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LIGHT OF THE WORLD ~ CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Exams Access Arrangements Policy **CARDINAL POLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

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CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SIGNATURE:...

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Contents

Mission Statement	3
What are Access Arrangements?	3
Who?	3
What evidence do we need to have to secure Access Arrangements?.....	4
Normal way of working and review	4
Assistive technologies	6
Sixth form progression and candidates changing centre	8
Support for students	8
Use of a Laptop	9
Frequently asked questions:	10
What does normal way of working mean.....	10
Which tests are used	10
How do candidates get help	10
Deadlines and late needs.....	10
Other individual arrangements and private candidates.....	10
Roles responsibilities and contingencies.....	11
Appeals and complaints	11
Privacy record keeping and policy links	12
Regulatory sources for 2026 to 2027	12

Mission Statement

Cardinal Pole Catholic School is a community of **service** guiding young people on a path to **opportunity**, **aspiration** and **reward**, founded on Catholic values.

What are Access Arrangements?

Access arrangements are adjustments agreed before an examination or assessment to address a candidate's individual needs without changing the knowledge, understanding or skills being assessed. Examples include extra time, supervised rest breaks, readers, computer readers, scribes, speech recognition technology, word processors and modified papers.

Reasonable adjustments address substantial disadvantage experienced by disabled candidates. An adjustment may require an individual referral where standard arrangements do not meet the candidate's needs. Assessment objectives, competence standards and awarding-organisation restrictions must be respected.

Special consideration is a separate process for eligible circumstances affecting a candidate's attendance or performance at the time of assessment. It is requested through the relevant awarding organisation's special-consideration procedure, rather than Access Arrangements Online.

Why?

The school recognises its own duties under the Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils through suitable changes to practices and auxiliary aids or services where reasonable. Awarding organisations have separate equality duties when conferring qualifications. The Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice inform the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Disability means a physical or mental impairment with a substantial and long-term adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities. Substantial means more than minor or trivial; long-term normally means lasting, or likely to last, at least 12 months, or for the remainder of the person's life. The statutory rules for recurring and fluctuating conditions also apply.

For 2026–27 the school follows JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, updated March 2026 and expressly continued for this academic year. The SENDCo and Exams Officer monitor updates and apply the rules relevant to each qualification and assessment.

Who?

Arrangements may be required by candidates with cognition and learning needs; communication and interaction needs; sensory or physical needs; social, emotional and mental health needs; or temporary illness, injury or impairment. Eligibility depends on functional need and the requirements for the particular arrangement.

A diagnosis, EHCP, SEND status or test score does not automatically confer a particular examination arrangement. Equally, an EHCP or diagnosis is not a universal prerequisite for support. The SENDCo identifies the correct evidence and approval route.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) is not, by itself, SEN or a disability. An EAL learner may also have a disability or learning difficulty. Dictionary provision and EAL-related extra time follow the separate requirements below.

Candidates, parents or carers and staff should report emerging needs to the SENDCo promptly. Urgent needs must also be brought to the Exams Officer's attention before the deadline for access arrangements, for the current academic year is 31st January 2026

The school considers late diagnosis, late manifestation of an impairment and temporary injury under the JCQ late-needs procedure; late notification alone is not a reason for refusal.

What evidence do we need to have to secure Access Arrangements?

The SENDCo gathers a current picture of need from appropriate classroom observations, timed assessments, staff feedback, support records and the candidate's own experience. Evidence must explain the functional barrier, the support used and why the requested arrangement is appropriate.

The school uses the form and evidence route required for each arrangement.

Form 8 records the relevant learning-difficulty assessment and history of need.

Form 9 records the prescribed communication, medical, sensory or other needs.

Form 8RF provides updated evidence when a compliant Form 8 is rolled forward to permitted Level 3 arrangements.

The completed forms, required assessment or specialist evidence, supporting centre records, application outcome and relevant cover sheets are held securely and made available for inspection. Electronic evidence is organised in an individual candidate folder. The school checks approval duration and expiry and does not treat an online approval as a substitute for the required evidence.

