

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY CONTENTS

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Section 1: Overview and scope of the policy

1.1 What is the scope and purpose of the policy?

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who use NCFE products and services and submit requests for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- **support centres with applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for their learners**
- **provide centres with details on NCFE processes and timescales for access arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.**

1.2 What products and services are covered by this policy?

This policy covers the delivery of NCFE qualifications which are subject to scrutiny and enforcement by our qualifications regulators (regulated qualifications) and unregulated products which are owned and/or accredited by NCFE. All NCFE products include those that may be offered and/or delivered under an NCFE owned brand name, for example, 'CACHE'.

1.3 Who needs to know about the policy?

Any staff (including centre, satellite centres, sub-contract centres, or contractual staff) who are involved in the design, delivery, management, assessment and/or quality assurance of our products. Learners should also be aware of, and familiar with, the contents of the policy.

1.4 How can we obtain copies of the policy?

Copies of the policy can be downloaded from our website: www.qualhub.co.uk. Centres can request copies from our Customer Support Team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing customersupport@ncfe.org.uk.

1.5 Review of the policy

We review this policy regularly and may revise it as required in response to changes in legislation, in our practices, actions from our regulatory or external agencies, and/or in response to customer and stakeholder feedback.

This document is subject to revision and is maintained electronically; electronic copies are version controlled, however, printed copies are not subject to this control.

1.6 Complaints

We have a separate complaints process that covers our dissatisfaction with our products or services other than those categories listed in Section 1.1 of this policy.

Section 2: Definition

2.1 Overview of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires Awarding Organisations to make Reasonable Adjustments to ensure a learner who has a disability as defined in the Act are not placed at a **substantial** disadvantage in comparison to learners with no disabilities.

Assessment should be a fair test of a learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable.

The provision for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments are 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 neither concessions to make assessments easier for learners nor advantages to benefit the learners.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be achieved, these are through:

- **Access Arrangements** – allow learners with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an Access Arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- **Reasonable Adjustments** – NCFE are required to make Reasonable Adjustments where a learner, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. NCFE are required to take all reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

2.2 Definition of Access Arrangements

An Access Arrangement 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.

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.

Access Arrangements must not affect the integrity of what is being assessed.

Access Arrangements 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 an Access Arrangement will not be taken into consideration **during** the assessment of a learner's work.

Section 3: Assessing for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

The range of learning difficulties is extensive and must therefore be assessed by an appropriately qualified assessor, to ensure that the Access Arrangements approved allow the learner to access the assessment, without gaining an unfair advantage.

3.1 Assessor requirements

The Head of Centre must ensure that the professional assessing a learners' needs, has the required level of competence and training. The professional must present evidence of successful completion of a post-graduate course in individual specialist assessment at, or equivalent to, Level 7.

Upon request a Centre must be able to provide NCFE with details of the qualified assessor who assessed their learner, including details of the specialist qualification held and evidence of attainment.

When assessing a learner's special educational needs, the Centre must ensure this is completed by one of the following;

- an appropriately qualified psychologist registered with the Health & Care Professional Council.
- a specialist assessor with a current SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate.
- an Access Arrangements assessor approved by the Head of Centre who has successfully completed a post graduate course at or equivalent to Level 7, including at least 100 hours relating to individual specialist assessment.

Please note NCFE is not able to approve an assessor's qualification(s) and does not maintain a list of appropriate qualifications for assessors.

Please refer to chapter 7 of the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* for more information about who can be an assessor.

Section 4: Processes and timescales for requesting an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment

This policy document **must be used** in conjunction with the [Guidance on Applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#).

This guidance document provides a non-exhaustive list of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, along with practical advice and guidance on how each should be applied. Please refer to the permissions tables within the guidance document when applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.

4.1 Centre delegated adjustments

Some Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments may be implemented by centres for both internal and external assessment components **without prior notification to NCFE**. Please refer to the centre delegated adjustments section of the [Guidance on Applying Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) document for further information. Please also refer to permissions table within the same document for details on whether prior notification to NCFE is required and/or supporting evidence of need is required within centre for inspection purposes. Please note any arrangements put in place must reflect a learner's normal way of working.

4.2 Evidence requirements

If your learner(s) require any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments, they should provide you with evidence of their individual learning needs or medical condition(s). You must ensure that suitably qualified personnel check that the evidence is current* and reflects a learner's normal way of working.

**Learner(s) special educational needs assessed within 26 months of the external assessment being completed.*

All supporting evidence of learner need must be retained by the centre. This must be made available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Inspections may be completed remotely either by the NCFE Quality Assurance team, during a pre-arranged reviews or unannounced assessment audit visit. Where a centre is storing access arrangements documentation electronically, they must create an e-folder for each individual candidate. The candidate's e-folder must hold each of the required documents for inspection

On site inspection visits can be completed by External Quality Assurers and Assessment Audit Advisors.

In the case of an appeal, you must ensure that evidence to support an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment is securely kept and produced upon request.

