



Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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Change Mechanism

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Introduction

Assessment should be a fair test of an apprentice's knowledge, skills and experience; however, for some apprentices, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. The Education and Care Qualifications Network (ECQN) recognises that for all apprentices to access assessment fairly, reasonable adjustments may be appropriate.

This could be because at the time of assessment;

- apprentices have a permanent disability, or specific learning need
- apprentices have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning need
- apprentices are indisposed at the time of assessment

Scope

This policy applies to all end point assessments offered by The Education and Care Qualifications Network and to every individual involved in ECQN including but not limited to; ECQN staff, EPA, LEPA, assessors, quality assurers and apprentices

Purpose

This policy sets out the steps ECQN will take to initially find out about apprentices' requirements for reasonable adjustments and how it will consider meeting them.

Policy Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy lies with the Assessment Manager in conjunction with the Head of Customer Services.

All staff & associates including but not limited ECQN staff, EPA, LEPA, assessors, quality assurers and apprentices are accountable for ensuring full adherence to all items set out in this policy

Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places apprentices at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment situation. The reasonable adjustment should be approved and in place before the activity takes place.

Work produced by the apprentices should be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed apprentices. There is no duty to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested.

ECQN has a responsibility to ensure that any apprentices request is based on firm evidence and that it will not confer an advantage on the apprentices in any aspect of the subject concerned.

Some examples of reasonable adjustments might include;

- modifying assessment materials (providing materials in Braille or a larger font)
- allowing a apprentice's extra time to complete a time limited assessment activity
- providing access for facilitators such as a sign language interpreter, reader or scribe
- removing excessive visual stimuli from assessment materials
- use of a word processor or mobile electronic device

Considerations when assessing the reasonableness of an adjustment include;

- maintaining the integrity of assessment criteria
- individual circumstances
- cost implications
- practicality
- effectiveness

Health and safety to individual and others

ECQN has a responsibility to ensure that any request for a reasonable adjustment is based on firm evidence so where the implications of the disability or difficulty are not obvious, we may ask for supporting evidence regarding the effect of the impairment on the candidate or delegate's performance such as;

- medical certificates
- written evidence produced by an independent, authoritative specialist.

This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments stating the name, title and professional credentials of the person carrying out the assessment and/or report. Such reports should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the apprentices are affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any related medication that the apprentices may be taking, if relevant. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the apprentices are affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

During initial assessment, prior to End Point Assessment at ECQN will;

- aim to identify any difficulties the apprentices may have in accessing learning and assessment
- assist in the selection of end point assessment that the apprentices, can undertake depending on circumstances
- explain to the apprentices any assessment requirements
- be clear if it seems unlikely that the apprentices would meet all the requirements and explain the restriction on achievement as a result (for example, if an apprentice is unable to demonstrate specific skills, they may be unable to gain achievement of the assessment).
- communicate ECQN Access to Assessment & Reasonable Adjustments policy to staff, associates,
- ensure staff and associates deal with reasonable adjustments sensitively
- create an atmosphere in which apprentices are comfortable discussing requirements
- observe the right of apprentices who do not wish to disclose additional needs
- not presume solutions for individual apprentices but discuss and agree support
- anticipate general future needs for all and make adequate provision
- take into account the diversity of the group and differentiate accordingly
- provide 'apprentices support' training for staff involved in recruiting/supporting apprentices
- apply to ECQN reasonable adjustments for assessment
- select appropriate adjustment without lowering assessment standards
- contact relevant Internal quality assurance regarding most suitable adjustment if in doubt
- Keep records of reasonable adjustment requests for audit purposes
- design assessment activities that are accessible to apprentices
- ensure buildings used for assessment are accessible as far as is practical
- ensure health and safety is not compromised – conduct risk assessments

Special considerations

apprentices taking ECQN Assessment, Special consideration can be applied after an assessment when an apprentice is disadvantaged during the exam.

Each request for special consideration will be unique to the apprentices or assessment and will depend on the circumstances at the time of the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the apprentices.

Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the apprentices e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment, domestic crisis Candidates must apply for special consideration within seven days of the assessment activity). If a candidate had a medical condition at the time of the ECQN Assessment their request for special consideration must be accompanied by a relevant medical certificate.

