

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy.

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Section 1 – Overview of the Policy

1.1 Scope of the policy

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are using NCFE products and services and who submit requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations:

1.2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose is to set out the steps you need to follow when implementing reasonable adjustments or special considerations and the service we provide for these arrangements.

1.3 Location of the policy

You can download copies of the policy from our website: ncfe.org.uk or request copies from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk. We've also signposted the policy in our *NCFE Centre Support Guide*, and in our Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment/Controlled Assessment. These documents are available from our website or our Centre Support team.

1.4 Communication of the policy

It's important that both your personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and your learners studying our programmes are fully aware of the contents of the policy. Please ensure that you've made your colleagues and learners aware of the policy. On their centre visits, our External Moderators, External Verifiers and Quality Verifiers may check that you've not only received the policy but also made your relevant colleagues and learners aware of its contents and purpose.

1.5 Review of the policy

We'll review the policy annually and revise it as and when required in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. We reserve the right to amend the policy as and when necessary. Our review of the policy will ensure that our procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory and legislative criteria and are applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

We'll consider issues raised by you with respect to reasonable adjustments and special considerations in the on-going development of this policy and our products and services.

Section 2 – Definition

2.1 Overview

The Equality Act 2010 requires awarding bodies to make reasonable adjustments to ensure a learner who is disabled as defined in the Act are not placed at a **substantial** disadvantage in comparison to learners who are not disabled.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they're able to do, however, for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. We ensure that our qualifications and assessments do not prevent learners from taking our qualifications.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessments easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

There are 2 ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained, these are through:

- reasonable adjustments – agreed before the assessment takes place
- special considerations – applied post assessment.

2.2 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 the assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what is being assessed.

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 assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

Awarding Organisations 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.

2.3 Special considerations

Special considerations can be applied after an assessment if there is a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. Reasons for special consideration could be temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment.

Learners cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. Learners must declare their needs prior to the assessment period and all necessary reasonable adjustments arrangements must have been implemented before the time of their assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

Special consideration may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the learner, but will always be a minor adjustment as to do more may jeopardise the standard.

Where an assessment requires a competence, criterion or standard to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a Licence to Practise, **it may not be possible** to apply special consideration. It may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date or to extend the registration period so that the learner has more time to complete the assessment activity.

All learners regardless of their special consideration must still meet our minimum requirement for the award of a certificate.

2.4 Making reasonable adjustments

Adjustments to assessments must:

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

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

All Awarding Organisations and centres have a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner to show what they know and can do without compromising the assessment criteria.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, Awarding Organisations and centres need to consider the following:

- Learners should potentially be able to achieve the assessment requirements. 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/award or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards should not be altered. While Awarding Organisations should take all reasonable steps to ensure that learners with a disability or difficulty are not placed at a substantial disadvantage 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 will 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 and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage nor should it disadvantage the learner. The qualification of a learner who has had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. Vocational qualifications may lead to employment. Achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do.
- 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 and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. Centres should not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. Learners should be consulted throughout the process.

Section 3 – Our centre’s roles and responsibilities

3.1 Internal assessment

Arrangements for reasonable adjustments for the internal assessment must ensure that the resulting learner’s evidence:

- meets the performance criteria
- is assessable
- is capable of internal verification/moderation and external verification/moderation.

In cases where you’ve made arrangements for reasonable adjustments for a learner to complete the internal assessment component, please make the details available to our External Moderators, External Verifiers or Quality Verifiers during their centre visit.

3.2 External assessment

For learners completing external assessments, you’ll need to record the relevant code and details of the arrangements on the Invigilator’s or External Assessment Register and return it to us with the external assessment papers.

3.3 Delegated responsibilities to our centres

The following arrangements may be implemented by you for both the internal and external assessment components **without prior application to us**.

Please note any arrangements put in place must reflect the learner’s normal way of working.

When implementing a delegated responsibility please use **approval code RA/1** on the appropriate paperwork. **Evidence of need** must be kept in Centre files and produced on request to NCFE.

Learners sitting Functional Skills qualifications alongside GCSE/GCE qualifications

If your learner has been approved for an access arrangement via the Access arrangements online system for a GCSE or GCE qualification, NCFE will honour this approval for the Functional Skills qualifications. However the access

arrangement must also be permitted for the particular Functional Skills qualification as outlined in this policy. **Evidence of approval** must be kept in Centre files and produced on request to NCFE.

Additional information about Functional Skills access arrangements can be found within the Functional Skills criteria issued by Ofqual, and in the current JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document.