4.3 Learner personal data consent

Prior to notifying NCFE of a learner’s required Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments, centres must ensure the learner in question has provided their written and signed consent to their personal data being processed. This must be retained by a centre (for not less than 2 years) and must be available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Please refer to the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* for further details on capturing and recording learner personal data consent.

4.4 How to notify NCFE of learner Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments

For external assessments, to notify NCFE of an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment that is not a centre delegated adjustment, a centre must complete the Paper Modifications and/or Access Arrangements sections within the ‘Edit Learner’ option (if amending an existing booking) or within the ‘Add or Amend Learner Details’ option upon registration, available in the NCFE Portal (*Note that there has been an update in the Portal Handbook to support centres in this revised process*).

To request a modified paper a centre must complete the Paper Modifications and/or Access Arrangements sections within the ‘Edit Learner’ option (if amending an existing booking) or within the ‘Add or Amend Learner Details’ option upon registration, available in the NCFE Portal.

For internal assessments, to notify NCFE of an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment that is not a centre delegated adjustment, a centre must complete the notification of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments form on QualHub.

4.5 Timescales for notifying NCFE of an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment request

Centres are required to notify NCFE of any Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment requirements within the following timescales:

Access Arrangement / Reasonable Adjustment	Timescales
Non-centre delegated adjustments eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reader ❖ Scribe ❖ Enlarged papers ❖ Coloured papers ❖ Non-interactive electronic (PDF) question papers for use with computer reading/speech recognition software. 	<p style="text-align: center;">15 working days’ notice <i>(prior to the published date of assessment or start of assessment window)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Braille papers ❖ Tactile diagrams ❖ Modified language papers 	<p style="text-align: center;">30 working days’ notice <i>(prior to the published date of assessment or start of assessment window)</i></p>

For any qualification specific guidance please see the qualifications associated regulations on QualHub.

4.6 NCFE timescales for processing an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment request

For external assessments, upon submitting an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment notification, a centre will be able to view these through the 'edit my learner' screen on the portal'.

Any requests for paper modifications submitted in line with the timescales outlined above will be processed within **5 working days** of receipt. Any modified papers will be dispatched to arrive **at least 3 working days** before the scheduled external assessment date or start of assessment window. Any requests submitted outside of our advertised timescales may be rejected.

For internal assessment any access arrangement or reasonable adjustment forms submitted, we will confirm your request has been received. All Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments will be logged centrally, and we may contact you at a later date to request supporting evidence of need to validate any access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments you have in place for your learner(s).

NCFE will keep a record of all Access Arrangement and Reasonable Adjustment requests received and will contact centres to inspect learner evidence on an ongoing basis to ensure any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments applied are valid.

NCFE will decide when inspections will be completed and in some cases this may be after an external or internal assessment has been completed by a learner requiring Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments.

Supporting evidence of learner need must be made available to NCFE upon request for inspection purposes. Inspections may be completed remotely by the NCFE Quality Assurance team, during a pre-arranged external quality assurance review or unannounced assessment audit visit.

Following the inspection of learner evidence NCFE hold the right to disqualify a learner from a previously completed assessment or cancel a learner certificate, if it is proven that Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments were applied without valid supporting evidence of learner need.

4.7 If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your request

If you or your learners remain dissatisfied following the outcome of the request that you have submitted, you may submit a complaint in line with our complaints procedure on our website: www.qualhub.co.uk.

Furthermore, you also have the right to appeal the outcome of an inspection of learner evidence relating to Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments. Please refer to our Appeals Policy on our website: www.qualhub.co.uk.

Section 5: Confidentiality of data and information and privacy notice

5.1 Data protection and GDPR

We may need access to confidential information and where this is necessary, we will ensure that such information is kept secure, only used for the purposes of the relevant request and handled at all times in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. We do not disclose confidential information to third parties unless we are required to do so, for example by our regulators, law enforcement or statutory bodies.

When requesting copies of valid supporting evidence of learner need for inspection purposes, we will do this via a secure file transferring platform. Any learner evidence provided for inspection will be reviewed only for inspection purposes and will be retained for no longer than **30 working days**.

We aim to access and retain original evidence or information; if original records cannot be retained, we will photocopy the original and record the copy as authentic. We require that you retain any relevant documentation securely in line with your archiving and retention procedures.



Section 6 Contact information

6.1 Your contact for this policy

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the Customer Support Team.

For NCFE and CACHE products:

Email: customersupport@ncfe.org.uk

Telephone*: 0191 239 8000

Post for NCFE and CACHE products:

NCFE
Q6, Quorum Business Park
Benton Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8BT

*To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded.

Appendix A: Our qualifications regulators' details

England:

Ofqual

Spring Place
Herald Avenue
Coventry
CV5 6UB
Email public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk
Telephone 0300 303 3344

Wales:

Qualifications Wales

Q2 Building
Pencarn Lane
Imperial Park
Coedkernew
Newport
NP10 8AR
Email enquiries@qualificationswales.org
Telephone 01633 373 222

Northern Ireland:

CCEA

The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
29 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast BT1 3BG
Email info@ccea.org.uk
Telephone 02890 261 200