**	**Date approved:**	**To be reviewed:**
1	College Executive	2 November 2026	September 2027

Version Control	
Version Number	**Changes from previous 12 months policy**
1	All changes have been updated to reflect the most recent JCQ regulations, and to update date references throughout.
1	Any references to learner(s) have been changed to student(s)
1	Any references to Additional Learning Support has been changed to Inclusive Learning Support

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	

Contents

1. Purpose and scope of this policy 3
2. Exam Access Arrangements 3
3. Key Principles 4
4. Responsibilities 5
5. Assessment process 8
6. Centre Delegated Access Arrangements 9
7. Examples of specific needs and available access arrangements 10
8. Retention of evidence 12
9. Monitoring the use of approved Access Arrangements 13
10. Linked policies 13
Appendix 1 - Student/ Next of Kin Responsibilities 14
Appendix 2 – EAA Team Responsibilities 15
Appendix 3 – Process for Curriculum Staff including Apprenticeships 16

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 students (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.

*Students may also be referred to as candidates.

2. Exam Access Arrangements

Colchester Institute's policy for access arrangements in examinations is reviewed and updated annually, on the publication of updated Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and guidance contained in the publication: JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. References to 'AA' refer to *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* document 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.

The purpose of an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment is to ensure, where possible, that barriers to assessment are removed for a disabled candidate preventing them from being placed at a substantial advantage due to persistent and significant difficulties. The integrity of the assessment is maintained, whilst at the same time providing access to assessments for disabled candidates. (JCQ AA 4.2.1)

Exam access arrangements allow students with specific needs, such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), medical conditions, disabilities, temporary illness or injuries, or for whom English is an additional language to access exams and assessments. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of the individual student without affecting the integrity of the exam or assessment. In this way, Colchester Institute 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.

Each adjustment must be based on the candidate's individual profile and the impact their needs have on their ability to access examinations/assessments. The aim is to remove barriers to assessment without giving an unfair advantage to any particular candidate group, ensuring all candidates have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. (JCQ AA 4.1)

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

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:
    i. declare previous EAAs so evidence can be rolled over where applicable,
    ii. meet with college assessors and, where required, undertake a formal assessment,
    iii. have a current Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP),
    iv. provide appropriate medical evidence or,
    v. demonstrate 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. Although professionals from other organisations may give advice, they **cannot** make the decision regarding EAAs for Colchester Institute as they will not have a working

knowledge of an individual students needs and how their difficulties impact in the classroom and/or in timed assessments.

f. EAA must always be approved before the examination or assessment (JCQ AA 4.2.4).
g. The need for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be considered on a subject-by-subject basis as the student may not require the same in each.
h. The student **must** have had appropriate opportunities to practise using the access arrangement(s)/reasonable adjustment(s) before their first examination (*JCQ AA* 4.2.7)
i. If students do not make use of their exam access arrangements during assessments and examinations, Colchester Institute may withdraw the provision of them (please see section 10 for more details).

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 with 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 student. This evidence may include:

  a. Information about exam access arrangements from their school or previous educational provider.
  b. Evidence of the specific need – this will look different for different types of specific need:

     i. **Learning difficulties**: Students 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.
     ii. **Physical, sensory, mental health or neurodevelopmental impairment**: Students should provide their diagnosis letter/report or evidence from a medical professional or specialist. Such as:

        - *a letter/report from CAMHS, an HCPC registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);* ***or***
        - *a Neurodevelopmental Specialist GP or GP with an extended role in ADHD, who must have completed an RCGP framework for developing and maintaining an extended role specifically in ADHD. Evidence must be provided of this;* ***or***
        - *a letter/report from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service (JCQ AA 5.2.3)*

        Please note: a GP's letter (unless a specialist GP as described above) or prescription evidence would not normally be sufficient for EAA's where formal application to the JCQ/ Awarding bodies is required.

iii. **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 Colchester Institute 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 agree that approved access arrangements will be processed using 'Access Arrangements Online (AAO)', complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

AAO is a shared digital service that enables Colchester Institute to request and manage pre-agreed adjustments, such as extra time, readers, scribes or modified papers, for students with specific needs, disabilities or temporary injuries in a consistent and efficient way across JCQ member qualifications. It sits within the JCQ Centre Admin Portal and is used to submit a single application per student (where applicable), rather than applying separately to each member, helping to streamline administration while supporting regulatory compliance and data protection requirements.

