

Information Guide for Students, Parents & Carers

Students who had exam arrangements in their previous school:

The access arrangements team will contact your previous school or contact you directly to request the evidence for your exam arrangements.

If you or your previous school are able to provide this evidence, we may be able to “roll forward” your arrangements at college. This is dependent on your college teachers providing supporting evidence because we are required to show that you still need these arrangements in your exams.

If you or your previous school are not able to provide this evidence, you will need to be referred to the Access Arrangements team by one of your subject teachers, giving their observations of how your learning need affects your performance in exams. **We cannot accept referrals from teachers until after the October half term of your first year, because your teachers will need time to assess your performance.**

Students who did not have exam arrangements in their previous school:

You will need to be referred to the Access Arrangements team by one of your subject teachers, giving their observations of how your learning need affects your performance in exams. **We cannot accept referrals from teachers until after the October half term of your first year, because your teachers will need time to assess your performance.**

Following this referral, you may be invited to a meeting with a qualified assessor to ensure you have the right exams support and to discuss alternative support options if required. It is very important that you attend this appointment.

Important information:

- It is very important that applicants disclose any previous exam arrangements on their application forms, but please be aware that this is not confirmation of exam arrangements and students will need to follow the processes outlined above.
- 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.
- We are only able to provide exam arrangements for November resit exams or first year January exams where we have evidence that these arrangements were in place in the student’s previous school. This is to enable us to adhere to the JCQ requirements.
- Varndean College adheres 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.

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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.

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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.

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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”.

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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!

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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.

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