

Information Guide for Students, Parents & Carers

Students need to be reassessed for appropriate exam arrangements when starting college. Exam arrangements **do not** automatically carry over from school. Students will be invited to an assessment with a fully qualified assessor before their first formal exams/ mocks and in line with the awarding body deadlines. **They must attend this appointment if they need exam arrangements at college.**

Applicants to college are required to disclose any exam arrangements on their application form.

Current students are required to ask a subject teacher to make a referral to Additional Learning Support providing evidence of persistent and significant need, including samples of work.

Please note, a diagnosis of a learning need or disability is NOT sufficient evidence for exam arrangements. There must also be evidence of significant and persistent need in class and when completing work and assessments.

Exam arrangements will not normally be applied to 100% coursework-based subjects or practical subjects e.g., visual arts.

Varndean College adhere to the JCQ regulations when making decisions about exam arrangements

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Please click on the links below to view information relating to the different Access Arrangements

Alternative Room

Computer Reader

Extra Time

**Noise Cancelling
Headphones/ ear
plugs/ ear defenders**

Prompt

Rest Breaks

Alternative Room

An alternative room means you will be in a room away from the main hall with a reduced number of students.

Please check your exam timetable carefully to find out what room you are in.

If you are not sure where to go, please go to the Additional Learning Support department and someone will be able to direct you.

[Click to return to the Main page](#)

Computer reader

Varndean College uses Read&Write software for students who need a reader in their exams.

Reading software enables you to be more independent because you do not need to ask an invigilator to read for you. You can use the software to select text from a pdf of the exam paper and it will read aloud to you through headphones (these will be provided).

This means you will be sitting your exam with a computer, but you are only allowed to type your answers if you **ALSO** have a WP as one of your exam arrangements. If you handwrite you will be given a hard copy exam paper/ answer sheets to write your answers.

We **strongly** advise that you practise using the software for your independent study and in class work. Read&Write is available on every college desktop computer and can be added as an extension to your student profile on Chrome so you can use it in class on your own device or a college chromebook.

If you have any issues installing or accessing the software please contact the IT helpdesk. You can also find more information and support for Read&Write on the Additional Learning Support googleclassroom, and there are some helpful YouTube tutorials available online.

Remember- you can use this software to help you complete your homework and coursework as well!

Please come to Additional Learning Support if you have any questions about this.

[Click to return to the Main page](#)

Extra time

Extra time is only awarded where a disability impacts on a student's speed of working in examinations. Students at Varndean who qualify for extra time will be allowed 25% extra time unless otherwise agreed with the Access Arrangements Assessor.

25% extra time means that whatever the exam time is, you will have 25% more. So, for example, if your exam is 1 hour long, you will have 1 hour 15 minutes. If your exam is 2 hours long, you will have 2 hours 30 minutes. The invigilators will make your finish time clear to you.

You will not normally be required to stay in the exam room when you have finished your exam. Even if you have not used all of your time, you will be allowed to leave in line with national exam regulations. There may be some exceptions to this depending on your room or if you are being supervised due to a clash. **However, we always recommend that you use all of the time available to check your work!**

All of the usual exam rules will still apply- please ask the invigilation team if you have any questions.

[Click to return to the Main page](#)

Prompt

Students are entitled to a prompt if they have a disability which impacts their focus or concentration in exams. Having a prompt means that the invigilators will be able to interact with you during the exam, so if they notice you have not written anything for a while or have become distracted they can bring your attention back to the exam. They can say:

“(student name), focus on the question” or “(student name), you have x minutes left”.

[Click to return to the Main page](#)

Rest Breaks

Having rest breaks means that you are able to take a break during your exam without losing any examination time. The time taken on each break is added on to your finish time.

So, if your finish time is 2pm and you take a break lasting five minutes, your finish time will change to 2:05pm.

You can choose when to take breaks, but you are not allowed to take a break in the first ten minutes of the exam, and you are not allowed to take a single break that lasts longer than half an hour.

We recommend that you take no more than ten minutes break per each hour of the exam.

When you want to take a break, raise your hand and let the invigilator know. They will note down the start and finish time of your break and add the total time to your finish time.

During a break, you must close your exam paper. You are not allowed to engage with the exam paper at all during your break.

Students will usually be expected to stay at their desks during a rest break. In exceptional circumstances you may be allowed to leave the room. If you do need to leave the room you must be accompanied by an invigilator and must stay outside the examination room.

Toilet breaks will **not** be counted as rest breaks unless this has been pre agreed with the Access Arrangements Assessor due to a medical condition. Please make sure you use the toilet before you start your exam!

[Click to return to the Main page](#)

Noise cancelling headphones/ ear plugs/ ear defenders

Students are allowed to take non digital noise cancelling headphones, ear plugs or ear defenders into their exams, unless this will cause an issue with health and safety e.g. in science practicals or 3D design exams. If you are unsure, please check with your teacher. The exams team have some physical ear defenders available for students to borrow if needed.

Digital or electronic noise cancelling headphones are only allowed in specific circumstances and require an application to be made to the awarding bodies. Please speak to the Access Arrangements Coordinator if you think you require this arrangement. If you use digital or electronic noise cancelling headphones the invigilators will need to check them before you start your paper- please find an invigilator at the start of the exam so you can show them what you are using.

[Click to return to the Main page](#)