- 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 Inclusive 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.
- Check the CI Connect App / Student Hub prior to each exam to view the exam access arrangements that have been approved and put in place.
- Notify the Exams Department immediately if the expected exam access arrangement is not showing on either the CI Connect App / Student Hub

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 2026, or where they are aged 19 – 24 and have a current EHCP, Colchester Institute will endeavour to include the students' named next of kin (NoK) in all email communications about exam access arrangements. It is the students' responsibility for ensuring up to date contact information is provided and updated as necessary.

4.2 The responsibilities of Colchester Institute

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 Colchester Institute *(see assessment process below).*
- Ensure that before the student's assessment, the assessor has access to background information, i.e. a picture of need has been painted, as required in Part 1 of Form 8. The academic staff and the assessor will work together to ensure a joined-up and consistent process (JCQ AA 7.5.2)
- Ensure the assessment is completed by an assessor who has successfully completed a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at or equivalent to Level 7 or evidence of HCPC or SASC registration.
- Complete and submit relevant documentation required by JCQ Regulations and appropriate Examination Boards by Colchester Institute's set internal deadline dates and/or JCQ/Awarding Body external deadline dates in order to allow the Exam Office to prepare for the exams. A single application for approval is required for each student 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.
- Ensure that applications through Access Arrangements Online **will** only be processed where they are supported by the centre **and** the student meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place. (JCQ AA 8.1)
- Explain and agree exam access arrangement recommendations with the student and inform staff via appropriate Colchester Institute processes.
- Comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to ensure protection of students' 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.
- Ensure that when an access arrangement/reasonable adjustment has been processed online and approved, the evidence of need (where required) will be made available to a JCQ Centre Inspector upon request. An awarding body may also request evidence of need when considered necessary. This can either be in hard copy paper format or electronically. (JCQ AA 4.2.13)
- Where documentation is stored electronically an e-folder for each individual student will be created containing all required documents for inspection.

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 Colchester Institute and / or at enrolment, and / or within the first 6 weeks of their course, 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: ils@colchester.ac.uk.
- If a current EHCP is in place students may 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, Colchester Institute 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).

Colchester Institute 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.

Exam access arrangements will only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the student meets the published criteria for the arrangement(s) with the full supporting evidence in place

Students (and NoK if applicable) will be notified if an Awarding Body does not approve an application for an EAA. Colchester Institute can appeal this decision on the student's behalf.

A student can appeal an Awarding Body's decision by completing the online Appeal Request form that is available on Colchester Institute 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, Colchester Institute can review cases on an individual basis. Whilst Colchester Institute 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 Colchester Institute can consider submitting a Special Consideration form at the time of the examination / assessment.

6. Centre Delegated Access Arrangements

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 Colchester Institute 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 student 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 student, their normal way of working, supporting evidence and what is considered reasonable by Colchester Institute.

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 (please note that supervised rest breaks may be more appropriate than extra time and, in most cases, supervised rest breaks will be considered before 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

*See Section 7.1 for more information

7.1 Coloured paper / Overlay

Coloured paper, for those with visual stress can be provided from a standard range of colours. These colours can be supplied on the basis of known prior needs and current normal way of working.

At Colchester Institute the following colours are approved and available for use:

- Intense pink
- Pastel Pink
- Bright Yellow
- Pastel Yellow
- Billiard Green
- Royal Blue
- Salmon
- Violet (not available for some T Level courses)
- Pastel Green
- Pastel Blue

Should these colours not prove suitable, students will be required to produce evidence of clinical assessment or will be advised to seek an intuitive colorimetry test with a suitably qualified optometrist.

Colour overlays of any colour can be used but the student has to supply their own and ensure they bring to all classes, assessments and exams.

7.2 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 typewriter, 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 student has been permitted a scribe or is using voice recognition technology.

7.3 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 student at significant disadvantage to their peers and that this is their normal way of working, and where the EAA assessment indicates that:

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

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

- The students' difficulties are well established and known to the relevant staff
- There could be an adverse effect on other students if seated in the main exam room e.g. the need for reading aloud.
- students have a medical condition needing privacy – with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- students have a mental health condition needing privacy– with supporting evidence from a Consultant or Specialist.
- students have a condition – either temporary or permanent needing privacy.

