



EXAMS ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Last reviewed:	October 2019
Next review due:	October 2021
Reviewed by:	Academic Co-ordinator

1. Principles

As set out in the school's Disability Inclusion policy, the Governing Board, senior management and staff of d'Overbroeck's are wholly committed to the principles and aims of the Equality Act 2010 and of the SEN and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), and to their implications for schools.

We fully take on board our responsibility, under the non-discrimination duties which apply to all schools, not to treat a disabled student or prospective student less favourably, for a reason solely related to his or her disability, than someone to whom that reason does not apply and where there is no reasonable justification for doing so.

We aim to make sure that this principle applies in all aspects of our school life including admissions and exclusions, examinations, and the provision of education and all other related services including sport and other activities. And we seek to ensure that this principle is applied whenever relevant individual decisions have to be made or whole-school policies reviewed.

This policy is a distillation of the school's broader disability inclusion policy in so far as it applies to examinations.

2. Definitions

2.1 Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as any '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 statutory guidance issued by the Office of Disability Issues (which can be found at <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/new/ea.guide.pdf>) sets out the notion that disability means 'limitations which go beyond the normal differences in ability which may exist among people'.

In the definition of disability given above:

- 'Substantial' means 'more than minor or trivial'. Substantial adverse effects can be determined by looking at the effects on a person with the impairment, comparing those to a person without the impairment, to judge if the difference between the two is more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long term' means that the impairment has existed for at least 12 months, or is likely to do so.
- 'Normal day to day activities' could be determined by reference to the illustrative, non-exhaustive list of factors given on pages 47-51 of the statutory guidance relating to the Equality Act 2010. Study and education-related activities are included in the meaning of 'day to day' activities.

Factors that might reasonably be expected to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- Persistent and significant difficulty in reading and understanding written material where this is in the person's native language, for example because of a mental impairment, a learning difficulty or a sensory or multi-sensory impairment;
- Persistent distractibility or difficulty in concentrating;
- Difficulty understanding or following simple verbal instructions.

Factors that might reasonably be expected not to have a substantial adverse effect include:

- Minor problems with writing or spelling;
- Inability to fill in a long, detailed, technical document, which is in the person's native language without assistance;
- Inability to concentrate on a task requiring application over several hours.

2.2 Special educational needs

A candidate has 'special educational needs' as defined in the SEND code of practice if s/he has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for her/him.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

3. Examinations

As a school, we take considerable care to ensure that students with disabilities or special educational needs are not at a disadvantage in examinations as a result of their disability or SEND. Reasonable adjustments will be made where there is reason to believe that assessment arrangements would put a candidate with a disability or a special educational need at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled or does not have a special educational need. In such circumstances, the school will take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage. Appropriate reasonable adjustments (or 'access arrangements') are put in place wherever possible to accommodate known needs and disabilities.

3.1 Access arrangements

Examples of 'access arrangements' commonly made for our candidates in exams include:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- a word processor
- a scribe
- a prompter
- coloured overlays
- coloured/enlarged papers
- modified language papers

Other adjustments which we have not so far had call for but which are also allowed under JCQ regulations include:

- a Sign Language interpreter
- a practical assistant
- an oral language modifier

3.2 Other special arrangements in examinations

Where students have a physical disability, a physical or mental illness, or social and emotional needs, we are guided by the recommendations made by the medical professionals treating them. The exams office ensures that these recommendations are implemented for all public examinations. These recommendations will also have been circulated to teaching staff so that they are the normal way of working for that student.

3.3 Students with SEND

When students have SEN difficulties that may require exam access arrangements, they are assessed by one of the specialist assessors or educational psychologists with whom the school has an established relationship. Students are referred to these specialist assessors by the SENCO. In order to qualify for access arrangements in Years 11, 12 or 13, this report must be completed in Year 9 or later, so some students who already have a report may need to be retested. Sections A and B of a JCQ Form 8 will be completed by the SENCO before the assessment, setting out observations from teaching staff, the areas of concern and the student's normal way of working. Once the assessment has been completed exam access arrangements will be agreed by the SENCO and then applied for through the JCQ online application process.

Students who join us for the Sixth Form:

- For those with previous exam access arrangements, the school requires a copy of the Form 8 from their previous school as well as the report. During the school year the SENCO will consult with teachers to establish that it is appropriate to continue with these established access arrangements for exams taken at d'Overbroeck's and confirm that it is the student's normal way of working. Parts A and B of a Form 8 will be produced detailing these observations. Exam access arrangements will then be applied for through the JCQ online application process.
- It is not uncommon for students to start to experience difficulties as they reach higher levels of study. This is not because the difficulty has only just appeared but rather that the added challenge at this level of study means that their previously effective coping strategies are no longer sufficient. When teachers, Directors of Studies, parents or the student notice the difficulties then information is collected from the relevant teachers detailing where the specific difficulties are. Should it then be felt that the student would benefit from a formal assessment, the student is referred to one of the specialist assessors or educational psychologists with whom the school has an established relationship. Following this report, classroom support and, if appropriate, exam access arrangements can be agreed. These will be applied for using the JCQ online application process using the Form 8 as detailed above.