



Access to Assessment Policy

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Introduction

Quallsafe Awards (QA) supports and complies with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.

Any Learner assessment should be a fair test of their knowledge and the skills they have obtained however, for some Learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable.

QA is committed to making sure individuals with special educational needs, disabilities, temporary illness or injury or other adverse circumstance outside their control are not unfairly disadvantaged when undertaking qualifications or assessments.

With a view to removing barriers which prevent Learners from undertaking assessments, reasonable adjustments may be made and special consideration may be given. These arrangements ensure that Learners are able to undertake assessments on a fair and equitable basis and they allow Learners to receive recognition of their achievements while ensuring the integrity, validity and reliability of assessment is maintained.

Centres can ensure they do not unfairly exclude the assessment needs of a particular Learner by following this policy to determine if it is appropriate to make a:

- Reasonable adjustment – applied for and agreed before any training course commences
- Special consideration - given during or within 5 working days of any Learner assessment

Reasonable adjustments

The aim of a reasonable adjustment is to reduce the negative impact of a disability (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010) on a Learner's ability to achieve a qualification. The objective is that a Learner with a disability experiences no substantial disadvantage to a Learner that does not.

Examples of reasonable adjustments Centres can make for a Learner during a theory assessment include supporting Learners with dyslexia or other reading or writing disadvantages by:

- Using coloured overlay on written questions
- Giving additional time (an additional 25% time allocation is the standard)
- Reading the questions to the Learner and/or writing down the Learner's answers. Note: this must be carried out after all other Learners have completed their assessments and these have been collected. The arrangement must be conducted for the duration of the assessment (e.g. from start to finish)
- Allowing Learners to use a bilingual dictionary if English is not their first language

In some cases reasonable adjustments may not be permitted due to published legal criteria. For example, if a Learner is unable to meet the requirements of a qualification that are outlined in Health & Safety legislation (which takes precedence over Equality legislation). In this scenario, Centres may issue Learners with a certificate that details the Learners attendance and specific achievements on the course.

Adjustments that are not "reasonable" may also not be approved. For example, if the adjustment:

- Incurs an unreasonable cost to the Centre or QA
- Has an unreasonable timeframe in which to be achieved
- Negatively impacts the integrity or security of the assessment

Special Consideration

A special consideration is a change to an assessment outcome, mark or grade made when the Learner has been affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control at the time of the assessment.

Learners will be eligible for special consideration if they have completed the training and covered the whole course but performance in the assessment/coursework is materially affected by such adverse circumstances. Learners should provide evidence of their circumstances as appropriate.

Examples of when a Learner may be eligible for special consideration:

- Temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of assessment
- Bereavement at the time of assessment
- Domestic crisis at the time of assessment
- Disadvantage due to the Centre failing to provide adequate provisions

Centre responsibilities

Centre staff must refer to the qualification specification and assessment guidance in full to ascertain whether there are any minimum standard requirements a Learner must meet during their assessment for a particular qualification.

Centres should take all reasonable steps to identify and support any specific assessment needs before the Learner takes an assessment. Centres should contact QA as soon as possible if they need support to make a decision.

Centres must complete and submit the forms available on the QA Customer Portal to record and provide full details of the reasonable adjustments or special consideration required by Learners.

Reasonable adjustments

Centres are responsible for ascertaining the individual needs of Learners prior to their attendance on a course.

Centres must be able to identify where they are able to make a reasonable adjustment for a Learner and should take all reasonable steps to support Learners to achieve a qualification.

Centres should plan ahead and consider:

- Any minimum standard requirements Learners must meet when being assessed (detailed in the relevant qualification specification or assessment guidance). E.g. to achieve a first aid qualification a Learner must be able to demonstrate competency performing CPR on a manikin on the floor.
- If the integrity of an assessment, and therefore the reliability and validity of the outcome, would be compromised or undermined
- The individual needs of the Learner
- The impact on the Learner and any other Learners
- The cost incurred of making an adjustment

When a reasonable adjustment is made Centres must complete the *Reasonable Adjustment Form* and send it to QA with any relevant supporting evidence. Centres should retain a copy of this form for their own records and quality assurance purposes.

Centres have a responsibility to identify any reasonable adjustments required prior to any course commencing and they must notify QA of such. However QA permits Centres to make the following straightforward adjustments without initial approval, with the required *Reasonable Adjustment Form* being submitted retrospectively:

- Verbal Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) assessments
- 25% additional time to complete an assessment
- Use of coloured overlays and rulers (for Dyslexic Learners)
- Use of bi-lingual dictionaries

Special consideration

Centres should always aim to reschedule an assessment for a Learner in the first instance. Applying a special consideration should be a last resort and must not compromise the integrity of an assessment or the reliability and validity of its outcome. QA may consider extending the registration period for the qualification to allow time for assessments to be completed.

If a Learner is unable to attend alternative assessment sessions due to specific circumstances, a special consideration may be applicable.

A *Special Consideration Request Form* should be completed and sent to QA for consideration along with supporting evidence prior to implementation.

Record keeping

Centres must retain Learner records for a minimum of three years. Records must be made available to QA, its representatives or regulators on request. QA may request documentation for review as part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance activities.

Complaints and appeals

If a Learner is dissatisfied with a decision regarding reasonable adjustments made or special consideration given by a Centre see QA:

- *Customer Complaints Policy*
- *Appeals Policy*

Qualsafe Awards

Policy review arrangements

QA will review this policy on an ongoing basis as part of our continuous improvement activities and revise as required in response to changes in legislation, our practices and actions in response to customer and Learner feedback.

Revisions are made to this document to ensure our arrangements for allowing fair and equitable access to assessments remain effective.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, contact our customer service team:

Tel: 0845 644 3305

Email: info@qualsafeawards.org

Anita Goodfellow



Chief Executive

29th August 2018

Owner: CEO

Regulatory references: Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition D2, G6, G7

QA documents referenced:

- *Customer Complaints Policy*
- *Appeals Policy*
- *Reasonable Adjustment Form*
- *Special Consideration Request Form*