Unsupported arrangements, failures to obtain required approval or failures to implement arrangements may constitute malpractice. The school reports and addresses suspected malpractice through the applicable procedure. Any consequences for results are determined by the awarding organisation; they are not an automatic mark deduction imposed by this policy.

For the Form 9 route to 25% extra time, obtain the specialist evidence or current EHCP permitted by JCQ 5.2.3, together with the required centre evidence. Permitted sources include CAMHS, an HCPC-registered psychologist, a medical consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist, the specified local-authority or occupational-health services, and the qualifying specialist GP roles described by JCQ. Ordinary GP correspondence is not automatically sufficient for this route.

For a qualifying Neurodevelopmental Specialist GP or GP with an extended role in ADHD, retain evidence of the required RCGP framework training or role. Where JCQ permits a referral while specialist assessment is pending, follow that route and provide the prescribed supporting evidence.

A general medical-letter requirement does not apply to every arrangement. For example, supervised rest breaks and a word processor without additional assistance have their own centre-delegated requirements. Temporary arrangements follow the relevant JCQ evidence route.

Parents' or carers' information is considered in discussions and retained appropriately, but their comments must not be recorded as the centre evidence in Part 1 of Form 8 or Form 9. Those sections must reflect the school's own evidence and observations.

Normal way of working and review

The school establishes and records the candidate's normal way of working through appropriate support in lessons, support groups, intervention sessions, internal tests or mock examinations. Arrangements may differ by subject or assessment demand; identical provision in every lesson and examination is not required.

The SENDCo works with teachers and the Exams Officer to implement appropriate arrangements in internal assessments, mocks and external examinations. Late diagnosis, late

manifestation of an impairment and temporary injury are considered under the relevant exceptions to an established history of provision.

If a candidate does not use an arrangement, the SENDCo investigates the reasons and reviews effectiveness, subject demands and current evidence with the candidate and relevant staff. Non-use is not treated as misconduct. Any decision to change or discontinue provision is reasoned, recorded and communicated with information about appeal. An arrangement that is no longer needed or effective is not automatically renewed.

English as an Additional Language

A bilingual translation dictionary, without extra time, may be provided where ICE permits it, the candidate's first language is not English, Irish or Welsh and its use reflects normal way of working. Dictionary-only use does not require an AAO application or evidence for inspection, but the dictionary must be checked and held securely.

The dictionary must provide straightforward translations only, without pictures, explanations, notes, revision material or unauthorised information. Monolingual dictionaries, glossaries, wordlists and web-based translators are not permitted. Staff do not translate examination questions or the candidate's answers.

The EAL coordinator or SENDCo checks the subject and component restrictions in ICE 14.3 and the awarding organisation's specification. These include English and relevant language examinations and certain GCSE components assessing spelling, punctuation and grammar. Apply the current specification exceptions, including the permitted Cambridge OCR History and Eduqas Religious Studies components, rather than a blanket subject prohibition.

A bilingual translation dictionary with 25% extra time is a rare arrangement for the eligible Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications listed in JCQ 5.18. The EAL coordinator or SENDCo must establish that every condition in JCQ 5.18.6 is met before processing an application where required.

The conditions include a first language other than English, Irish or Welsh; entry to the UK within the required three-year period; being new to learning in English with insufficient prior and current academic English; the home-language condition; and the restrictions concerning previous education or examination preparation in English. The candidate must need to consult the dictionary so frequently that examination time is lost, and 25% extra time with dictionary use must reflect normal way of working.

An approved application for a bilingual dictionary with 25% extra time allows the SENDCo to provide that extra time in examinations where the dictionary itself is prohibited. If the three-year eligibility period ends during an examination series, an eligible candidate with approval may complete that series using the arrangement.

Dictionary-related extra time is not normally available for Level 3 qualifications. Rare cases involving mitigating and challenging personal circumstances may be referred to the relevant awarding organisation through AAO with a compelling rationale and evidence. Dictionary-only provision at Level 3 remains subject to ICE and specification restrictions.

EAL alone does not justify disability-related extra time or a scribe. A request outside the dictionary route must meet the applicable learning-difficulty or substantial-impairment criteria and evidence requirements.

