



# Access to Fair Assessment, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Reasonable adjustments are approved and set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

## 2. Definition of 'reasonable adjustment'

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. It is made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disadvantaged learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements; for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner
- changing the assessment method; for example, from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- using assistive technology, such as screen-reading or voice-activated software
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

Awarding bodies and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

## 3. Definition of 'special consideration'

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of his/her control

which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, nor should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his / her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres should note that:

- where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a License to Practise, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.
- in some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

#### **4. Principles of making reasonable adjustments**

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment. The adjustments:

- should not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- should not give the learners an unfair advantage
- should reflect the learner's normal way of working
- should be based on the individual need of the learner

#### **5. Glossary**

In an educational context, the term "assessment" refers to a wide range of tools used for different purposes, such as:

- to measure learners' knowledge of a particular area or subject (what they know);
- to make an informative judgement on learners' competence (what they can do) and attitudes (what drive them to achieve);
- to evaluate learners' progression (what they have learnt so far); or
- to analyse learners' intellectual (how they learn, what learning difficulties they have), social (what other commitments/barriers they have) and emotional (what frame of mind they have) makeup.

#### **6. Types of assessment**

The type of assessment tools used would depend on the purpose of the assessment. However, any tools used must follow the same principles of fairness to ensure that all learners have access to the same equal opportunities and avoid any potential discrimination risks. The principles are:

- authenticity;
- reliability;
- currency;
- fitness for purpose;
- fairness;
- validity;
- sufficiency;
- transparency.

### **6.1 Authenticity**

All assessments carried out must be completed by the learners themselves. For example, a person sitting a summative assessment such as a final test for the learner is unfair, hence identity checks being robust.

### **6.2 Fairness**

The assessment system and its processes must not disadvantage or discriminate the learner. You may need to adjust the system to accommodate the learner's needs. Please, see below for a description of the reasonable adjustment and special considerations.

### **6.3 Reliability**

The assessment outcomes must present an accurate evaluation of what the learners have been assessed on. For example, if a learner does two initial assessments in English using two different systems and the results of the assessments show this learner to be working at two different levels (one shows level 1 and the other one shows level 2), then one of these systems is not reliable (or both) as one would expect both systems to show the learner to be working at the same level.

### **6.4 Validity**

The method or type of assessment used must measure what it was designed to measure. For example, using an English screener is not a valid assessment method to build up a programme in English as the screener was only designed to give an overview, a rough idea of the learners' English skills. To build up a programme in English, the learners must complete an assessment that gives a detailed view of their skills. In other words, the assessment methods used must be appropriate to the requirements of the programme or qualification.

### **6.5 Currency**

The assessment method may need to be updated due to a change in the curriculum. For example, the move of the Legacy Functional Skills suite in English and Maths to the Reformed Functional Skills suite required assessment tools to be amended to include new functional skills elements. Currency also refers to the type of evidence submitted by

the learners for assessment. A tutor cannot make an accurate judgement on the actual skills of the learners by assessing some work created five years ago.

### **6.6 Sufficiency**

The assessment method must be exhaustive enough for one to be confident of the assessment outcome to be an accurate picture of the learners' skills. For example, how many multiplications should learners carry out for one to be confident that the learners are able to carry out multiplications?

### **6.7 Fitness for purpose**

The assessment methods used must be for the purpose of measuring an intended area.

### **6.8 Transparency**

It is clear to all parties (the learners, the tutors, the internal quality assurers, the awarding body) what has been assessed and what the outcomes of the assessment were. It is then important to keep records of any assessment activities as evidence of current level, progression etc. The reasons for special considerations must also be clear and documented.

The purpose of the above principles is to ensure that all assessment methods used are fair and meet the Company's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.

## **7. Summary - Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations**

The Company recognises that some candidates require alternative arrangements for their examinations. This may be the result of a disability, medical condition or for religious reasons. The Equality Act 2010 (previously the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) aims to end discrimination which many people with a disability face and it is now unlawful for Examination Institutes, among others, to discriminate against people with a disability. Examinations should be a fair test of an individual's knowledge and what they are able to do. If someone has a disability or learning difficulty, the usual format of the examinations may not be suitable. Adjustments may need to be made for them. They allow an individual to show his/her ability and knowledge without being disadvantaged by the assessment format itself. We seek to provide equal access to examinations for all candidates, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers and that any reasonable adjustments for candidates preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification. We will endeavour to accommodate the needs of candidates with a particular examination requirement, according to individual circumstances, ensuring such candidates are not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates and that certificates accurately reflect candidate attainment. We will give every consideration to requested extra time and other adjustments, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to the examination and candidate attainment. However, all requests will be considered on the information received.

Requests for extra time or any other adjustments which do not meet the Reasonable Adjustments Policy will be declined.

## **8. How to make a 'reasonable adjustment' request**

Reasonable adjustments can be requested by contacting your Tutor. The Tutor will then contact the Internal Quality Assurer or the Head of Central Support, who will make the adjustment request.

### Contact details

Contact	Address/Tel No
Tutor	See the centre's contact list
Head of Quality	Think Employment Limited 140 Victoria Street Grimsby N E Lincs DN31 1NX Tel: 01472 898221
Head of Central Support (also known for the awarding bodies as the Centre Manager)/Lead IQA	Think Employment Limited 140 Victoria Street Grimsby N E Lincs DN31 1NX Tel: 01472 898221

### 9. Review of the policy

A Senior Manager will review this policy annually or more frequently where there are significant changes in circumstances.

<b>To be disseminated to:</b> All Staff / Service Users		<b>Policy Ref:</b> 013
<b>Authorised by:</b> Head of Central Support Lead IQA Head of Quality	<b>Issue Date:</b> October 2010	<b>Review Due:</b> December 2021
<b>Amendments:</b> Dec 2018 – Introduction added / Layout change Jan 2019 – No changes June 2020 – More generic term used when mentioning awarding bodies Dec 2020 – Changed Performance & Quality Manager to Head of Quality; removed “first language being English” for special consideration; changed Equality and Diversity Policy to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy May 2021 – Replaced Head of Operations to Head of Quality		