Functional Skills: Level 1 and 2

Qualification	Delegated adjustment
Maths/ICT	Sign Language Interpreter
FS English	Sign Language Interpreter (writing only)
All qualifications	Dictionary Bi-lingual dictionary with extra time of up to 25% (for the use of the dictionary) 25% extra time Word processor Supervised rest breaks Prompter Coloured overlays

Functional Skills – Entry Level

Qualification	Delegated adjustment
Maths/ICT	Sign Language Interpreter Reader Scribe
English	Sign Language Interpreter (writing only) Reader (writing only) Scribe (reading only)
All qualifications	Dictionary Bi-lingual dictionary with extra time of up to 25% (for the use of the dictionary) 25% extra time Word processor Computer reader Practical Assistant Prompter Coloured overlays Supervised rest breaks

Functional Skills English

(Speaking, Listening and Communication)

Sign Language (i.e. BSL, ISL, SSE) is permissible in the Speaking, Listening and Communication component, provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion. (It is recognised that BSL is a language in its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication where BSL is the learners’ normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards.) **No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English.**

Similarly, access to augmentative speech equipment is permissible where it reflects the learner’s normal way of working.

At a last resort, learners who are disabled under the terms of the Equality Act 2010 and have no accessible means of communication may request an exemption from the Speaking, Listening and Communication component.

V Certs

Qualification	Delegated adjustment
All	Bilingual dictionary (without extra time) Coloured overlays Sign language interpreter Supervised rest breaks Word processor Colour naming – for colour blind Learners Low vision aid/magnifier Amplification equipment Prompter

All other qualifications with External Assessments

Qualification	Delegated adjustment
Counselling	25% extra time
Food Safety in catering	Coloured overlays
Personal Licence Holders (PLH)	Supervised rest breaks
Compliance (Health and Safety)	Word processor
Cleaning Principles	Reader
	Scribe
	Use of a bilingual dictionary
	Prompter

3.4 Applying for a reasonable adjustment

If you need to put any arrangements in place which are above and beyond what is delegated as detailed in 3.3, you'll need our approval. To do this, please complete our 'Request for Reasonable Adjustments' web form which is available on our website www.ncfe.org.uk. Please submit your completed form and accompanying evidence.

Each request should indicate the:

- nature of the learner's disability/learning need
- special assessment arrangements requested
- supporting evidence or a copy of the evidence.

Approved reasonable adjustment requests that can be implemented at centre level will be valid for 24 months from approval and do **not** need to be requested again for the specific qualification they pertain to until expiry. This will be evidenced in the code supplied by NCFE that will detail the month and year of approval, for example RA12/15. A new request will need to be submitted for approval by December(12) 20(17).

Requests for modifications (colour paper, braille etc) that must be carried out by NCFE will still need to be requested. If you've had prior approval you will need to supply the code on subsequent requests within 24 months.

Qualification specific requirements follow in section **3.4.2**

3.4.1. Notification timescales

For reasonable adjustments that we don't delegate to you, you'll need to complete the web form and send it to us at least **15 working days before** your learner needs the NCFE mandatory workbook, supporting materials or sits either an online or paper based external assessment. We do need more notice for some requests:

- **at least 15 working days' notice** for a NCFE mandatory workbook, supporting materials or external assessment paper to be in simplified language, enlarged font, printed on coloured paper or to enable them to work with assistive technologies such as computer readers.
- **At least 15 working days' notice** before the start of an assessment window, for example our V Certs suite.
- **at least 30 working days' notice** for a NCFE mandatory workbook, supporting materials or external assessment paper to be translated into Braille.

3.4.2 Functional Skills Qualifications – application required

The information published below applies to all levels of Functional Skills English, ICT and Mathematics qualifications.

Reasonable Adjustment	Reading	Writing	ICT	Mathematics
	NB: check if what you are applying for is allowed below			
Reader	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Computer Reader	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extra time over 25%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oral Language Modifier	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sign Language Interpreter	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scribe	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Voice recognition technology	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transcript	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Practical Assistant	Yes	Yes	Yes*	Yes
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
External device to load personal settings	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
	Permitted as a reasonable adjustment provided that this does not compromise the assessment or give the learner any advantage not available to other learners.			

* The practical assistant may switch on the computer and insert a storage device at the instruction of the learner but must not perform any skill for which marks are awarded.

In Functional Skills Mathematics and Functional Skills ICT qualifications learners can have access to all forms of equipment, software and practical assistance, such as a reader or a scribe that reflect their normal way of working within the centre. However, such adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes or give the learner an assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

3.4.3 V Certs – applications required

- Bilingual dictionary with extra time of up to 25% (for the use of the dictionary)
- Computer Reader
- Enlarged/coloured paper
- Extra time
- Reader
- Scribe
- Practical Assistant in practical assessments
- Modified papers

3.4.4 Additional considerations

Change in the organisation of the assessment room

Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties. For example:

- visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting
- hearing impaired learners may benefit from being seated near the front of the room
- removing visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, from the room.

Service for learners who require 25% extra time and/or rest breaks

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making an application for extra time. Centres are allowed to provide a supervised rest break to a learner where it is his/her normal way or working within the centre. The timing of the examination should be paused and re-started when the learner is ready to continue, this must be recorded on the Invigilator/External Assessment Register. During the rest break the learner must not have access to the question paper/answer booklet. The supervised rest break is **not** included in any extra time allowance.