Assistive technologies

The SENDCo considers assistive technology with the candidate to identify effective and suitable support. Technology is not imposed where it does not address the candidate's needs. A scribe or other arrangement may be appropriate where the candidate cannot produce effective independent responses using a word processor.

Computer readers, human readers, examination reading pens, speech recognition and word processors have different rules. Staff check the assessment objectives, permitted functions, evidence, approval and cover-sheet requirements for the individual arrangement. A human reader and a computer reader are not interchangeable in every assessment, particularly where reading is assessed.

Candidates practise approved technology before examinations. IT staff and the Exams Officer verify that only permitted functions are available, that the candidate can operate the equipment, and that use will not disturb other candidates.

A word processor does not automatically confer extra time. Where a candidate uses a reader or computer reader, reading-speed scores cannot support extra time; where they use a word processor, scribe or speech recognition, handwriting-speed scores cannot support extra time. Other qualifying evidence must be considered under JCQ rules.

Rest Breaks

Supervised rest breaks are centre-delegated: an AAO application and specialist evidence for inspection are not required. For GCSE and GCE, the SENDCo completes the required statement in Part 1 of Form 9, or Part 1 of Form 8 for a candidate with learning difficulties who also requires 25% extra time and/or a scribe, as applicable.

The SENDCo records the impairment, genuine need and normal way of working and confirms that the candidate meets the relevant criteria. The need may arise from learning, communication, medical, sensory, physical, social, emotional or mental health difficulties. Relevant pastoral or teaching staff must know the candidate's established difficulties. Where the impairment is other than a learning difficulty, the SENDCo should consider supervised rest breaks before applying for 25% extra time. There is no universal requirement to trial and exhaust rest breaks first. Professional judgement, observations, teacher feedback and the candidate's views inform the decision. Some candidates need both rest breaks and extra time.

During a supervised rest break the examination clock is paused and the candidate must not have access to the questions or answers or use the break as thinking time. Timing resumes when the candidate is ready to continue. Record the start and finish of each break and the revised examination finishing time.

The SENDCo determines the approximate number and duration of breaks in advance according to need. A single break should normally be no more than 30 minutes, and a break will not normally be required within the first ten minutes. Breaks are not unlimited in number or duration. Follow current JCQ guidance and consider the candidate's other examinations that day.

An invigilator accompanies a candidate who leaves the room and maintains examination security. Where serious illness is involved, seek medical advice about fitness to sit the examination. Rest breaks are not subject to a blanket February deadline or a universal medical-letter condition.

How are Access arrangements awarded?

The SENDCo leads the process with teaching staff, support staff, the appointed assessor and the Exams Officer. Year 7 screening and information from primary school, including an EHCP, inform early support. Screening results and an EHCP do not automatically establish eligibility for a particular future examination arrangement.

The school identifies and supports needs throughout the course. It does not restrict identification to pupils scoring 84 or below on a Year 7 screening measure. Where Form 8 assessment is required for 25% extra time, Part 2 testing must be no earlier than the start of Year 9 and must meet current JCQ requirements.

For the standard Form 8 route to 25% extra time, normally require two scores of 84 or less, or one of 84 or less and one of 85–89, relating to two different qualifying areas of speed of working. Two qualifying scores of 85–89 require an exceptional awarding-organisation referral with strong justification. Apply JCQ restrictions on the use of particular measures, including mathematical fluency being restricted to the relevant Mathematics evidence.

The Form 9 route to 25% extra time applies to the complex needs specified by JCQ 5.2.3 and requires its prescribed specialist or EHCP evidence and centre evidence; standardised scores are not required for that route. Do not use Form 8 in place of the correct Form 9 route.

For 25% extra-time applications subject to the current evidence requirement, retain a small representative sample of relevant timed assessments showing use of the arrangement, together with focused teacher observations explaining why it is needed and how it is used. Apply the appropriate GCSE-resit exceptions and the March 2026 supplementary guidance on proportionate evidence.

The SENDCo determines the appropriate arrangement and the Exams Officer supports applications through AAO where required. Centre-delegated arrangements are authorised and recorded according to their own rules. Exceptional cases and arrangements not approved automatically are referred to the relevant awarding organisation with full supporting information.