In order to provide a separate room, supporting evidence is required from both the teaching staff and the student.

Evidence can be in the form of:

- History of provision at a previous Examination Centre e.g. school.
- Compelling evidence of need and rationale provided by teaching staff.
- Relevant medical history
- EHCP recommendation.

A separate room can only be awarded in exceptional cases and where the relevant criteria has been met to support this need. **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; Colchester Institute is required to hold evidence in its files that can be inspected at short notice. For this reason, Colchester Institute will keep copies of evidence of need, Form 8, Form 9, letters from outside agencies, record of access arrangements used, for a minimum of 3 years. All information and data, whether electronic or paper based, will be stored in accordance with Colchester Institute's GDPR policy.

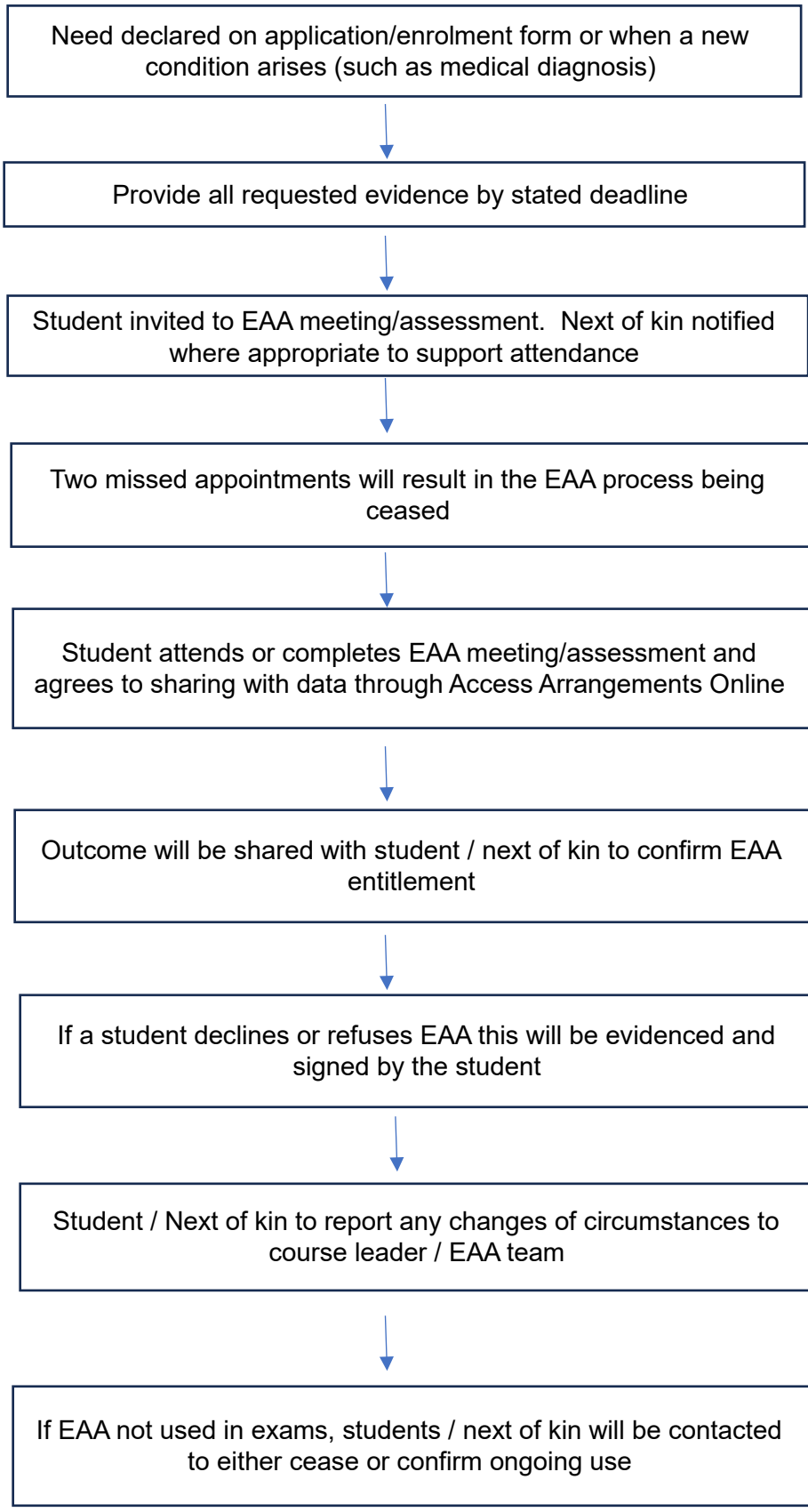
9. Monitoring the use of approved Access Arrangements

