

# **ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROCEDURES**

## Contents

1. Scope and Purpose.....	3
2. Definitions.....	3
3. Accountability .....	5
4. Access Arrangements Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 1) .....	7
5. Access Arrangements Using Technology.....	7
6. Reasonable Adjustment Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 2) .....	8
7. Special Considerations Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 3).....	9
8. Associated Documents (Linked policies etc.).....	9
9. Equality Impact Assessment .....	9
10. Data Retention Statement.....	10
11. Policy Review and Ownership .....	10
12. Amendments Log.....	10
Appendix 1 Implementation Flow Chart for Access Arrangements – ALS form 7b...	11
Appendix 2 Implementation Flow Chart for Reasonable Adjustments ALS form 7c	12
Appendix 3 Implementation Flow Chart for Special Consideration.....	13

## 1. Scope and Purpose

Wiltshire College and University Centre ("The College") has a duty to uphold the rights of individual learners to have access to qualification assessments (either exams or coursework based assessments) in a way most appropriate for their individual needs.

The duty for an Awarding Organisation to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where an assessment/examination arrangement would put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the Awarding Organisation, via the college, is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

The College ensures that individual candidates can access qualifications and assessments in two ways:

- by recognising the diverse needs of learners when qualifications and assessments are designed.
- by making appropriate **access arrangements** or **reasonable adjustments** to standard assessments, wherever this is required to enable access.

The College, via the relevant Awarding Organisation, will also give **special consideration** to assessment results.

This procedure applies to all access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration concerning qualifications taken by all The College learners.

## 2. Definitions

### 2.1 Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a '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.

### 2.2 Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-agreed and put in place **before an assessment/examination**. They allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment. Access arrangements allow candidates/learners to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment: for example, a reader, a scribe or 25% extra time. Only learners that have been assessed by a qualified specialist assessor as being eligible for these arrangements may be permitted to use/have them.

The intention behind many access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. In this way awarding bodies will comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' (See also Section 2.3). Access Arrangements last for a 2-year period and then re-assessment will be required.

### 2.3 Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable Adjustments are pre-agreed and put in place **before an assessment/examination**. A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- adapting assessment materials, e.g., in Braille
- providing assistance such as a sign language interpreter
- separate room requests for learners with high anxiety
- using assistive technology such as screen reading, or voice activated software

Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence (a) whether Reasonable Adjustments will be needed and (b) the kind of Reasonable Adjustment which may be put in place. Reasonable Adjustments are generally not appropriate where the learner's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the attributes to be assessed

**A learner with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), Specific learning or physical difficulty does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustments.**

If an EHCP states that Reasonable Adjustments are appropriate College will still need to provide **evidence of normal way of working in the classroom**. A referral will need to be made to the LDS Specialist Assessor by the tutor who will assess the request and confirm with the exams team which, if any, reasonable adjustments or Exam Access Arrangements are appropriate.

## **2.4 Special Consideration**

A learners' examination performance can sometimes be affected by circumstances out of their control. Special consideration is **a post-examination adjustment** that compensates learners who were suffering from a temporary illness/condition or who were otherwise **disadvantaged at the time of the assessment/examination**. Exams officers may apply for special consideration on behalf of a learner.

Special consideration if awarded may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the candidate. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the candidate. Special consideration cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate and only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardise the standard of the assessment. See Awarding Organisation guidelines for breakdown of adjustments that can be made.

Special consideration should not give the candidate an unfair advantage; neither should its use cause any person to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. The candidate's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

**Note the term Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances** is used in some of the current college policies and procedure but is interchangeable with **Special Consideration**

**2.4.1** A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment, and is fully aware of the assessment requirements, **may be eligible for Special Consideration** if:

- performance is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner: For example, recent personal illness (e.g. severe asthma attack, severe migraine or

broken limb), accident, emotional distress (e.g. recent bereavement of a close family member, severe domestic crisis at the time of the assessment), serious disturbance during the assessment (e.g., fire or accidental event);

- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment prove inappropriate or inadequate.
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.
- alternative assessment arrangements prove inappropriate or inadequate
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner
- There is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which Special Consideration is applied, and other parts of the qualifications that have been achieved, to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

#### **2.4.2 A learner will not be eligible for Special Consideration if:**

- no evidence is supplied by the Centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition.
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.
- s/he is suffering from a minor illness or subject to a minor disturbance.
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, for example disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.
- In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner, or when a permanent health condition and/or disability means a learner's completion of assessment takes additional time, it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification.
- It is not be possible to allow time extensions for all Qualifications and Units, most particularly in cases where the extension would be beyond the qualification end date.
- In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to allow the learner to take the assessment at a later date.
- Special Consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage and the result must reflect learner achievement and not potential ability.
- Centres should note that it may not be possible to apply Special Consideration where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a Licence to Practice

## **3. Accountability**

### **3.1 Students**

**3.1.1** Students should be fully involved in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations. This will ensure that individual needs can be met, whilst still bearing in mind the specified assessment criteria for a particular qualification.

