

The JCQ Access Arrangement Inspection: What to expect and how to best prepare

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2025/26 JCQ AA inspections

Changes:

- to the access arrangement inspections and process in 2025/26.

Understand:

- what to expect from an access arrangements inspection.

Be aware:

- of the paperwork and evidence of need requirements.

Changes to the process:

- Notice to SENCo for an AA inspection.
- In depth AA inspections pilot.
- Inspectors will not request to see the Data Protection Notice for all applications made since 1st September 2025.



Changes to the process:

- 48 hours advance notice prior to the AA inspection;
E mail will come from an inspector e mail address and be sent SENCo e mail address as provided in NCN Annual Update.
- What if you are not available on the date the inspector has given you?
Please arrange for a colleague to provide the documentation and information to the inspector.
- Can the inspection be rearranged?
Unfortunately, we can not rearrange the inspection.



When may a centre receive an access arrangement inspection

Access arrangement inspection only

- Autumn (November to December)
- Spring (March to mid April)

In depth access arrangement inspection (as part of pilot in 2025-2026)

- Autumn (November to December)
- Spring (March to mid April)

As part of a general inspection

- Autumn examination series
- January examination series
- Summer examination series

Access Arrangement Inspections

The SENCo will get **48 hours notice** of the inspection.

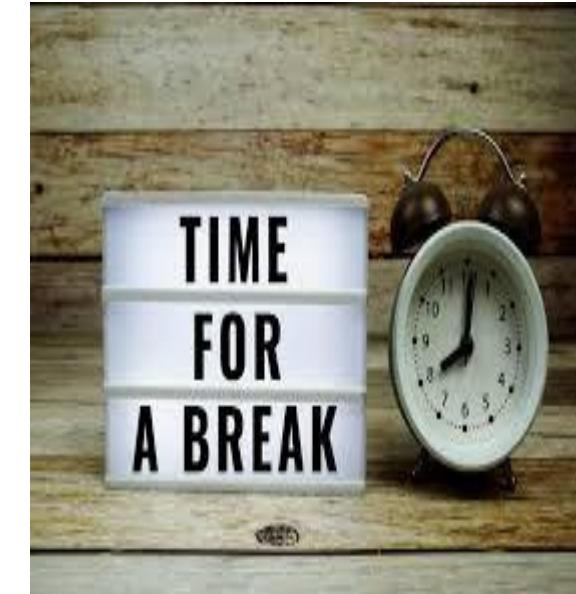
The Inspector will review candidate files.

They will expect to see, as a minimum:

- AAO application
- Form 8 or Form 9
- Evidence – For applications of 25% extra time detailed documentation of student need and normal way of working
- Form 9 must be supported by the specialist evidence such as an EHCP, medical documentation etc where a candidate requires 25% extra time, a scribe
- Word processor policy
- Confirmation of Assessors' qualifications

Form 9

- The inspector will check for confirmation that candidates with an impairment other than learning difficulties requiring 25% extra time, that it is demonstrated in Part 1 of Form 9 that supervised rest breaks have been explored, trialled, and exhausted



Assessor qualification

- Is the assessor's qualification held on file for inspection, and does it meet the published criteria as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ regulations?
- Please note that an access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.



Employee Qualification

Spring 2025 Access Arrangements Inspections

Top five inspection issues from 2024 – 2025:

- No signed candidate personal data consent form
- Centres not completing Form 9
- Form 8 not completed correctly
- The SENCo could not provide some or all the evidence
- Word processor policy



In-depth Access Arrangement inspections



- A small pilot was conducted towards the end of November 2025
- The inspector will conduct a thorough review of each application to ensure the evidence provided fully supports both the application and the candidate's stated need.

What will inspector look for?

Part 1 of Form 8/9

- Has Part 1 of Form 8 or Form 9 been tailored to reflect the candidate's individual needs and the specific access arrangements applied for?
- Has feedback from relevant teaching staff been incorporated into Part 1 of the Form 8/9?
- For candidates with an impairment other than learning difficulties requiring 25% extra time, is it demonstrated in Part 1 of Form 9 that supervised rest breaks have been explored, trialled, and exhausted?
- Have timed internal tests/mock examinations and teacher evidence been used as part of the decision-making process to determine the access arrangements awarded? Is this held on file? If not, how was the candidate's normal way of working determined?



Part 2 of Form 8

- Do the standardised scores recorded in Part 2 of Form 8 align with the access arrangements being requested in Part 3?
 - For example, if 25% extra time and a computer reader/reader are requested, the inspector will check that there are no standardised scores for speed of reading or reading comprehension.
 - If a scribe and 25% extra time are requested, the inspector will check that the correct standardised scores are recorded
- Is the assessor's qualification held on file for inspection, and does it meet the published criteria as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ regulations?
 - Please note that an access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.

Assessor qualification

- Is the assessor's qualification held on file for inspection, and does it meet the published criteria as per Chapter 7 of the JCQ regulations?
- Please note that an access arrangements assessor must have successfully completed a post-graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.
- At all AA inspections the inspector will ask to see the assessor's certificate.



Employee Qualification

Part 2 of Form 9

- Is there specialist evidence on file that is consistent with Part 2 of Form 9, and is it available for inspection? As a minimum we would expect that this evidence would be on letter-headed paper.

Student Voice

- To what extent has the candidate actively contributed to identifying and shaping the most appropriate/suitable arrangements to support their needs?



General inspections – Access Arrangement section

- These are unannounced.
- The Inspector will review a few candidate files.
- They will expect to see, as a minimum:
 - AAO application
 - Form 8 or Form 9
 - Evidence – for 25% extra time applications, detailed documentation of student need and way of working
 - Word processor policy
 - Confirmation of Assessors' qualifications

In all Access Arrangement Inspections

- The JCQ Centre Inspector will want to see the individual ‘candidate story’.



Candidates requiring 25% extra time

Inspector is confirming a needs-led approach to 25% extra time

Ensures decision making is based on a well-rounded view of the candidate's day-to day learning profile – teacher feedback, actual evidence of using 25% extra time



Candidates with an impairment other than a learning difficulty requiring 25% extra time

- Confirmation that the candidate has been referred to CAMHS or a local NHS Trust by their centre or GP, is on the list to be screened, **is no longer sufficient**
- A referral confirmation/acceptance letter **must** state an agreement to formally assess



Assurance

Inspections are an opportunity to give assurance to SENCos that candidates have the right access arrangement(s) to ensure they are not disadvantaged.



Be prepared for an inspection

- Identify a 'stand in' who can share data with Inspector in your absence
- Student's AA file should be either on-screen or hard copies –not a mix of both
- Be prepared to answer questions about evidence gathering



Thank you