Except where performance within a specific timescale is an assessment objective, and it is identified as a delegated responsibility in **section 3.3**, you are empowered to grant additional time up to a maximum of 25% of external assessment time, and/or rest breaks, to learners with particular requirements and with appropriate evidence of need. This may be evidence of a low processing speed and also evidence that this is the learner's usual way of working.

The additional time should only be granted to learners who have a disability or are at a significant disadvantage to other learners. The additional time should create a level playing field for learners and must not advantage one learner over another.

In order to award 25% extra time the centre **must** assess the needs of the learners based on one of the following documents:

- A Statement of Special Educational Needs relating to secondary education, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the Learner's disability.
- An assessment carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9 by a specialist assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the specialist assessor's report must also confirm that the learner has at least one below average standardised score of 84 or less which relates to an assessment of:

- Speed of reading
- Speed of reading comprehension
- Speed of writing
- Cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working.

Please refer to the JCQ regulations for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments to find further information about relevant tests to support your application.

For Entry Level qualifications the centre is not required to have each learner individually assessed by a specialist. The centre must determine the need for 25% extra time on the basis of how the learner normally works.

Service for learners who require separate supervision or invigilation

Arrangements for the separate supervision of any learner may be made at your discretion. Any invigilation arrangements for such learners should not advantage or disadvantage these learners over other learners.

Please note anyone who assists in implementing reasonable adjustments during an assessment, such as a reader, scribe or interpreter, can be employed by the centre but should not be involved in the course delivery.

3.5 Our role and responsibilities

When we receive your completed form, we'll aim to complete our review within 2 working days. We'll keep in touch along the way to let you know what's happening or if it's going to take longer and email you to let you know the outcome of the review. If we're unable to agree your request, we'll try to suggest a suitable alternative reasonable adjustment.

3.6 Evidence requirements

If your learners require arrangements for reasonable adjustments they should provide you with evidence of their learning needs or medical condition. You must ensure that suitably qualified personnel check that the evidence is current and relevant to the learner. Examples of evidence could be a relevant diagnostic report, statement of learning needs or medical condition from appropriately qualified personnel.

Please retain the evidence and make it available to any of our authorised representatives who visit your centre, this includes External Moderators, External Verifiers, Quality Verifiers and Spot Checkers.

In the case of an appeal, you must ensure that evidence to support a reasonable adjustment or special consideration is retained for 3 months after you've been issued with the results of an assessment.

Section 4 – Special Considerations

We'll review the circumstances 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.

Learners need to submit evidence to you in support of the special consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the Invigilator or any other appropriate information.

4.1 Internal assessment

The only special consideration allowed is an extended time period/registration period for the completion of the assessment. Please retain evidence of this special consideration and make it available to our External Moderators, External Verifiers or Quality Advisors during their visits, as required.

4.2 External assessment

All learners regardless of their special consideration must still meet our minimum requirement for the award of a certificate. Where a learner completes the external assessment under special considerations and sufficient supporting evidence is available, then we may make an exceptional circumstances award where learners have achieved the internal assessment component providing at least 50% of the external assessment has been achieved. (This is also known as an aegrotat award).

For learners completing external assessments, you should record the details of these arrangements on the Invigilator's Register and return it to us with the external assessment papers.

A learner who's fully prepared for an external assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an external assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner, eg 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.

4.3 Applying for special considerations

To do this, please complete our 'Request for Special Consideration' web form which is available on our website: www.ncfe.org.uk

Please ensure that the application is authorised by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Centre. The signatory must declare that the information given is accurate.

In regards to external assessment please submit your application as soon as possible after the assessment and **no later than** 7 working days after the assessment has taken place or the assessment window has closed.

We can only accept requests for special consideration after the results of the assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- the application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the Head of Centre
- 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.
- For on-screen assessments where results are immediately available.

4.4 Our role and responsibilities

When we receive your application, we'll review it and inform you of our decision within 5 working days. If our review is going to take longer, we'll contact you to let you know what we intend to do. If your application for special consideration is successful, we'll review the learner's performance in the light of available evidence. Please note that a successful application of special consideration would not necessarily change a learner's result.

Section 5 – General information

5.1 Confidentiality

We treat all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements in confidence.

5.2 Other arrangements not covered by this policy

Circumstances for both internal and external assessment not covered in this policy should be discussed with our Quality Assurance team **before** assessment takes place. Please contact our Quality Assurance team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing externalqualityassurance@ncfe.org.uk

5.3 Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Appeals and Enquiries about Results Policy, available to download from our website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or on request from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk.

5.4 Using this policy

We want to help you in ensuring that your learners have fair access to assessment, however, if we become aware that you are not following this policy, then we may have to review your centre's approval status with us. For further information, please refer to our Malpractice Policy available to download from our website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or on request from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk.

Section 6 – Your NCFE contact for this policy

If you've any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our
Centre Support team:

Email: service@ncfe.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 239 8000
Fax: 0191 239 8001
Post: NCFE
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