**3.1.2** Students should disclose in confidence to their tutor/assessor and/or Learning mentor/LSDS support staff any disability, impairment or learning difficulty they are aware of which could adversely impact on their performance during internal unit assessment(s)

**3.1.3** Students should notify their tutor/assessor and/or the Exams Team about any temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred during assessment and which has or is likely to have adversely impacted on the same and warrants special consideration.

### **3.2 Tutors/Assessors**

**3.2.1** Tutor/Assessor must familiarise themselves with this policy and the JCQ regulations and the relevant awarding organisation guidelines regarding application for and recording of requests for access arrangement, reasonable adjustment and/or special considerations.

**3.2.2** Tutor/Assessor must inform LSDS and Exams Team as soon as possible of any disclosure or notification or apparent condition that could warrant access arrangements, reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration for their student.

**3.2.3** Ensure that there is sufficient recording of any such reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration applied.

**3.2.4** Liaise and co-operate with the LSDS and/or the Exams Team in relation to the above.

### **3.3 Learning and Skills Development Service (LSDS) Team**

**3.3.1** The LSDS staff will provide guidance to tutors/assessors in relation to individual student information (if held), explain how to make referrals for assessment of needs where there is no record of previous support/adjustments in place.

**3.3.2** Record and follow-up any reported requests for access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and forward relevant documentation to MIS/Exams.

### **3.4 LSDS Specialist Assessor**

The Specialist Assessor/s will perform the necessary assessments with learners to determine if access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are permitted in relation to their individual needs and the regulatory guidelines

### **3.5 Exams and Customer Service Manager/Quality Manager**

Exams and Customer Service Manager/Quality Manager will provide general guidance on this policy and assist to make the appropriate request to Awarding Organisations and ensure that an audit trail is held and monitored centrally.

The Exams and Customer Service Manager will make arrangements for Special Consideration requests to be forwarded to Awarding Organisations where appropriate.

### **3.6 Awarding Organisations**

Provide information on how to apply for and maintain records of requests for reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special considerations.

### **3.7 The College as a provider in relation to Malpractice**

It is the accredited course provider's responsibility to ensure that the candidate uses only appropriate adjustments and that they keep records of these adjustments for audit purposes.

**If the accredited course provider exceeds the level of assistance and type of assistance it may lead to malpractice investigations**

## 4. Access Arrangements Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 1)

Due to timelines required to put access arrangements in place early requests are advisable as near to the start of a programme/course as possible.

For entry level students refer to the Awarding Organisation guidelines in consultation with LSDS.

For Level 1 to 3 students including GCSE requesting access arrangements they are to be referred to and assessed by the LSDS specialist assessor.

If access arrangements are approved this will be documented and the request forwarded to MIS/Exams to make the necessary arrangements.

If a student does not qualify for access arrangements, they will be notified and informed they cannot re-apply for assessment for 2 years.

## 5. Access Arrangements Using Technology

### 5.1 Reader Pens

The C-Pen Exam Reader pen is a major technological breakthrough for anyone wanting to read English, Spanish, French, German or Italian exam questions. The C-Pen Exam Reader is a totally portable, pocket-sized device that reads text out aloud with a human-like digital voice.

The Exam Reader has been approved by The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) for use in exams.

This means students who have reading difficulties, such as dyslexia, can independently take exams knowing that they can read and understand the questions.

As well as promoting Independent Reading this pen is:

- Ideal for hearing words & lines of text read aloud
- Great for students with dyslexia, reading difficulties and English as a second language
- Designed to allow students to be with their peers in the main exam hall with headphones plugged into their pens

An examination reading pen may be used in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading. (However, in this instance, the candidate cannot additionally be granted up to the maximum 50% extra time in place of the reader).

