

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Introduction

This policy is primarily aimed at centres and learners who are delivering/registered on, or have taken an Occupational Awards approved qualification or apprenticeship end-point assessment. It is also for use by Occupational Awards to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests in a consistent & timely manner.

This policy outlines:

- Arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to Occupational Awards qualifications and apprenticeship end-point assessments
- How learners qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- The reasonable adjustments that Occupational Awards will permit and those where permission is required in advance before they are applied
- The special considerations that can be given to learners.
- The process for applying for a reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration

Occupational Awards Responsibilities

The Head of Quality & Compliance is accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy. The Equality Act 2010 sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person. The Act requires Awarding Organisations to make reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements which place disabled learners at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to learners who are not disabled. Qualification regulators state within their conditions of recognition that Awarding Organisations must take all reasonable steps to remove any disadvantage to learners which is unjustifiable, and to maintain records of any disadvantage which it believes is justifiable, and the reasons why.

Centre Responsibilities

It is important that anyone involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Occupational Awards qualifications or delivery of an apprenticeship that OAL will end-point assess and all Occupational Awards learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

Below we outline the process for Reasonable Adjustments and when they would apply, and the outline the process for Special Consideration.

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Reasonable Adjustments

Definition

- A Reasonable Adjustment is an action taken to ensure that equal access and access arrangements are carried out where applicable. Under the Equality Act 2010, education and training providers and an Awarding Organisation have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people so they are not at a substantial disadvantage when carrying out an assessment.

What can be considered for Reasonable Adjustments

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 an assessment situation. It is made to allow an assessment for a qualification or end-point assessment that enables a disadvantaged learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills or understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification or end-point assessment.

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 a specific amount of 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

Reasonable adjustments are approved or 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.

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Occupational Awards 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

Two ways to Apply for Reasonable Adjustments

There are two routes through which a learner may be granted adjustments to assessment. These routes are to:

- Use reasonable adjustments permitted at the discretion of the centre
In some cases, Occupational Awards may permit the centre to implement reasonable adjustments without seeking prior permission. In these cases, Occupational Awards requires centres to keep records for inspection (including any declaration that are signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Centre Co-ordinator). Appendix 1 gives details of what can be approved by the centre, and what needs to be applied for through OAL
- Apply to Occupational Awards for permission
Centres should keep records of adjustments they have permitted and those they have requested from Occupational Awards. These records should normally be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they apply.

It is recommended that centres nominate members of staff to take responsibility for demonstrating the implementation and recording of adjustments to assessments for monitoring by Occupational Awards or the regulatory authorities. The Reasonable Adjustments Permission table (appendix 1) at the end of this document shows when either of these apply under OAL's policy.

Process for Requesting Reasonable Adjustments

If a centre is making a request on behalf of its learners it should complete a Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Request form via the OAL Portal/EPA Live and submit it directly to Occupational Awards with the relevant supporting information. It should be emailed to the Head of Quality & Compliance at this email address – quality@oawards.co.uk.

This submission should include, but may not be limited to:

- The learner's name and Occupational Awards registration number
- The nature of, and rationale for, the request
- Supporting information/evidence (e.g. medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information)

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- If the learner has been receiving additional learning support as part of their learning or apprenticeship programme, then we need details of what support they have been receiving including in the form
- Specific detail on what you are requesting as a reasonable adjustment for the learner – so a request for additional time would say “25% additional time for the following reason.....” and not just “extra time needed”

Learners can, in exceptional circumstances, make requests directly to Occupational Awards.

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted no later than 10 days before the assessment. For End Point Assessment requests they must be sent at the point of Gateway approval and before any bookings are logged on the system. Appendix 2 outlines the recommended approach for applying reasonable adjustments to End Point Assessment components – please refer to it when considering what you need to apply for your learner(s).

OAL may also request further information if the original form does not have sufficient information on the exact reasonable adjustment/special consideration required; and the rationale behind it, together with any supporting information outlining what the centre has been providing for additional learning support during the learner/apprentices’ learning programme (if applicable).

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Special Consideration

Definition:

- Special Considerations are access arrangements taken when an individual's examination performance is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control. Special consideration can be a pre-examination or post-examination adjustment that compensates individuals who are suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the examination.

What can be included as a Special Considerations?

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

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

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control and 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, neither 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 and end-point assessments that confer a License to Practice, 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.

Applying for Special Considerations

All requests for special consideration must be submitted to Occupational Awards for approval. We will review the circumstances and evidence surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage.