Who can assess and how are decisions made?

The Head of Centre appoints an assessor, verifies their competence and retains the required evidence before assessments begin. The permitted routes are an assessor with the prescribed Level 7 or equivalent postgraduate specialist-assessment training, including at least 100 relevant hours; a specialist teacher assessor holding a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate; or an appropriately qualified HCPC-registered psychologist. QTS is not an additional universal eligibility condition.

The SENDCo and assessor work together. Before a Form 8 assessment, Part 1 must contain a detailed current picture of need, teacher feedback and normal way of working. A skeleton Part 1 is insufficient. The assessor personally carries out the relevant testing, completes Part 2 and does not sign off another professional's assessment. Complete and sign Part 3 as required.

The school maintains its assessment inventory separately, recording exact test names, editions, age limits and measured skills from publisher manuals. It does not describe its tests as a list approved by JCQ.

A privately commissioned learning-difficulty report does not itself award examination access arrangements. The centre leads the required assessment and evidence process through its appointed assessor. Relevant external information is considered appropriately, and a decision not to support an arrangement is explained in writing with information about internal appeal.

The SENDCo makes informed decisions using current JCQ requirements and evidence. The Head of Centre and senior leaders provide resources, support and oversight; external professionals advise within their expertise but do not make the Centre's decision.

What is teacher evidence?

Teachers describe the specific barriers affecting the candidate in lessons and timed assessments, the adjustments normally used, and their effect on the candidate's work. Relevant observations may concern reading, writing, spelling, processing, planning, concentration, communication, physical access or fatigue.

Evidence may include marked scripts, appropriately annotated extracts, digital records or logs, and a teacher proforma supported by focused observations in accordance with JCQ's supplementary guidance. The sample should represent the relevant assessment demands; a full subject portfolio is not required.

Sixth form progression and candidates changing centre

The SENDCo liaises securely with the previous centre to obtain a fully completed Form 8 or other relevant evidence and the assessor's qualification evidence. Candidates are asked about previous arrangements but are not solely responsible for obtaining their records. The receiving school validates the paperwork and establishes current need and normal way of working.

A compliant Form 8 may roll forward from GCSE to permitted GCE or other Level 3 arrangements, including 25% extra time and/or a scribe, with Form 8RF, the required updated centre evidence and a new online application. The school checks the precise rules for any accompanying arrangement.

Form 9 cannot roll forward from GCSE to Level 3: complete a new Form 9 and a new application where required. Arrangements such as 26–50% extra time or a Language Modifier must follow their specific reassessment requirements.

Reassessment is required where the previous evidence is unavailable, incomplete, non-compliant or unsuitable, where needs have changed, or where the requested arrangement requires new testing. The school does not impose blanket re-testing at each key stage where the current roll-forward provisions apply.

Support for students

The SENDCo provides accessible individual guidance and appropriate practice or workshops before mocks and examinations. Candidates are told which arrangements apply, how to use them and whom to contact if a problem occurs. Attendance and training needs are supported according to the individual's circumstances.

Teachers, invigilators and support staff check that expected arrangements are implemented. Candidates are encouraged to raise an omission immediately. The Exams Officer records incidents and escalates them to the SENDCo and Head of Centre, liaising with the awarding organisation where necessary.

Support includes practice with devices and facilitators, suitable rooming, physical access, accessible examination information and individual emergency-evacuation arrangements where required. A candidate's disability is treated sensitively and necessary information is shared only with appropriate staff.

Use of a Laptop

The school's Word Processor in Exams Policy governs allocation and operation. A word processor may be provided where it meets an established need and reflects normal way of working, subject to temporary-injury and late-needs exceptions. A specialist report, EHCP, fixed typing-speed threshold or completion of 24 TTRS levels is not a universal prerequisite.

Relevant needs may include a learning difficulty, physical or sensory disability, medical condition, poor or illegible handwriting, or difficulty planning and organising responses by hand. Preference, faster typing or laptop use at home alone does not justify the arrangement. The school provides tailored practice and considers whether typing is effective for the candidate.

A word processor without additional assistance is centre-delegated. A candidate may type extended responses and handwrite shorter answers where appropriate. Word processing in non-examination assessment is standard practice unless the specification prohibits it. It does not automatically confer extra time.