These pens can make a significant difference to a candidate who persistently struggles to understand what they have read, but who does not qualify for a reader, or might benefit those candidates who wish to work independently who did qualify for a reader. It may increase the independence of candidates who needed a reader for accuracy rather than

comprehension. It is also beneficial for those candidates who only require occasional words or phrases to be read to them.

In order for us to grant the use of an Exam Reader Pen to a candidate:

- The arrangement must reflect the candidates 'normal way of working' in class, in internal tests and mock exams and we must have evidence of this recorded.
- There must be evidence that they have reading difficulties with either accuracy, comprehension and/or speed but they do not necessarily have to qualify for a reader.
- It will be up to the LSDS Specialist Assessor and/or Specialist Coordinator for EAAs to determine if the use of the Exam Reader Pen is the appropriate arrangement on a case by case basis.

## 5.1 Word Processors

As a centre we are allowed to provide a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility/predictive text disabled (switched off) to a candidate where it is their 'normal way of working' within the centre.

A Word Processor **cannot** simply be granted to a candidate because he/she now wants to type rather than write in exams nor can it be granted just because they can work faster on a keyboard or because they use one at home.

The use of a word processor **must** reflect the candidate's 'normal way of working' within the centre i.e. in class and in internal tests and mock exams and we must have evidence of this recorded.

As a centre we consider that the use of a word processor would be of benefit to a candidate with;

- A learning difficulty which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to write legibly.
- A medical condition
- A physical disability
- A sensory impairment
- Planning and organisational problems, made worse when writing by hand
- Poor/illegible handwriting

**N.B.** Exams that involve a significant amount of writing, in addition to those that place a greater demand on the need to organise thoughts and plan extended answers, are those where candidates will frequently need to type. However, exams which require more simplistic answers are often much easier to handwrite in the answer booklet i.e. maths because the candidate avoids the difficulty associated with visually tracking between the question paper and the screen.

It will be up to the LSDS Specialist Assessor and/or Specialist Coordinator for EAAs to determine if the use of a Word Processor is the appropriate arrangement on a case by case basis.

## 6. Reasonable Adjustment Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 2)



Students are to be referred to and then assessed as required for Reasonable Adjustments by the LSDS Specialist Assessor. If students are assessed as requiring any form of reasonable adjustment this will be documented and the request forwarded to MIS/Exams. If they fail to secure the reasonable adjustment general support guidance will be offered to tutor/assessors and/or the student may be offered further IAG for a more appropriate course. Records will be retained by the ALS and/or Exams department. Awarding Organisation process and documentation will be followed.

## 7. Special Considerations Process (see also flow chart at Appendix 3)

Unlike access arrangements, there are no circumstances whereby The College may apply its own special consideration. Applications must be made to the Awarding Organisation on a case by case basis and thus separate applications must be made for each candidate. The only exception to this is where a group of candidates has been affected by a similar circumstance during an assessment, such as a fire alarm. A list of candidates affected must always be attached to the application.

Special consideration can be requested by staff, parents or candidates with appropriate evidence within seven days of the exam/assessment.

In most circumstances, relating to vocational qualifications, the student should request an extension to the assessment deadlines where special circumstances are known about prior to assessment taking place.

For all other claims the “Mitigating Circumstances” form available in course handbooks should be completed by the student.

Any application will be considered on its individual merits. Applications will only be accepted where there is independent, supporting medical or other relevant evidence covering the appropriate period of time.

If the College supports the application the Exams and Customer Service Manager will then forward a completed special consideration application to the relevant Awarding Organisation within the JCQ’s recommended deadlines.

## 8. Associated Documents (Linked policies etc.)

- Equality Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- Awarding Organisation Guidance Notes
- The Joint Council for Qualifications’ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policies

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment

Wiltshire College & University Centre strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all students, local people and the workforce. As an employer and a provider of education, the College aims to ensure that none are placed at a disadvantage as a result of its policies and procedures. It is intended that this policy and procedure is fair to all. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

## 10. Data Retention Statement

Wiltshire College & University Centre is committed to ensure the data it collects, and holds is in line with the ICO's guidance and meets data protection law. Where appropriate a Data Protection Impact Assessment will be undertaken as and when policies are updated to ensure risks to the individual and college are considered and managed.

For further information please refer to Wiltshire College & University Centre's Data Protection Policy.