The Assessment Special Consideration Panel has the right to request additional information from the apprentices as necessary. apprentices with a disability The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

It is unlawful for institutions such as ECQN to discriminate in the provision of goods, services and facilities to disabled people including;

- all aspects of teaching and assessment
- assessments and assessments
- e-learning and distance learning including virtual learning environments
- ECQN website
- Assessment resources including libraries and computer facilities
- aspects of the physical environment where assessment takes place, including buildings and equipment
- welfare, counselling and other support services
- catering, residential and leisure facilities
- careers services Under the act, ECQN is expected to take reasonable steps to;
- find out about people's disabilities
- consider what adjustments may be required
- adjust where reasonable, including by alternative means.

Disclosure of additional requirements

In order to provide support and guidance from the outset, apprentices are encouraged to disclose any additional requirements so that where possible, arrangements can be put in place. apprentices should complete and submit a request for Reasonable Adjustments (available on our website)

Apprentices' requirements may be reviewed individually to ascertain extent of condition and requirements. During the assessment, this is to measure the effectiveness of any such adjustments.

Recruitment and selection of apprentices, & Potential apprentices to ECQN will be selected for Assessment strictly in line with the selectin criteria and the requirements of the Gateway, and Employer requirements for the standards.

ECQN will make reasonable adjustments and review its recruitment and selection practices on an annual basis in order to monitor equal opportunities.

Monitoring enquiries and requests for information purposes

It is important for us to log all requests and monitor the resulting action. However, to comply with the Data Protection Act, all personal details will be removed so that no individual can be identified.

Venues

When sourcing venues, ECQN consider every aspect of the building including:

- how people enter,
- how they find their way around,
- what signs will be provided,
- how people communicate with staff,
- information we provide,
- queuing systems,
- counters
- accessible lavatory facilities.
- all assessment venues comply with the Equality Act 2010
- we do not use venues without lifts
- where a lift breaks down, exit is via an evacuation chair or alternative means In making reasonable adjustments,

ECQN must think in advance about what people with a range of impairments might reasonably need. If there is a particular situation we have not anticipated, and a person wants to use our service, then we must make a reasonable adjustment as quickly as possible.

Complaints If a apprentice believes that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation, they should first speak to their personal account manager and if following discussion, the apprentice is not satisfied, they should follow the ECQN complaints procedure.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually via the Governance board and updated as necessary.

Breach of the Policy ECQN will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the policy by its staff, management, apprentices. Any breach of policy will be investigated, and where appropriate, action will be considered.

Access to the Policy The policy will be published on the ECQN website: www.ecqnlimited.co.uk

Reference to other policies, procedures and agreements:

- Misconduct policy
- Assessment policy
- Candidate Agreement
- Candidate & Delegate Conduct policy
- Data Protection policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Internal Verification policy
- Reasonable Adjustment request form
- Withdrawals policy

Appendix

Range of reasonable adjustments

The Permissions Table (in Appendix 1) lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and centres have a duty to seek advice from the ECQN in all cases.

Centres should note that:

- not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations.
- the apprentice may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications. Some apprentices may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
- adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions.

The list of reasonable adjustments is organised under the following headings:

- Changes to assessment conditions
- Use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Use of access facilitators

CHANGES TO ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS

Extra time

- Where assessment activities are time constrained a apprentice may be allowed extra time during an assessment if he/she has a condition which affects the speed of processing.
- The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the apprentice's difficulty. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. It is the centre's responsibility to specify the amount of extra time the apprentice will need, using as a guide the extra time required during formative assessments in the centre.
- Extra time will not be allowed for computer-based assessments testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as keyboarding speed tests. Extra time may, however, be available for those computer-based assessments where the manipulation of software, and not processing speed, is the primary aim of the assessment.
- Extra time for on-screen assessments may have to be customised for each apprentice. In these cases, the centre is advised to contact the ECQN to apply for a time extension to be set up.
- Before the centre allows extra time for the apprentice, the centre should be satisfied that the apprentice can cope with the content of the qualification and that the apprentice is medically fit to undertake the extended assessment.
- Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or in group activities where the apprentice's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

Summary:

- Extra time should not be allowed where its use will invalidate the assessment criteria.
- Extra time should not give the apprentice an unfair advantage over others.

Supervised rest breaks

- Where assessment activities are time constrained, an apprentice may, if there is a demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment.
- Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room. The duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the assessment time. The centre should be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the apprentice is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing conduct of assessments will apply during this time.
- Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, supervised rest breaks can be allowed.
- For on-screen assessments, the centre needs to check with the ECQN whether the time for rest breaks must be built into the extra time requested for the assessment. This is necessary because the test runs continuously on the system. The system must also be supervised during the break to ensure that no one else can interfere with the apprentice's test during the break.

