

Consultant Brief

Consultancy Rate: £250 - £350 per day depending on experience.

The Role

We are looking for someone who has **proven expertise in JCQ Access Arrangements** regulations with the **ability to interpret and apply legislative updates**. You will have **developed processes and procedures** for building the evidence required to remain compliant with JCQ regulations and you will either already **have an understanding of what that might look like for a distance learning provider**, or you will be confident in your ability to transfer this knowledge from mainstream education and into alternative provision.

About The National Extension College

Established in 1963 as a not-for-profit distance learning provider, the National Extension College (NEC) has a strong, proud heritage in widening access to education. Our aim is to transform lives and open up new possibilities for people of all ages by offering access to essential qualifications like GCSEs and A levels, as well as vocational qualifications in management, business and teaching.

These courses can be studied flexibly, at any time and anywhere, and offer each student an exceptional level of support to achieve their future ambitions. We are widely recognised as a specialist in online learning and continue to seek out new areas for innovation.

The need for this support

As with all educational institutions, The NEC is working with a greater number of vulnerable students, and learners with additional needs than ever before. Many of these learners require access arrangements and the change in JCQ regulations has added another layer of complexity. As a result, we have recognised the need for some additional SENCO expertise to ensure that our processes are robust, and the outcome of our judgements maintains both equality of access for our learners and compliance with JCQ.

Scope of Work

Process Review	
Phase 1 2 days with report. June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand current processes and procedures and get to know the NEC team - Exams Team and SENCO.• Evaluate the current workflow between the Exams Officer and SENCO to ensure it meets the latest JCQ (2025/26) requirements for Entering Centres.• Sample some folders from the 25/26 academic year to ensure it meets the latest JCQ (2025/26) requirements for Entering Centres and to identify any gaps. <p>Output:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report of recommendations for improvements to processes and procedures, to include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Advice on robust methods for gathering Normal Way of Working evidence from a remote setting○ Clarity around the legal sign-off boundaries to reassure the SENCO of what their PGCert/NASENCO qualification covers (and where the External Assessor's liability begins).
Stakeholder Mediation & Training	
Phase 2 2 days with resources July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a brief update session for the SENCO and Exams Manager on the recent JCQ changes (e.g., the March 2026 updates regarding extra time evidence).• Meet with the Exams Manager and SENCO to agree on a clear step-by-step process to ensure accuracy and compliance of folders. <p>Output:</p> <p>To address discomfort around the sign-off process -</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flow diagram that documents the stages for administering an efficient and compliant access arrangements process. • A 'safe-signing' briefing together with templates or checklists that make the signing-off process objective rather than subjective.
Long-term Quality Assurance and Ad hoc Support	
Phase 3 2 days with report - annually in March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual "Mock Inspection" visit (remote audit) to ensure the centre remains compliant before the peak exam season. Audit of a representative sample of candidate folders (Form 8s, Form 9s, and supporting evidence). • Review NEC's internal Access Arrangements Policy to ensure it accurately reflects the distance learning model and the transfer of candidate process to local venues. • Be available for on-call advice should a complex case arise or if a JCQ inspector raises a query during a real audit. <p>Output</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling report with recommendations that align to the new processes. This will demonstrate the work needed for continuous improvement for the forthcoming exam cycle.

Next Steps

If you are interested in this role, please send your CV to helen.smith@nec.ac.uk. The closing date for applications will be 5th June 2026, and interviews will be held in the following week.

We would ideally like someone to work with us from late June onwards.