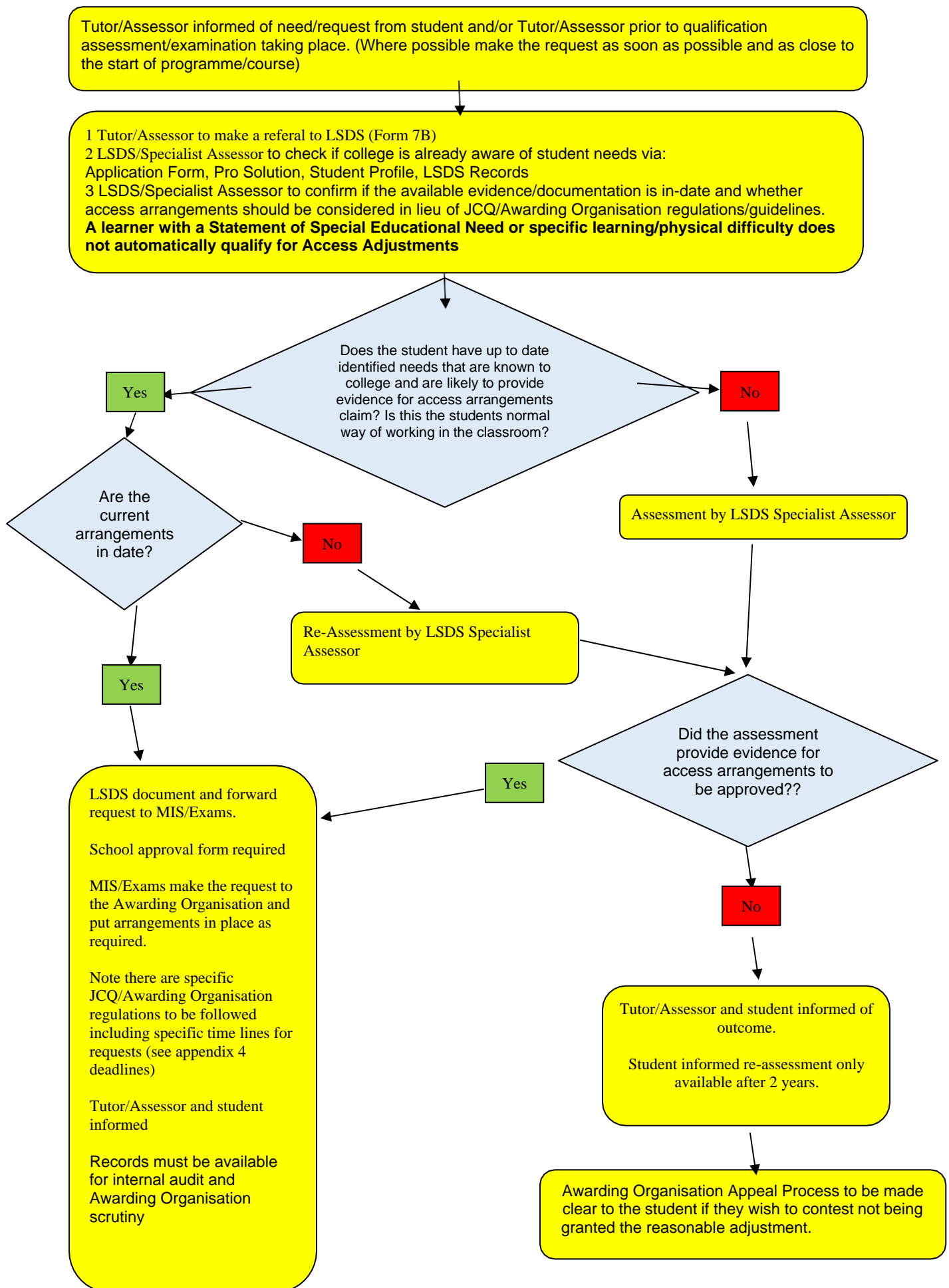
## 11. Policy Review and Ownership

This policy and procedure is owned by the Exams and Customer Service Manager, Head of LSDS, and LSDS Specialist Assessor, and the Quality Manager. It will be reviewed periodically in light of developments in employment legislation, good employment practice or audit; and to ensure it continues to be relevant and supports operational effectiveness.

