

Access to Assessment

1 General

- 1.1 In accordance with Equalities Law Skills and Education Group Awards¹ demonstrates its commitment to ensuring that individual learners have fair access to its qualifications and assessments in two ways:
- 1.1.1 By recognising the diverse needs of learners at the stage where qualifications and assessments are designed and developed; we take a positive approach to the provision of a range of flexible and responsive qualifications and assessment methods. The aim is to provide the same access for all learners by seeking to remove barriers which may place people of different religions and beliefs, racial backgrounds, ages, ability, sexual orientation, gender, political opinion or any other status at a disadvantage.
 - 1.1.2 By making appropriate reasonable adjustments to standard assessment arrangements wherever this is required to enable access. We provide the opportunity for a range of adjustments. The nature of any special arrangements allowed depends largely upon the qualifications and/or standards being followed and the assessment methods employed.
- 1.2 At all times we seek to ensure that the application of such arrangements does not give an unfair advantage over other learners or diminish the validity of the assessment process.
- 1.3 Each Centre² approved by us is required to have effective policies and procedures in place to identify learner needs and to comply with the requirements of all equalities legislation.

2 What are Reasonable Adjustments?

- 2.1 A reasonable adjustment³ is any action that helps to reduce the effect of any barriers or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment situation.

¹ Skills and Education Group Awards is a recognised awarding organisation and part of the Skills and Education Group.

² A 'Centre' in the context of this document applies to organisations, whether a training organisation, educational institution or employer that deliver qualifications and / or assessments to individuals and as such has a duty of care with respect to the individual as a learner.

³ Further information on Reasonable Adjustments and Special consideration can be found on our websites.

- 2.2 The general principles which are applied to our decisions about reasonable adjustments are as follows:
- 2.2.1 The nature of the reasonable adjustment is determined according to the assessment needs of the individual learner.
 - 2.2.2 Account is taken of the learner's usual method of working.
 - 2.2.3 Arrangements are such that they accurately reflect the learner's achievement and competence to work in a sector, and do not give a misleading picture of the learner's ability.
 - 2.2.4 Arrangements do not reduce the validity and/or reliability of the assessment, and do not compromise the integrity of the assessment.
 - 2.2.5 No unfair advantage accrues to the learner where reasonable adjustments are applied.

3 Assessments not taken under specific Test/ Independent Assessment Conditions

- 3.1 In these cases the Centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and to choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment.
- 3.2 In these types of assessments the learner may meet the specified Assessment Criteria in any way that is valid. The Centre may present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working but still enables him or her to meet the specified Assessment Criteria.
- 3.3 Materials do not have to be in written format unless specified by the assessment requirements. The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids that are available in the workplace, or which are commercially available, in order to demonstrate competence. This includes specially adapted equipment or assistive technology.
- 3.4 For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, via a recording 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 External Moderator.
- 3.5 Please note that English must be the language of assessment for all our qualifications, except where British Sign Language (BSL) is allowed.
- 3.6 The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of the method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria must not be amended, re-worded or omitted, and the adjustments must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.

- 3.7 Centres must always pay specific attention to the requirements of the assessment and adjustments must not be made in the following circumstances:
- A human reader must not be allowed where the assessment is testing the learner's ability to read independently;
 - A human scribe must not be allowed where the assessment is testing the learner's ability to write independently;
 - A practical assistant must not be allowed where the assessment is testing an individual's practical competence or skills.
- 3.8 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 authenticated and moderated/verified.
- 3.9 Centres are expected to log all cases of Reasonable Adjustments applied to internal assessments and make these available to the External Moderator on request.⁴

4 Assessments / Tests taken under Specific Conditions

- 4.1 Where invigilated tests or assessments are required the centre is required to seek permission for any Reasonable Adjustments prior to the assessment/test taking place.
- For Independent Assessments 28 working days prior to the assessment date;
 - For timed paper tests 28 working days prior to the test date, except in the case of Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) examinations where this is reduced to 14 working days prior to the test date.
 - For onscreen tests 5 working days prior to the test date.
- 4.2 Requests for Reasonable Adjustments must be made on Form E2 Centre Application for Reasonable Adjustments. Please consult our website for guidance on how to apply.

⁴ Centres may log these on their own internal documents or use Form E2C provided for this purpose.

4.3 We will consider all reasonable adjustment requests, and the decision to accept or reject them will be confirmed to the centre within 5 working days of receipt.

4.3.1 To appeal against any rejection please consult our Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

4.4 Centres are expected to confirm that any reasonable adjustments approved are actually applied during the timed external assessment by completing and despatching form EX4a either with the candidate written script for marking or in the case of onscreen tests emailed to us with the signed invigilator pack. Failure to return this document will indicate that the adjustment was **NOT** applied/required.

4.4.1 We will require Centres to explain why approved adjustments were not implemented.

5 Special Consideration for External Tests/ Independent Assessment

5.1 Special Consideration⁵ may be given to candidates who have suffered temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances immediately before or during an assessment that may have affected their performance.

5.1.1 Applications for Special Consideration must be made by the Centre on form E2A within 10 working days of the external/independent assessment date.

5.2 Adjustments to marks, if made, will be small in these circumstances, and will be applied according to the severity of the difficulty faced by the candidate.

Adjustments will not be applied if:

5.2.1 an assessment requires the demonstration of competence or is a licence to practice;

5.2.2 the assessment plan/strategy does not allow it;

5.2.3 there is a viable alternative to re-sit the assessment;

5.2.4 outside the timescales for applying;

5.2.5 results have already been validated and confirmation issued.

5.3 In the case of lost or damaged work, applications for Special Consideration must be made by the Centre on form E2A as soon as the loss or damage has been notified or discovered.

⁵ See Centre Guide to Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration on the website.

- 5.4 Each request for Special Consideration will be judged on its own merit and in line with the criteria published in our centre guidance.⁶

6 Aegrotat

- 6.1 An Aegrotat award is where a candidate has been given a certificate but has not completed all the required assessment arrangements due to adverse circumstances.
- 6.2 An Aegrotat may be awarded only in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.3 Each application will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 6.4 An Aegrotat can only be awarded if the learner has completed, and can evidence, at least 50% of the assessment, or has generated sufficient alternative evidence of achievement at the appropriate standard upon which to base an assessment decision.
- 6.5 In cases when an Aegrotat is awarded, the maximum grade achievable is a pass.

7 Quality Assurance

- 7.1 This policy and guidance is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of its customers and the Regulators⁷.

⁶ Centre Guidance when applying for Special Arrangements on the website

⁷ Ofqual in England; Qualifications Wales; CCEA Regulation in NI for regulated qualifications; the IfA for Apprenticeships or any other Regulator to which the Skills and Education Group Awards may be subject.