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A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment
- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification or end-point assessment that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment
- A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:
 - no evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
 - any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
 - preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

Process for Requesting Special Consideration

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than 5 working days after the assessment, or after results have been issued. Centres should complete the form in the OAL portal/EPA Live and return by email to quality@oawards.co.uk. Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- The application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the centre co-coordinator
- Medical evidence comes to light about a learner's condition, which demonstrates that the learner must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment
- In cases of onscreen assessments or other methods where results are immediately available.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

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Approvals will follow the principles below:

- Adjustments to assessment should not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills. The learner must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or end-point assessment or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Whilst we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a learner with a disability or difficulty is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, in terms of access to assessment, there is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice which is defined as a competence standard. All learners' performance must be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered, but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage over other learners. The qualification or end-point assessment of a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of the learner.
- Decisions about adjustments to assessment should be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual learner, the assessment requirements of the qualification or end-point assessment and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. The learner should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment should reflect the learner's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.
- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by the Head of Centre or a member of staff with delegated authority.

Timescale for Occupational Awards response to both

- Occupational Awards aim to respond to all requests within 5 working days of receipt. If Occupational Awards is unable to respond within 5 working days, Occupational Awards will provide the person/organisation submitting the request with an estimated response date.
- We will provide a copy of the signed and authorised approval form by email and upload a copy to the OAL portal so there is a full electronic record. This can be found under the

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learner documents tab.

- For End Point Assessment approvals, the approval will be applied to the specific component on EPA Live by the Head of EPA Operations, who will also upload the approved request form & evidence in the related section, and will notify the Independent Assessor who will then apply the Reasonable Adjustment/Special Consideration with the apprentice at the time of the Assessment.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against a decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to the OAL Appeals Policy.

Storage and Use of Information

All information and data collected regarding any reasonable adjustments or special considerations made to Occupational Awards Ltd will be stored securely on the database system. This information will be stored against either a centre or learner. This information will only be made available to relevant persons. Information may be used to review associated processes and policies

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Appendix 1: OAL Reasonable Adjustments Permissions Table

This table outlines some of the decisions on reasonable adjustments that can be made within centres. However, centres have a duty to seek advice from Occupational Awards in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

- Permitted – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre
- Apply – Apply to Occupational Awards for permission

Reasonable adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 33%	Permitted	Apply
Extra time in excess of 33%	Permitted	Apply
Supervised rest breaks	Permitted	Apply
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Permitted	Permitted
Separate accommodation within the centre	Permitted	Permitted
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Permitted	Permitted
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	Permitted	Apply
Use of assisted software	Permitted/Apply *	Apply
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in large font	Permitted	Apply

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Assessment of material in Braille	Apply	Apply
Language modified assessment materials	Apply	Apply
Assessment materials in BSL/ISL	Apply	Apply
Assessment material on coloured paper	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in audio format	Permitted	Apply
Use of ICT	Permitted/Apply *	Apply
Responses using electronic devices	Permitted	Apply
Responses in BSL/ISL	Permitted	Apply
Responses using in Braille	Permitted	Apply
Reader	Permitted	Apply
Scribe	Permitted	Apply
BSL/ISL/English interpreter	Permitted	Apply
Prompter	Permitted	Apply
Practical assessment	Apply	Apply
Transcriber	Permitted	Apply

* Permitted at the discretion of the centre unless ICT is implicitly or explicitly excluded in the standard being assessed or in its associated assessment strategy or qualification specification or EPA plan.

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Appendix 2: EPA Reasonable adjustment matrix (Courtesy of IfATE)

1. No known disability
2. Cognitive processing need such as dyslexia, dyspraxia; a need in executive function, visual processing speed, visual perception, literacy, numeracy, verbal reasoning, verbal memory, nonverbal memory
3. Social/ communication need such autistic spectrum condition
4. Long standing illness such as cancer, epilepsy, Crohn's, IBS, Chronic Fatigue
5. A mental health condition
6. A physical need such as crutches or wheelchair user, arthritis, paraplegia, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy
7. Hearing need
8. Visual need

Assessment method	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
Reasonable adjustment						
Extra time allowance	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5	2,3,4,5,7	2,3,5,6,7
Scribe			2,6,8			
Reader			2,8			
Personal support worker in attendance	2,5,6,8	2,5,6,8	2,5,8	2,5,8	2,5,6,8	2,5,8
Timed rest breaks	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8
Bathroom breaks	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6
Voice explanation	2,8	2,8				
BSL interpreter + extra time	7	7	7	7	7	7

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Assessment method	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
Reasonable adjustment						
Assistive technology – voice recognition			2,4,6			
Assistive technology – screenreader			8			
Assistive technology – text to speech			2,4			
Flexibility with location				3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6
Flexibility of time of assessment	4	4	4	4	4	4
Flexibility within the method of assessment		6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6
Pre-recorded evidence / delivered by video link				2,3,4,5	2,3,4,5	
Permission to write notes						2,4,5
Permission to bring notes				2,4,5		2,4,5
Info presented in required format – size, font style, colour			2,8			

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Assessment method	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
Reasonable adjustment						
Individual testing			3,4,5			
Paper-based option			2,4			
Supervised assessment taken at home			3,4,5,6			
Written questions to back up verbal					2,4,5,6	2,4,5,6
Rewording of questions / clarification if needed					2,3,7	2,3,7
Time allowance for processing verbal questions					2,4,5,7	2,4,5,7
Information presented in small chunks					2,4,7	2,4,7

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