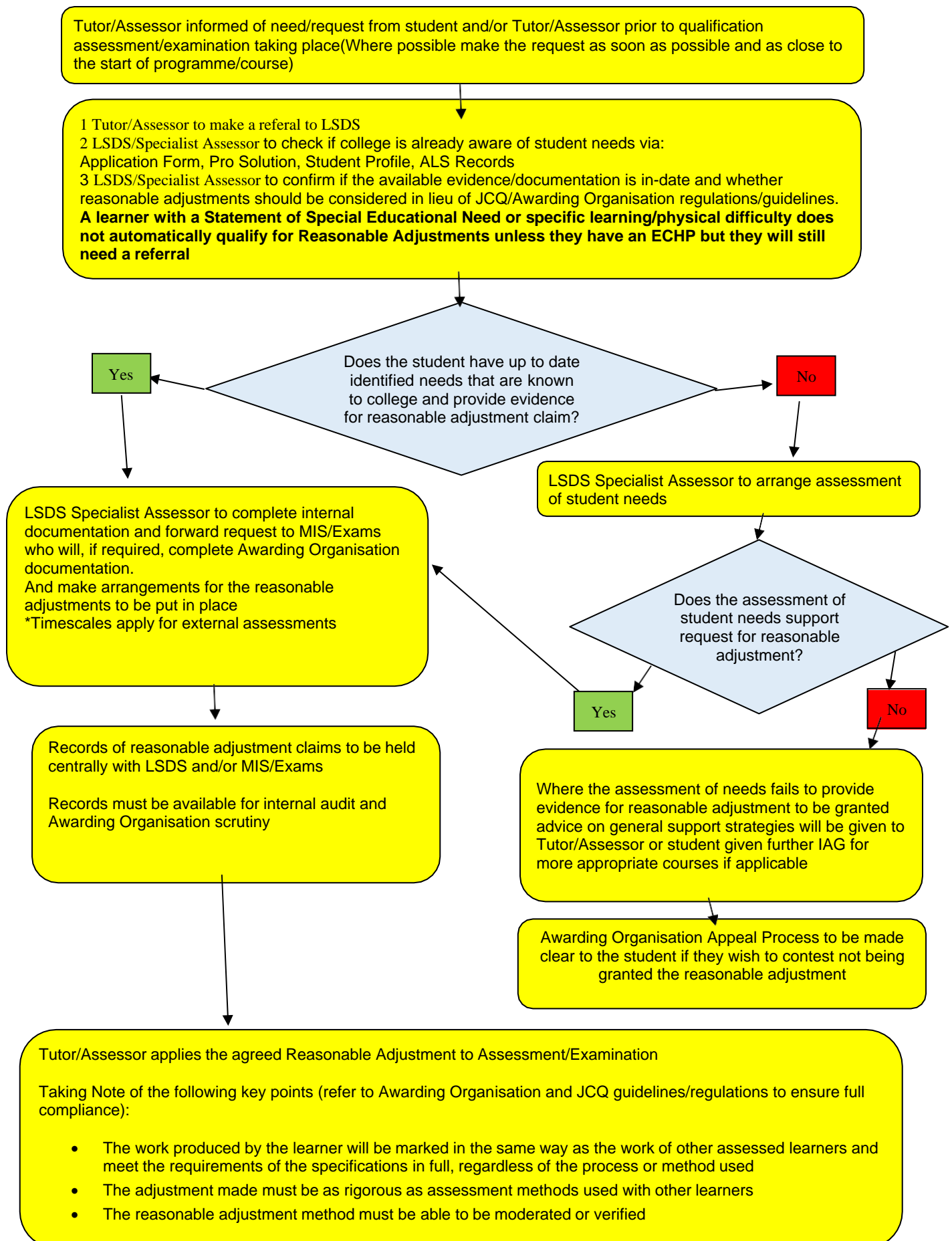
## 12. Amendments Log

Version	Date of Issue	Amendment summary	Author(s)
V1.0	01/11/2020	Approved by SMT	
V1.1	03/03/2022	Reviewed – no change – review date extended.	Adam Bushell