IT staff allocate, maintain and test school-provided examination devices in liaison with the SENDCo and Exams Officer. Necessary examination provision is not dependent on a family supplying or insuring equipment. Personal classroom-device rules do not override required examination support. Handwriting practice is considered individually and does not justify withholding an adjustment.

Before each series, IT staff test the actual examination configuration. Candidates must not be able to access unauthorised stored data, communication, applications, internet services, AI or writing-assistance tools. Check the word processor, operating system, browsers and other accessible software; application choice, including Notepad, does not establish security by itself.

Disable predictive text, spellcheck and grammar assistance unless the candidate has the necessary permission under the scribe rules or the specification expressly permits the function. Approved computer-reading or speech-recognition functions follow their own evidence, approval and cover-sheet rules. AI tools are not permitted on examination word processors.

Devices must be in working order, with adequate battery capacity or suitable power arrangements. Candidates save regularly and staff enable secure autosave where appropriate. Provide a tested spare-device and recovery procedure that protects the candidate's work and records any disruption.

Each script page must identify the centre number, candidate number and unit or component code and must be numbered. Use at least 12-point text and double spacing where practicable. Where the software cannot insert headers or footers, supervise the candidate adding the details to the printout without re-reading or changing answers.

Print after the examination under secure supervision, with the candidate present to confirm that the printed work is theirs. Attach typed responses to any handwritten answer booklet, include any cover sheet required by the awarding organisation and dispatch securely. Retained electronic copies must be protected from alteration and unauthorised access.

Rooming is based on need, disturbance, screen visibility and compliant supervision. A word processor does not automatically require a separate room. Where another room is used, provide the required invigilator and observe the applicable ICE ratios and facilitator rules.

Frequently asked questions:

What does normal way of working mean

It is the appropriate, evidenced support a candidate normally uses to address their difficulties. It may be established in lessons, support sessions, internal tests or mocks and may vary by subject. It is not a requirement to use the same arrangement in every assessment. Temporary and late-emerging needs have specific JCQ exceptions.

Which tests are used

The appointed assessor selects current, nationally standardised tests appropriate to the candidate's age and the arrangement requested. The school's assessment inventory records the exact edition, age limits, skills assessed and standard-score requirements. Not every arrangement requires standardised testing, and a screening result alone does not establish eligibility.

How do candidates get help

Contact the SENDCo through the school office for queries about evidence, decisions or practice. For urgent matters close to or during an examination, also contact the Exams Officer. Candidates should alert the invigilator immediately if an expected arrangement is missing.

Deadlines and late needs

For June 2027 GCSE and GCE examinations, the published modified-paper ordering deadline is 31 January 2027 and the AAO access-arrangement application deadline is 21 March 2027. The Exams Officer maintains and communicates an annual calendar for all series and qualifications, including any earlier internal evidence deadlines.

A temporary injury requiring a scribe follows the relevant online process, with a typed statement confirming the injury and need and a completed scribe cover sheet. Other temporary arrangements follow their own evidence requirements; this policy does not impose a medical letter in every case.

Modified-paper orders are checked by subject and component for every series. For late needs affecting modified papers, the Exams Officer contacts the awarding organisation promptly to identify a suitable authorised solution rather than assuming a standard paper will be accessible.

Special-consideration requests follow the applicable awarding-organisation criteria and deadlines. For the June 2027 GCSE/GCE series, the published final deadline is 30 June 2027. Evidence is appropriate to the circumstances; a medical certificate is not a universal condition of eligibility.

Other individual arrangements and private candidates

The SENDCo considers modified papers, alternative rooming, reading aids, prompting, practical assistance, medical monitoring and other adjustments according to individual need and current rules. Obtain the prescribed evidence and approval and consult subject teachers where assistance could affect an assessment objective.

Where approved, a medical-monitoring phone is managed under JCQ 5.19 with the required Form 9 and online approval, held and provided under individual supervision for the permitted purpose. It does not confer extra time automatically.

