



Access to Assessment Policy

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Introduction

Qualsafe 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 entirely suitable.

QA is committed to making sure individuals with special educational needs, disabilities, temporary illness or injury or who are experiencing other adverse circumstances 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 the assessment process is maintained.

Centres can ensure they do not unfairly exclude the assessment needs of a particular Learner by following this policy to determine if and when it is appropriate to make a reasonable adjustment or give special consideration:

Reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The aim of a reasonable adjustment is to reduce the negative impact of a disability on a Learner's ability to achieve a qualification. The objective is that a Learner with a disability (as defined) experiences no discernible disadvantage through training delivery and assessment compared 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)

QA offers a range of qualifications that can be delivered and assessed remotely. Examples of reasonable adjustments Centres can make for Learners undertaking e-assessment remotely include:

- Reading the questions to the Learner using video conferencing functionality (this must be done on a one-to-one basis with the Learner using a private chat in video conferencing)
- The use of monitor overlays (computer screen covers) to aid those with dyslexia

Where e-assessment is concerned, the Learner will be situated in a remote location without a Trainer/ Assessor in close proximity to provide assistance where required. However, with this in mind, Centres are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for any Learner as applied for and agreed with QA where e-assessment is concerned.

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
- Cannot be achieved in a reasonable timescale
- 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 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 QA 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 must be able to identify when a reasonable adjustment is required for a Learner and should take all reasonable steps to support Learners to achieve any qualification. Therefore, Centres must be aware of the definition of disability as included in the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered and requested (where appropriate) for Learners who meet this definition.

In order to assess whether or not a reasonable adjustment should be made, Centres should 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 required, 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. QA will review the details of the proposed adjustment to ensure that it is appropriate and fit for purpose.

Centres have a responsibility to identify any reasonable adjustments required prior to any course commencing and must request approval from QA at least 5 working days in advance. 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)

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. *Special Consideration Request Forms* must be sent to QA within five working days of Learner assessment taking place.

Language Translation Requests

QA approved Centres may have Learners attending courses that do not have English as their first language or who have a need for some language translation through training delivery and assessment. Any Centre that would like to request the translation of qualification or assessment documentation into a language other than English to facilitate training delivery and Learner assessment must do so through the Language Translation Request process detailed in the *QA Language Policy*.

The exceptions to this are requests received for training delivery and Learner assessment to be carried out in another language:

- for Learners who have been identified by the Centre as meeting the definition of disabled (as per the Equality Act 2010)
- when that language is British Sign Language (BSL)

Any such requests must be made through the reasonable adjustment process outlined in this policy.

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, quality assurance activities or compliance investigations.

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: 0330 660 0899* / 01274 381414

Calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

*Costs to call this number will vary depending on your phone company's access charge.

Email: info@qualsafeawards.org



Anita Goodfellow

Chief Executive

16th November 2021

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*
- *Language Policy*