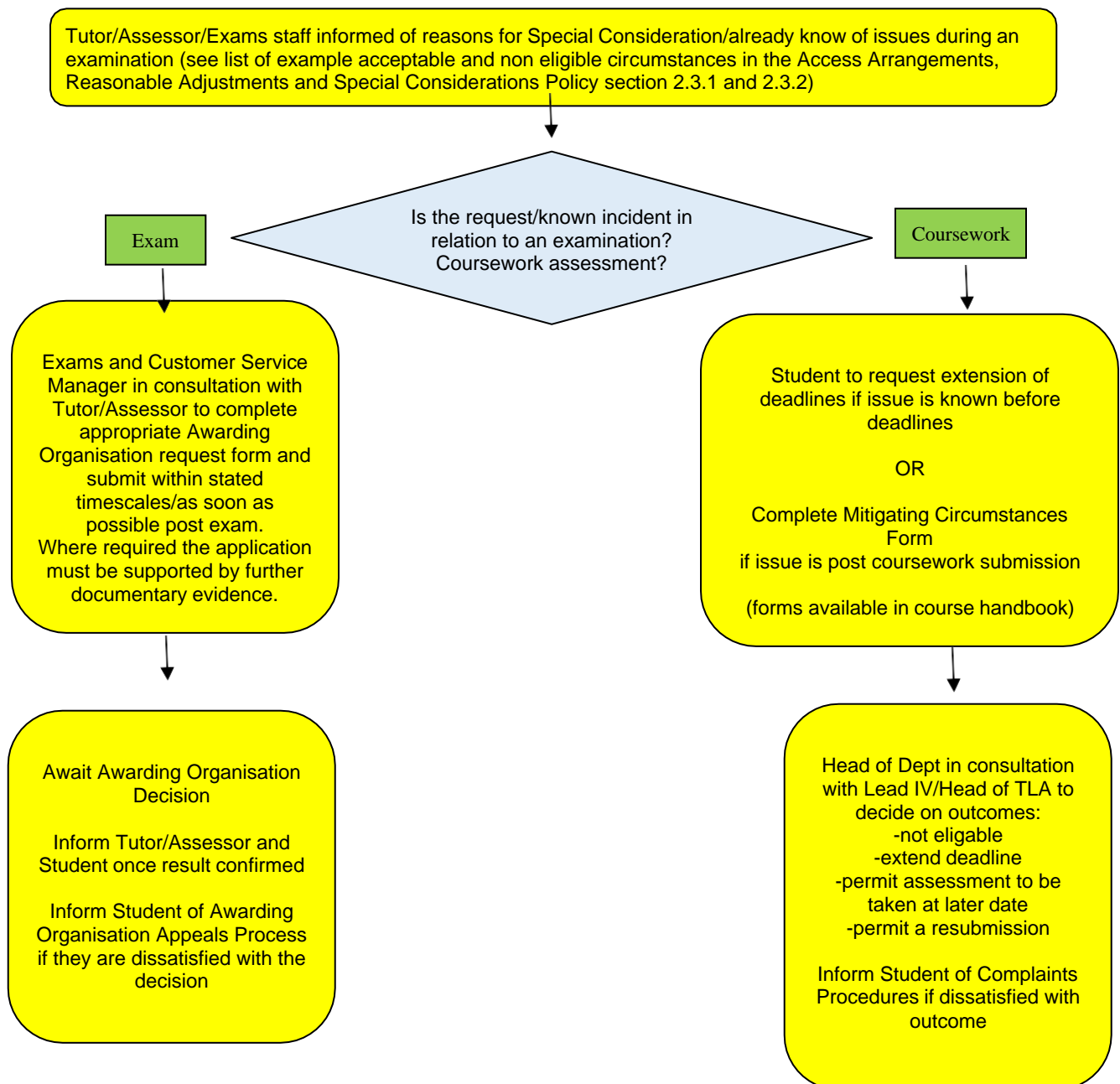
## Appendix 1 Implementation Flow Chart for Access Arrangements – ALS form 7b



## Appendix 2 Implementation Flow Chart for Reasonable Adjustments ALS form 7c



### Appendix 3 Implementation Flow Chart for Special Consideration



## Appendices

- 1-Form 7A – General Referral to LSDS
- 2-Form 7B – Access Arrangements Referral
- 3-Form 7C – Reasonable Adjustments Referral

### Appendix 4 Deadline Dates for EAA\*

Assessment request type	Deadline for LSDS to receive referral
GCSE retake Nov	30 <sup>th</sup> Sept
GCSE	23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec
Funct Skills	Min 10 weeks before exam
Pearson (BTEC NQF External Assessments)	Min 10 weeks before external assessment (online or paper based)

\*dates subject to change so check with LSDS

## LS7a – LSDS Referral Form



<b>Site:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Chippenham	<input type="checkbox"/> Lackham	<input type="checkbox"/> Salisbury	<input type="checkbox"/> Trowbridge	
<b>Student:</b>	<b>Personal Tutor:</b>				
<b>Ref No:</b>	<b>Student Contact No:</b>				
<b>Course:</b>	<b>Course Code:</b>				
<b>Level of course:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4+

**What kind of support do you consider you need, or did you have at school that was helpful?**  
(Student to complete)

**Signature**..... **Date**.....

**Additional support needs identified after discussion with Personal Tutor:**

Relevant information/evidence of learner's persistent and significant difficulties. Include relevant information about attendance and punctuality.

