

ACCESS TO FAIR ASSESSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Definition

Awarding organisations must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

The awarding organisation must also arrange for special consideration to be given to learners that experience temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of an assessment. This should allow them to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of for the units that are subject to special consideration.'

1. Audience

1.1 This document is intended for:

- Centre staff responsible for Quality Assurance
- Assessors
- Internal Verifiers
- Quality Reviewers

1.2 This policy applies to:

- Qualifications and units external bodies
- Units approved by Rotunda Ltd

2. Introduction

2.1 The guidance sets out:

The principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessment.

The procedures which should be followed when making adjustments to assessment requirements.

2.2 Rotunda Ltd has a duty to ensure that the integrity of qualifications, units and assessment is maintained at all times and have a duty to ensure that the rights of individual learners to access qualifications, units and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld. Disability and equal opportunity legislation and the regulatory criteria give support and guidance

to awarding organisations and centres in creating an inclusive assessment process.

- 2.3 Note where the terms 'access-related needs' or 'access-related issues' are used in this guidance, they refer to any entitlement to access the assessment process resulting from legislation, regulation, or good practice, provided that the standards of the assessment are maintained.

3. Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, 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 a learner with autism.
 - 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.
- 3.3 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 units and qualification. The work produced by the learner will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners.
- 3.4 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, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence should be taken into consideration.

4. Types of Assessment and Reasonable Adjustments

General guidance

- 4.1 Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.
- 4.2 The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:
- The specific assessment requirements of the units and/or qualification.
 - The type of assessment.
 - The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

5. Assessments which are not taken under examination conditions

- 5.1 With these types of assessments the centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment.
- 5.2 These types of assessments may include, for example, coursework, set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time, assessment activities devised by the centre, assessments where the learner has to collect evidence in order to demonstrate competence. The assessment requirements for the majority of vocationally related units and qualifications fall into this group.
- 5.3 In these types of assessments the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, the centre may allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids:
- Are generally commercially available.
 - Reflect the learner's normal way of working.
 - Enable the learner to meet the specified criteria.
 - Do not give the learner an unfair advantage.
- 5.4 The centre may present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified assessment criteria, for example, materials do not have to be in written format, unless specified by the assessment requirements.

- 5.5 The centre may allow the learner to present their answers or evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria, for example, answers or evidence do not have to be in written format unless specified by the assessment criteria.
- 5.6 The centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements.
- 5.7 The centre is advised to contact the relevant awarding body to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.
- 5.8 The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:
- Meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used.
 - Be as rigorous as assessment methods used with other learners.
 - Be assessable.
 - Be able to be moderated or verified.
- 5.9 In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition/disability means a learner's completion of assessment takes additional time it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification. A centre should note that it will not be possible to allow time extensions for all units and qualifications.
- 5.10 Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for these types of assessments, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from the awarding body. The centre should ensure that they adhere to the awarding body requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.
- 5.11 The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when the learner is first accepted onto a programme.
- 5.12 Where there is an identified need, the learner may present their evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audio cassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto video, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or sign language is available to translate the material for the internal verifier and Quality Reviewer if this is required.

- 5.13 The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.
- 5.14 The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids which are available in the workplace or which are commercially available in order to demonstrate competence. For example, these may include specially adapted equipment or assistive technology.
- 5.15 The centre is required to provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs to produce evidence of developing the portfolio.
- 5.16 All adjustments should be consistent with the learner's normal way of working and must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.
- 5.17 While assessors, internal moderators and Quality Reviewers normally prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence which is varied, the centre should be prepared to accept a more restrictive variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. It is sensible, however, to discuss this matter with the internal moderator and/or Quality Reviewer at an early stage.
- 5.18 The learner must achieve all the required units to gain a qualification. It may sometimes be the case that some full qualifications are inaccessible because of a learner's inability to demonstrate competence in all parts of the qualification. In these cases unit certification will always be available.
- 5.19 Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for verified types of assessments, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from the awarding body or the Quality Reviewer. The centre should ensure that they adhere to the awarding body requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

6. Assessments which are taken under examination conditions

- 6.1 Where the method of assessment is more rigidly determined, such as for assessments taken under specified conditions, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

7. Identifying Learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments

- 7.1 Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted

that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

- Communication and interaction needs.
- Cognition and learning needs.
- Sensory and physical needs.
- Behavioural, emotional and social needs.

- 7.2 The learner will be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their performance during an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. Many of these learners will be defined as being disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 7.3 An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, the centre should assist the learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.
- 7.4 A learner does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Every learner who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for assistance.

8. Identifying Learners' Needs

- 8.1 The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learner's needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of Disability and Equal Opportunity legislation.
- 8.2 A centre should use the following guide:
- Identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment.
 - Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed.
 - Identify the appropriate adjustment.
 - Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with awarding body guidelines.

9. Identifying and Obtaining Supporting Evidence

- 9.1 In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair

advantage over others, the centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

- 9.2 Where the centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the centre does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.
- 9.3 Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. The centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation:

Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the centre by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area; staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This evidence should include an indication of how the centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the candidate can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included;

History of provision within the centre. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes;

Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

- 9.4 A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the units and qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.
- 9.5 It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid. A centre should maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments which have been made.

10. The range of Reasonable Adjustments

- 10.1 The Permissions Table (Appendix 1) lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in a template which can be used when considering where the decisions on applying different reasonable adjustments need to be applied. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and centres are advised to contact Trident Awards for advice on alternative ways of accessing assessment for particular situations.
- 10.2 Centres and Quality Reviewers have a duty to seek advice from the awarding body in any case where they do not consider that they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is needed, and/or how it should be applied. The following sections provide guidance for centres on how various types of reasonable adjustments should be implemented.
- 10.3 Centres should note that:
 Not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the centre is advised to contact the awarding body for advice. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to select an alternative assessment task for the learner;

 The learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all units and qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments;

 Adjustments to assessments will most commonly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions. The list of reasonable adjustments is organised under the following headings:

Extra Time	Invariably applied to examination based assessment.
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	<p>Extra time should not be allowed where its use will invalidate the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Extra time should not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.</p> <p>The amount of extra time must be realistic.</p>
<p>Supervised rest breaks</p>	<p>Centres should ensure that both the learner and his/her work is supervised during the break.</p> <p>The duration of the break should not be deducted from the assessment time.</p> <p>Rest breaks should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment criteria.</p>
<p>Changes in organisation of the assessment room</p>	<p>The centre should consider the needs of each individual learner and, where possible, arrange the assessment room to suit the learner.</p>
<p>Separate accommodation within the centre</p>	<p>Centres should ensure that, where learners are accommodated separately for assessments taken under examination conditions, usual examination conditions apply and separate invigilation is arranged.</p>
<p>Taking the assessment at an alternative venue</p>	<p>For assessments taken under examination conditions, standard examination conditions should be in place at the alternative venue and the standard procedures for security of assessment material and despatch of the learner's work should be followed.</p>
<p>Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, cctv and ocr scanners</p>	<p>The learner should be familiar with how the aid works.</p> <p>The use of aids should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.</p>

Use of assistive technology	<p>The learner should be familiar with how the assistive technology works.</p> <p>The assistive technology should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.</p>
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Rotunda Policy Review Record

Reviewed by:	Approval date:	Review frequency:	Review date:	Signed:
Maxine Ennis	09/04/2024	Annual	10/04/2025	