A student may decide that they do not wish to use the access arrangements that have been granted to them for a particular exam or assessment. The access arrangement will still be put in place for applicable future exams and assessments. However, if the student never uses the access arrangement granted to them, after careful consideration, the SENCO may consider withdrawing the access arrangement from future exams and assessments.

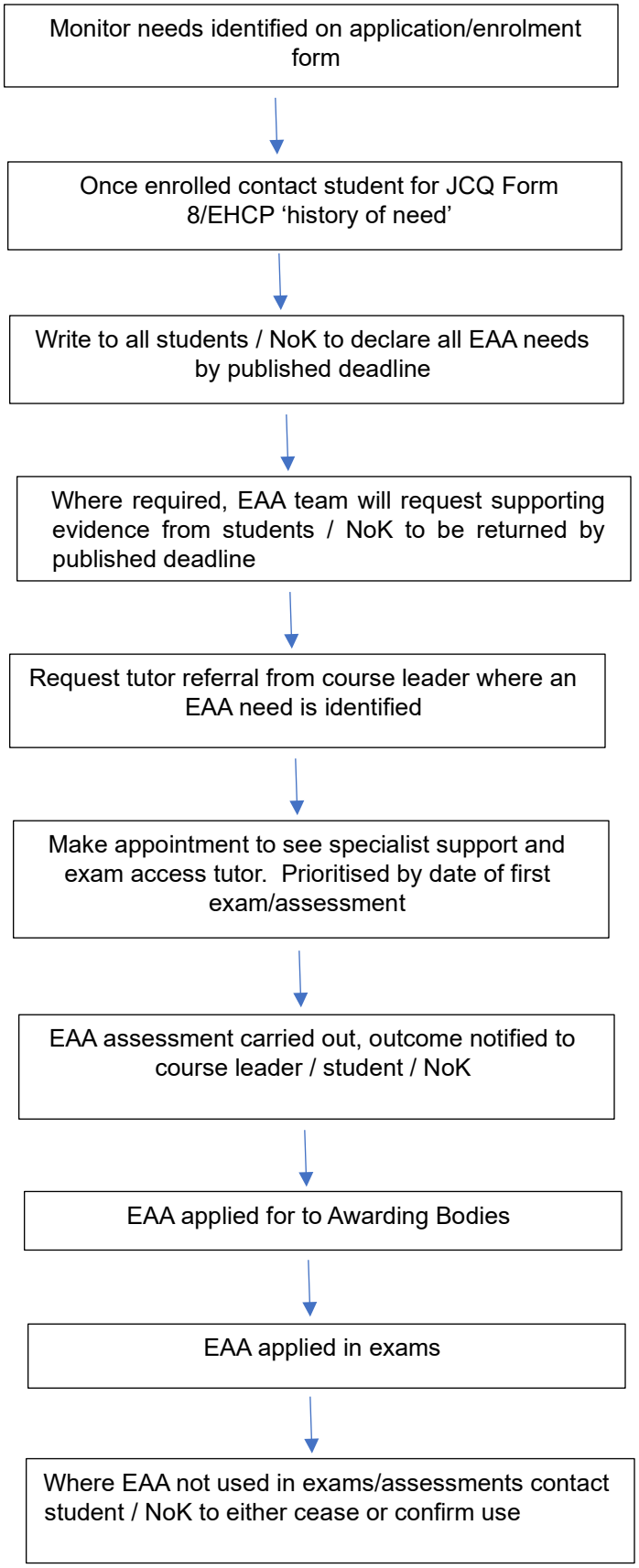
10. Linked policies

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