Describe how the learner's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and what measures have you put in place to support the learner.

Student met the course entry requirements ☐ Student was an exceptional entrant ☐

Personal Tutor Name:

Signature:

Date:

## LS7b – LSDS Referral Form for

## Exam Access Arrangements



<b>Site:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Chippenham	<input type="checkbox"/> Lackham	<input type="checkbox"/> Salisbury	<input type="checkbox"/> Trowbridge
<b>Student:</b>	<b>Personal Tutor:</b>			
<b>Ref No:</b>	<b>Student Contact No:</b>			
<b>Course:</b>	<b>Course Code:</b>			
<b>Level of course:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

**What kind of exam arrangements did you have at school and what do you consider you need now? e.g. reader/scribe**

(Student to complete)

**Signature..... Date.....**

**Personal Tutor to complete the following:**

Relevant information/evidence of learner's persistent and significant difficulties.

Show how the learner's disability/difficulty has impacted on teaching and learning in the classroom and that subject teachers are fully involved in supporting the learner.

Show that subject teachers have been fully involved in determining the proposed arrangement(s) for the learner and that they support the arrangements(s) proposed.

Detail the learner's normal way of working within the classroom, the support given and how this relates to the proposed arrangements.

**Please complete both sides in full**



### Application for Exam Access Arrangements

#### LS7c – LSDS Referral Form for Reasonable Adjustments in Exams



GCSE:  <input type="checkbox"/>	Functional Skills:  Entry Level <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Level : <b>Wiltshire College</b>
Exam subjects/Module Name and Codes:	Help required:  <input type="checkbox"/> Reader  <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe  <input type="checkbox"/> Extra Time  <input type="checkbox"/> Word processor  <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)
Exam Board/s:	
Date of exams:	
Is the exam?  <input type="checkbox"/> Online  <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Based	
Has the student had any previous exams access arrangements?  Please state:	
Any supporting evidence?  E.g. Free writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please attach a copy)  <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any further comments	
Student met the course entry requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Student was an exceptional entrant <input type="checkbox"/>  Have you checked the Learner Course Profile and ProSolution for exam arrangements? <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence Expiry Date _____ <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  Personal Tutor Name:  Signature: _____ Date: _____	

<b>Site:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Chippenham <input type="checkbox"/> Lackham <input type="checkbox"/> Salisbury <input type="checkbox"/> Trowbridge				
<b>Student:</b>		<b>Personal Tutor:</b>		
<b>Ref No:</b>		<b>Student Contact No:</b>		
<b>Course:</b>		<b>Course Code:</b>		
<b>Level of course:</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> E	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3

**What kind of reasonable adjustments did you have at school and what do you consider you need now? e.g. Separate room, coloured paper**  
(Student to complete)

Signature..... Date.....

**Personal Tutor to complete the following:**

Relevant information/evidence of learner's persistent and significant difficulties.

Please complete both sides in full

LSDS

Application for Reasonable Adjustments in Exams



GCSE: <input type="checkbox"/>	Functional Skills: Entry Level <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Exam subjects/Module Name and Codes:	Help required: <input type="checkbox"/> Modified Papers (needed 12 weeks before exam)  <input type="checkbox"/> Word Processor for GCSE  <input type="checkbox"/> Rest Breaks  <input type="checkbox"/> Prompter  <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Language Interpreter  <input type="checkbox"/> Enlarged text or coloured paper (needed 8 weeks before exam)  <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)
Exam Board/s:	
Date of exams:	
Is the exam?  <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Based	
Has the student had any previous reasonable adjustments in exams?  Please state:	
Any supporting evidence?  E.G. Medical records	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (please attach a copy)  <input type="checkbox"/> No
Any further comments	

Student met the course entry requirements ☐ Student was an exceptional entrant ☐

Have you checked the Learner Course Profile and ProSolution for reasonable adjustments?

**Yes** ☐ Evidence Expiry Date\_\_\_\_\_

**No** ☐

Personal Tutor Name:

Signature:

Date: