



**THE  
PORTSMOUTH  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL**

## **The PGS Access Arrangements FAQ**

### **What is the purpose of access arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are the principal way in which examination boards comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The intention is that the access arrangement should meet the needs of the candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. The basic principle is that one is levelling the playing field i.e. putting the candidate in the same position as their peers in terms of ability to demonstrate their knowledge.

### **How is an application made?**

The Learning Support department are made aware of concerns regarding a pupil having a disability or learning difficulty either from screening tests which are carried out in school, information from a previous school, or through referral from one of the pupil's teachers. Requests for access arrangements should not come directly from pupils to Learning Support. If pupils or parents have a concern, they should approach the pupil's tutor in the first instance.

### **When should an application be made?**

All applications for access arrangements should be made at the beginning of the course of study i.e. in Years 10 and 12.

### **What evidence is required?**

The evidence of need will vary depending on the disability and the access arrangement for which the application is being made. Different qualifications have different criteria, and different subjects provide different demands of the pupil, so each application will need to be considered in the light of the specific criteria and need.

### **Which access arrangement should be applied for?**

Neither pupils nor parents apply for a specific access arrangement. Based on the evidence gathered in school, including from appropriate assessments carried out in line with the JCQ regulations, the Learning Support department will make a judgement as to the most appropriate access arrangement in each individual case. In order to maintain the integrity of the assessment, this will be the least significant arrangement which appropriately addresses the pupil's needs.

### **Who can provide the evidence?**

Evidence will be sought from the pupil, from the pupil's teachers and also from other data the school holds on the pupil, such as scores from nationally standardised tests. Additional evidence may be sought from external professionals or from further appropriate tests.

### **Who decides whether an access arrangement should be granted?**

In all cases it is the school who make the decision about whether the access arrangement should be applied for and in most cases, it is the school who determine whether the access arrangement is granted. Evidence from other professionals may count towards this decision but, in line with the relevant regulations, it is the school who make the final decision to apply for the arrangement in all cases.

### **When is it appropriate to use external assessors?**

A privately commissioned assessment carried out without the prior consultation with the school cannot be used to award access arrangements and cannot be used to process an application. Any external assessor must have an established relationship with the school or, prior to the assessment; establish a relationship with the school. This includes the school holding records of the assessor's qualifications and the assessor having the appropriate evidence of the candidates needs from the school before the assessment is carried out. In line with the JCQ regulations, the school can choose not to accept the findings of external assessors.

### **Can doctors grant access arrangements?**

Evidence from a medical professional should be to state the impact of a disability or injury on a candidate and how they will work. Medical evidence from appropriate medical professionals will be considered in the decision about the granting of access arrangements; however, the decision about granting the access arrangement does not lie with the medical professional but with the school. It is for the school to determine which access arrangement is most appropriate considering the medical evidence provided. All supporting medical letters must be dated and hand signed.

### **Transfer from previous school?**

For access arrangements to roll forward from a previous school to PGS, we must have an established working relationship with that school.

### **Does it apply to all subjects?**

No, access arrangements can be granted specific to individual subjects, as the demands and hence the need for the arrangement, will vary from one subject to another.

### **When do teachers refer pupils they teach?**

Teachers should refer pupils at the earliest opportunity to the Learning Support department, and provide appropriate evidence alongside any concerns.

### **What could I do if I wished to query the outcome?**

Parents wishing to query the outcome of an assessment for an access arrangement should write to the Head of Learning Support. Any parent wishing to challenge the outcome of an assessment should write to the Deputy Head (Academic).

### **Can parents contact JCQ directly?**

JCQ will not engage in communication about access arrangements with parents directly. All communications about access arrangements with JCQ are through the school.

### **Where can I find out more information?**

Access arrangements for all GCSE and A Level examinations are governed by the Joint Council for Qualifications and their full guidance for the awarding of such can be found via the following link; <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>. The JCQ Guidance for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments is updated annually every September.