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Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration Policy

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Author(s)

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# Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy

## 1) Responsibility

1. Responsibility for the operation of this policy lies with the [RESPONSIBLE CENTRE PERSON TITLE].
2. Awarding organisations have a duty to ensure that the integrity of their qualifications and assessment is maintained at all times. At the same time they and their centres have an equal duty to ensure that the rights of individual Learners to access qualifications and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld.
3. The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Awarding organisations are required to make reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements which may place disabled Learners and Learners with additional learning needs at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other Learners.

## 2) General policy statement

1. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] have a duty to ensure individual Learners can access qualifications and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] ensures that individual Learners can access qualifications and assessments in two ways:
* by recognising the diverse needs of Learners when qualifications and assessments are designed.
* by making appropriate access arrangements or reasonable adjustments to standard assessments, wherever this is required to enable access.
1. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] will also give special consideration to assessment results.
2. This Policy details:
* the principles that apply when determining and meeting a Learner’s need for an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment.
* how to request an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment.
* the procedure for special consideration.

## 3) Access Arrangements

1. Access arrangements must be agreed before an assessment takes place to facilitate an equal opportunity for the Learner with specific needs. Examples include (but are not exhaustive), special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries. This allows the Learner to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment.
2. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual Learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
3. Access arrangements are the principal way in which [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] are compliant with the duty under the Equality Act (2010) to make ‘reasonable adjustments’

## 4) Reasonable Adjustment

* 1. Reasonable adjustments must be agreed before an assessment takes place and correctly documented by the centre.
	2. The Equality Act (2010) requires [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] to make reasonable adjustments where a Learner, who is disabled, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. Section 6 of the Equality Act defines disability as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.
	3. A reasonable adjustment is intended to give additional support to those who require additional support to complete the assessment and/or qualification. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] cannot change the standards required within the qualifications. However, [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] can work with the Centre to determine specific actions which will allow Learners a fair and equal chance of accessing assessment. For example:
		+ Allowing Learners extra time to complete an assessment
		+ Adapting assessment materials e.g. large print
		+ Providing a reader during an assessment
	4. A reasonable adjustment will depend on the individual, their circumstances, the cost and practicalities of the adjustment as well as health and safety concerns of the Learner. The assessment cannot be changed to make it easier, nor can the Learner be given an unfair advantage over others. It is best if the Learner can explain their need so the adjustment can reflect the normal way of working. Any adjustments must be auditable and be able to be externally quality assured.

## 5) Special Considerations

* 1. A Special Consideration is a post-assessment adjustment reflecting an unforeseen circumstance which could affect a Learner’s performance during or near the time of an assessment and/or examination.
	2. Special considerations may be given following dated examinations or assessments for Learners who are present at the nominated date and time but may have been disadvantaged, for example, by temporary illness or adverse circumstances during the assessment.
	3. In the case of an on-demand or centre devised assessment, the assessment should be rescheduled.
	4. Examples of unforeseen circumstances include:
		+ Temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment.
		+ Bereavement at the time of the assessment (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible).
		+ Domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment.
		+ serious disturbance during an examination, particularly where recorded material is being used.
		+ Other accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper, failure of IT equipment, failure of materials to arrive on time.
		+ Failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements
		+ Consideration can be given on a case by case situation as this is not an exhaustive list
	5. Such circumstances do not normally apply to [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] assignment tasks and portfolio assessments which, because of their performance criteria requirements, are usually completed largely at the Learner’s convenience.
	6. Such circumstances may not affect the assessment outcome; therefore, it may be more appropriate to reschedule the assessment to enable fair access.
	7. Special consideration cannot give the Learner an unfair advantage and must not mislead regarding a Learner’s achievements. The Learner’s results must reflect their actual assessment achievement not their potential or estimated ability.
	8. All Centres are required to have their own guidance on Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations and to ensure that all staff within the Centre are familiar with the content.

## 6) Key Principles

* 1. Learners are recruited with integrity
* Centres must ensure that Learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and ensure that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. Whilst Health issues are disclosed at the discretion of the Learner, Centres must be made aware of any such issues affecting the Learner if Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations are requested. These cannot be anticipated or arranged by the Centre if the Centre is unaware of the Learner’s needs.
* It is important that Learners are entered for a qualification at the right level and that, where appropriate, the support that will need to be made available to the Learner to facilitate access to the qualification(s) is identified.
	1. The integrity of the qualifications must be maintained
* Assessment arrangements must be considered in the context of the assessment standards for each qualification. Assessment arrangements must not compromise these standards or undermine the integrity of the qualification. There are certain circumstances, where it may not be possible to provide an access arrangement or adjustment, without compromising the integrity of the assessment and the qualification. In these cases, the Learner would not be permitted to carry out the assessment for the relevant unit and as a result the Learner could not achieve in that particular unit and would therefore not be awarded a certificate for the overall qualification but could achieve a unitary accreditation certificate for some elements of the qualification.
	1. Arrangements should be tailored to meet a Learner’s individual needs
* Arrangements must be provided based on the individual needs of Learners.
* As part of the overall support offered to them, Learners must have an assessment plan to ensure that the correct level of support is provided for each assessment.
* There must be documented evidence of a Learner’s assessment needs.
	1. Arrangements must reflect, as far as possible, the Learner’s normal way of working and producing work
	2. Assessment arrangements must reflect the normal learning or working practice of a Learner.
* Learners may use mechanical, electronic and other aids that are either commercially available, or available from specialist suppliers, and can feasibly be used in the Centre’s premises. For example, if a Learner with dyslexia normally uses a laptop computer with spellchecker in class to overcome writing difficulties, then this should be the assessment arrangement provided in the assessment. However, there may be situations where a Learner’s particular way of working in the learning environment is not acceptable in an assessment. For this reason, it is very important that Learners are aware of, and have practice in, working methods that reflects the arrangements made in any particular assessment.
* Learners should be fully involved in any decisions about assessment arrangements. This will ensure that individual needs can be met, while still applying the assessment criteria for a particular qualification.
* Requests will be considered on a case by case basis

## 7) Process

* 1. [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] Centres must have their own policy in relation to access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations. This policy must be followed before referring to [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] for further guidance. The [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] approval and external quality assurance processes will monitor this policy and how Centre staff, associates and Learners are informed, and the way in which the policy operates.
	2. Centres must request approval of Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations by contacting [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME]. Centres must inform their assigned EQA as soon as an application for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations are made. In the event of an application for Access Arrangement, Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations, a Centre must provide the following information:
* Learner name and assessment of their need together with supporting evidence
* Centre name
* The qualification and assessment affected
	1. For access arrangements and reasonable adjustments:
* The reason for the adjustment and why the usual assessment is inappropriate
* The proposed adjustment
* Collation of evidence to support the reasonable adjustment
	1. For special considerations:
* The impact of the unforeseen circumstance on the Learner
* Documented evidence to provide an auditable record of the details of the special consideration made
	1. Requests for reasonable adjustments must be made at least 10 working days in advance of the assessment activity. Reasonable adjustments must be approved by [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] at least 5 working days before the assessment activity takes place.
	2. No prior approval is needed for:
* Amplification equipment,
* Bilingual dictionary without extra time,
* Coloured overlays,
* Low vision aid/ magnifier,
* Optical character reader (OCR) scanners,
* Supervised rest breaks,
* Transcript,
* Word processor
	1. The use of a reasonable adjustment must not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a Learner’s work. The same assessment standard must still be applied in order to confirm the competency of the Learner and maintain consistency in assessment.
	2. Requests for special considerations must be made within 5 working days of the assessment having taken place and before the issuing of results.
		+ A decision to award special consideration will be based on the evidence submitted including the severity of the circumstances and the nature of the assessment.
		+ Applications for special consideration cannot be made after results have been issued under any circumstances.

## 8) Appeals

Appeals against a decline of a request for reasonable adjustment or special consideration are dealt with through the ***Appeals Policy***.

## 9) Malpractice

A centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to assessments set out by [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead to [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME] withholding the Learner’s result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

* 1. Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME], where this is required
	2. Exceeding the allowances agreed with [CENTRE/COMPANY NAME]
	3. Agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by evidence
	4. Failing to maintain records of access arrangements and special considerations for audit

## 10) Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the [RESPONSIBLE CENTRE PERSON TITLE]