

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS POLICY

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Purpose

This policy is aimed at qualification approved centres and learners¹ who are undertaking or have completed a QFI qualification or end-point assessment. We are committed to not only complying with all current and relevant regulation and legislation to the development and delivery of our qualifications and end-point assessments. Our aim is to facilitate open access for all learners² who are eligible for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations in assessments, whilst ensuring the assessment of understanding, knowledge, skills and competence is not compromised in any way for all of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.

This policy will also be used to ensure that QFI is dealing with all reasonable adjustments and special considerations requests in a fair and consistent manner.

This policy outlines the following:

- Arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to the delivery and assessment of our qualifications and end-point assessments
- How learners/apprentices qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- Reasonable adjustments we will accept and requests that are required prior to them being applied
- What special considerations can be granted/ applied for

Reasonable adjustments

Definition of a Reasonable Adjustment

A reasonable adjustment relates to any actions that help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which may place the learner/apprentice at a disadvantage during the delivery of a qualification or an assessment situation. They are applied to an assessment process for a qualification or an end-point assessment to enable a learner/apprentice with a disability or difficulty to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required in the qualification specification, or in the end-point assessment as set out in the applicable apprenticeship standard Assessment Plan.

When a reasonable adjustment has been applied, the activity or work produced by the learner will be assessed to the same standards and assessment requirements as the activity or work assessed of the other learners/apprentices.

Policy

QFI assessments permit reasonable adjustments to be made while minimising the need for them through its development processes. On occasion, however a reasonable adjustment to an assessment may be deemed necessary so that potential barriers can be addressed for candidates with particular requirements. Reasonable adjustments are not designed to give any advantage but simply to prevent disadvantage.

The Centre Handbook (qualifications) and the Guidance for Training Providers and Employers (end-point assessments) provide further information on the types of adjustments that may be made. Guidance is also provided to QFI appointed end-point assessors.

Reasonable adjustments are monitored and numbers reported to the Board. This monitoring feeds into our reviews and self-assessment and changes may be made to qualifications or assessment tools based upon the volume and type of reasonable adjustments made in relation to these.

¹ Includes those studying for qualifications or being assessed as part of end-point assessment for an apprenticeship

² Includes qualification learners and apprentices

As a QFI approved centre for qualifications, or contracted training provider for end-point assessment, we expect your operations to adhere to relevant requirements and legislation to promote fair access to assessment for all learners. You should where applicable, have policies and procedures in place which reflect the principles included within this document.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge, skills and ability. The standard format of assessment may not be suitable for all learners, so our aim is that our assessments and qualifications do not prevent any learners from attaining them.

At QFI, we recognise that reasonable adjustments may be required at the time of assessment where the following applies:

- a. Learners have a permanent disability or specific learning needs
- b. Learners have a temporary disability, learning needs or medical condition
- c. Learners that may require reasonable adjustments include those with the following (these may be temporary or permanent):
 - Physical impairments
 - Auditory impairments
 - Visual impairments
 - Dyslexia or literacy issues (provided literacy is not a requirement of the training or qualification)

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other learners that qualify for reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments are available to ensure all learners receive recognition of their achievement providing there is evidence that the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. These arrangements should not be used to make assessments easier for learners or give learners a head start and should not disadvantage other learners.

QFI should be notified QFI at the point of registration of any reasonable adjustment that may be required. We will contact providers to obtain further information as necessary.

All requests for reasonable adjustments will be reviewed on an individual basis and all the information received will be considered.

Principles of Granting Reasonable Adjustments

QFI will support its approved centres making these reasonable adjustments by ensuring that the following applies:

- Reasonable adjustments granted provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their attainment
- The reasonable adjustment compensates for any disadvantage imposed by the disability or difficulty but do not disadvantage others
- Certificates issued do not mislead anyone regarding the learner's attainment
- The assessments were rigorous and fair
- The assessment activity is valid and is measurable against the assessment criteria
- Assessment results are reliable.

Reasonable adjustments that may be requested are as follows:

Modified enlarged manuals or assessment papers

For learners with a visual impairment where enlarged text would allow them access to fair delivery and assessment (pre-assessment notice is required).

Assessment extension time

An allowance of 25% extra time is permissible for assessment papers or activities (where feasible) if the learner has learning difficulties or other condition such as dyslexia, supported by an assessment report evidencing the need for the adjustment.

Use of a reader

For learners with a visual impairment whose reading skills have been tested and defined as below average. The reader is a responsible adult who reads the questions to the learner but must not be the course tutor, assessor, relative, friend or peer to the learner. The reader must only read the instructions and the questions, they must not explain or clarify. They may if requested repeat instructions, read back what has been written or give the spelling of a word.

Use of a scribe

For learners who have learning difficulties and are unable to write legibly. The scribe is a responsible adult who writes down the learners dictated answers to the questions, they must not be the course tutor, assessor, relative, friend or peer to the learner. The use of computer software that produces a hard copy of the learners dictated speech is permissible.

Use of a sign interpreter

For learners who communicate by using sign language. The interpreter is a responsible adult who is proficient in the use of sign language, they must not be the course tutor, assessor, relative, friend or peer to the learner. The interpreter must only sign the instructions and the questions, they must not explain or clarify. They may if requested repeat instructions, learners are only permitted to sign their answers in coursework and exams where the answers required involve single words.

Centres may reject requests in situations as follows:

- Reasonable adjustments must not invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the qualification specification or the End-point assessment requirements as set out in the apprenticeship standard Assessment plan
- The content and delivery of the chosen course of study would prevent the learner from fulfilling a major section of the course affecting the assessment requirements
- Must not give the learner an unfair advantage compared to other learners for whom a reasonable adjustment has not been granted.