Alternative-site examinations and remote invigilation are different arrangements. The Exams Officer follows the current CAP and awarding-organisation processes. Remote invigilation requires the relevant exceptional approval and must not be treated as centre-delegated alternative-site provision.

Roles responsibilities and contingencies

The Head of Centre is accountable for regulatory compliance, appoints and verifies assessors, provides sufficient resources and SENDCo time, and ensures regular CPD. Senior leaders support complex decisions, appeals, staff cover and implementation.

The SENDCo leads identification, evidence, assessment coordination, arrangement decisions and review. Teaching and support staff provide relevant observations and implement support. The Exams Officer coordinates applications, approvals, modified papers, deadlines, rooming, invigilation, incidents and secure examination delivery.

The IT lead secures and tests examination devices, script saving, printing and recovery. The DPO oversees lawful information handling. The policy owner keeps role-based contacts and nominated deputies current and accessible through the school office.

The Head of Centre ensures that invigilators and facilitators are appropriately trained and understand permitted and prohibited assistance. Retain training content and attendance records. Agency training and DBS arrangements do not replace the Centre's briefing on current rules and candidate-specific arrangements.

The Exams Contingency Policy covers SENDCo or assessor absence, missing evidence or approvals, unavailable modified papers, facilitator shortages, inaccessible rooms and device or printing failure. Deputies must have appropriate competence and secure access to the necessary records. The Exams Officer and senior leaders test the arrangements before each series.

Appeals and complaints

Candidates and parents or carers may seek an explanation of a centre decision and appeal a refusal, alteration or withdrawal of access arrangements, or a centre decision about special consideration. The school provides its internal appeals procedure in an accessible form.

Submit an appeal to the Head of Centre through the school office, identifying the decision, reasons for disagreement and relevant evidence. The school provides assistance or an accessible alternative where a written submission would create a barrier.

The Head of Centre arranges review by a suitably competent person who was not responsible for the disputed decision. The review considers the current regulations, evidence, candidate's needs and assessment requirements. Its written outcome states the reasons, any action to be taken and any further available route.

The school acknowledges and determines an appeal promptly. The timetable is set according to the next assessment and external deadline, communicated to the candidate, and expedited for urgent cases. A general SEND complaint response period must not delay a decision needed for an imminent examination.

Where the disputed decision is an awarding-organisation decision, the Exams Officer explains and follows the relevant appeal route and deadline with the candidate. JCQ does not decide individual candidate arrangements directly with parents or carers. General complaints about administration follow the school's complaints procedure without replacing the examination-decision appeal route.

Privacy record keeping and policy links

Candidates are informed that applications may be processed through AAO and are given accessible privacy information explaining the purpose, information used, recipients, lawful basis, retention and rights. The school does not require the obsolete JCQ candidate personal-data consent or data-protection confirmation forms.

The DPO documents the appropriate Article 6 lawful basis and Article 9 condition for special-category data, any relevant Data Protection Act 2018 Schedule 1 condition and any required appropriate policy document. The absence of a JCQ consent form does not remove the school's data-protection obligations.

Maintain secure individual candidate records, application outcomes, teacher evidence, required forms, relevant specialist reports, assessor qualification evidence, review decisions and incident records. Candidates and parents or carers are informed how to contact the DPO through the school office.

Read this policy with the school's Examinations, Exams Disability, Word Processor in Exams, Invigilator Procedures, Exams Contingency, Exams Cyber Security, Malpractice, SEND, Accessibility, Data Protection and Records Retention policies, and its applicable NEA/coursework and internal appeals procedures.

Regulatory sources for 2026 to 2027

- [JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments updated March 2026 and continued for 2026-27](#)
- [JCQ confirmation in the 16 September 2026 newsletter](#)
- [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres effective 1 September 2026](#)
- [JCQ Instructions for Conducting Examinations effective 1 September 2026](#)
- [JCQ supplementary access arrangements guidance March 2026](#)
- [JCQ Key dates June 2027 examination series](#)
- [JCQ guidance when a candidate changes centre](#)
- [JCQ current access arrangements and special consideration resources](#)
- [Equality Act 2010 including sections 6 20 85 and 96 and Schedules 10 and 13](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014 section 66](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice](#)
- [ICO guidance on special-category data](#)