Procedure to Request a Reasonable Adjustment

Centre co-ordinators, tutors and assessors must endeavour to identify learner needs as soon as possible to request the appropriate adjustments are reviewed by QFI, once approved these can be implemented.

The process for requesting access arrangements and the evidence required may vary dependent upon the qualification specification or end-point assessment as set out in the applicable apprenticeship standard Assessment plan, the learner's circumstances and any other factors that need to be taken into consideration.

Reasonable adjustments may cover all the course content and not just the assessment. We ask that a request is submitted to QFI prior to the course starting, if the adjustment is to an assessment paper a minimum of 14 days' notice is required. All arrangements for adjustments must be approved by QFI before being implemented.

For qualifications the QFI Reasonable Adjustments Request form is available to complete and submit through Quartz.

For end-point assessment the QFI Reasonable Adjustments Request form is available on ACE360. All requests for reasonable adjustments will be reviewed on an individual basis and all the information received will be considered.

QFI will not approve any adjustments that may compromise the assessment criteria and that may disadvantage other learners.

Note that where hearing, sight, able bodied or other are required by the job role that the qualification or assessment relates to, then a reasonable adjustment will not be made. Candidates should not be taking a qualification or apprenticeship for which they are not suitable.

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute malpractice and the resulting disqualification of the learner.

Special Consideration

Definition of a Special Consideration

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to the outcome of a learner's assessment. A special consideration is to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of the learner's control, for example disturbances during an assessment event which has had, or is reasonably likely to have materially affected the learner's ability to:

- (a) take an assessment, or
- (b) demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment³

A special consideration can be granted after an assessment has taken place if a learner may have been disadvantaged.

Special considerations may be applied in the form of an allowance of marks, where the assessment is mark based. The size of the mark allowance being determined by the timing, nature and extent of illness or other circumstance. Special considerations may be applied at the time of the assessment, or after the assessment in the case of mark-based adjustments.

Where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate a skill or competence or where criteria have to be fully met, for example an Apprenticeship Standard or a qualification that confers a Licence to Practice, it may not be possible to apply a special consideration unless other assessment(s) can evidence that such criteria have been met.

In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to re-take the assessment at a later date.

Note that for end-point assessment the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) allow for minor adjustments to be made, for example extending the duration of an assessment. Any proposed special consideration that may involve a change to a grade must be requested to the External Quality Assurer (EQA) who may need to consult and gain approval for IfATE.

³ A special consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of the Learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have materially affected the Learner's ability to: (a) take an assessment, or (b) demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment. (From Ofqual, General Conditions of Recognition)

Principles of Granting Special Considerations

Learners must have attended the course for the appropriate amount of guided learning hours and have been fully prepared by the tutor to take the assessment. If their performance in the assessment or in the production of coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control, a special consideration may be granted for a learner if they have temporarily experienced any of the following:

- Illness or injury
- An event out of the learner's control which has or is likely to have an impact on the learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their levels of attainment during the assessment.

Any special considerations granted must:

- Treat all learners fairly
- Require the learner to fully meet the assessment requirements
- Maintain the relevance, reliability and comparability of the assessment.

They must not invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the qualification specification or apprenticeship standard.

Special considerations should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should it mislead an employer/training provider regarding the learner's achievements for certification. The learner's results must reflect the achievement in assessment and not their potential ability.

If a special consideration is granted this may result in a post-assessment adjustment to the marks of the learner. The adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Procedure to Request a Special Consideration

Following an assessment, a centre co-ordinator, tutor or assessor may wish to request a special consideration, in recognition of the difficulty a learner has encountered. Where this is during a test this should be flagged on the Invigilation Report. The QFI special considerations form is available to complete and submit via Quartz and on ACE360. This should be submitted within 7 working days of the assessment taking place.

Please indicate on the form the exact nature of the adverse condition(s) that you consider make the learner eligible for a special consideration, supply copies of any appropriate evidence to support your request. Please note that there will be occasions when learners are too unwell or distressed to complete an assessment and occasionally learners do under perform. Provide supporting evidence.

This may include one or more of the following:

- Statement from the invigilator/verifier
- Medical or psychological evidence

This form must be used by centres to apply for special consideration on behalf of learners. Applications must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Applications must be submitted to QFI by an authorised manager of the centre and made as soon as possible after the assessment (and no more than seven working days of the end of the assessment period). Special considerations will not be considered once learner achievement has been claimed and certificated. Forms must be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence.

If the request for a special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed based on the evidence that was submitted. A successful request of a special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

QFI will not approve any special considerations that may compromise the assessment criteria and that may disadvantage other learners.
Failure to comply with this policy may constitute malpractice and the resulting disqualification of the learner.

Centre Responsibility

It is important that all centre personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of all QFI qualifications and end-point assessments, are fully aware of the contents within this policy and ensure their learners are made aware of the policy when undertaking or completing any of our qualifications.

When an EQA visits a centre, they may ask personnel and learners some questions to identify if they are aware of the policies contents and purpose.

Arrangements Not Covered Within This Policy

If any circumstances arise relating to internal or external assessment not covered within this policy, you should contact QFI to discuss prior to the assessment taking place.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline a request for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration please refer to our Appeals Policy, this is available on our website or you can request a copy by contacting us.

Monitoring and Review

This policy and its procedures will be reviewed regularly for improvements as part of our quality assurance requirements. This will ensure it is fit for purpose, reflects the services we deliver to our approved centres/ training providers and we provide services which are relevant to the requirements of individual needs.

Contact Details

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