Summary:

- Centres must ensure that both the apprentice and his/her work is supervised during the break.
- The duration of the break should not be deducted from the assessment time.
- Rest breaks should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment criteria.

Change in the organisation of the assessment room

- Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some apprentices with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.
- Visually impaired apprentices may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf apprentices may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good light.
- Some apprentices may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.

Summary:

The centre should consider the needs of the individual apprentice and, where possible, arrange the assessment room to suit the apprentice.

Separate accommodation within the centre

It may be necessary to accommodate the apprentice separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL/ISL, or word processing equipment which may disturb other apprentices.

Summary:

Centres should ensure that, where apprentices are accommodated separately for assessments taken under examination conditions, usual examination conditions apply and separate invigilation is arranged.

USE OF MECHANICAL, ELECTRONIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS

Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners

- The centre should ensure that the apprentice has had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.
- For assessments taken under examination conditions, the apprentice should be accommodated separately with separate invigilation if the use of any of these aids will disturb other apprentices. In these cases, the invigilator should be fully informed of the apprentice's support.
- A centre should contact the ECQN if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the apprentice or invalidate the assessment requirements.

Summary:

- The apprentice should be familiar with how the aid works.
- The use of aids should not give the apprentice an unfair advantage over other apprentices or invalidate the assessment criteria.

Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice activated software

- Some apprentices may benefit from the use of software that reads the assessment material to them and records their spoken responses.
- Speech software should not be allowed for qualifications where reading is the competence being assessed. Elsewhere, and especially in vocational areas, such software may be used to allow apprentices to have access to assessments that are appropriate for them and enable them to show their proficiency
- The centre should ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the apprentice an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, centres should seek advice from the ECQN if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.

Summary:

- The apprentice should be familiar with how the assistive technology works.
- The assistive technology should not give the apprentice an unfair advantage over other apprentices or invalidate the assessment criteria.

USE OF ACCESS FACILITATORS

Reader

- A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the apprentice all or part of the assessment material and the apprentice's written responses.
- Where there is evidence of need a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading is not being assessed
- The centre should, in consultation with the apprentice, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective arrangement. The apprentice may be more comfortable with:
- the use of speech/screen reading software which reads out the material without decoding or interpreting it
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader.
- The reader should not normally be the apprentice's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the ECQN should be specifically consulted. **On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the apprentice be used as a reader.**
- The centre should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the apprentice. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.
- An apprentice should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during any training programme leading up to the assessment.
- The centre should ensure that the apprentice and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.
- A separate invigilator must be present when a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.
- The centre should give the reader clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- For an apprentice requiring a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.
- The apprentice using a reader should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other apprentices.
- Where an apprentice is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the apprentice to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances the apprentice must be accommodated in a separate room so that other apprentices are not disturbed. Separate invigilation should be arranged in these cases. The invigilator may not correct the reading of the apprentice.

- The reader is responsible to, and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

The reader:

- should read only as requested by the apprentice. The apprentice may choose to read some parts of the assessment him/herself.
- should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing-impaired apprentice, the reader should articulate clearly.
- should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything.
- should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the apprentice.
- may consult a dictionary, where this is allowed, at the apprentice's request and read out entries
- should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proof-reader
- should not advise the apprentice regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered
- may enable a visually impaired apprentice to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question, but should neither give factual help to the apprentice nor offer any suggestion
- is permitted to help a visually impaired apprentice using diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted apprentice
- should, if requested, give a visually impaired apprentice the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise spellings must not be given.
- should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Summary

- The centre should check that the use of a reader is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the apprentice to undertake the assessment.
- The centre should select a reader and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a reader is used.
- A reader should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Scribe

- A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes an apprentice's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed. The most common need for a scribe is where an apprentice has injured their arm and is unable to write.
- The centre should, in consultation with the apprentice, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires high level communication skills from the apprentice, the centre is advised to consider whether the apprentice would be more comfortable with the use of a computer, especially where the apprentice is likely to use a word processor rather than a scribe in the workplace.
- For an apprentice requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.
- The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases, the writing of answers by the apprentice may be the skill being assessed. Voice recognition technology (assistive technology) may be used in the Writing component of qualification where its use reflects the apprentice's normal way of writing.
- The centre should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the apprentice. A scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the apprentice's responses, write legibly and/or word process at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe.
- A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing or ICT.
- A scribe should not normally be the apprentice's own tutor or assessor, except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the awarding body should be specifically consulted.

On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the apprentice be used as a scribe.

- An apprentice should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.
- The centre should ensure that the apprentice and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.
- The centre should give the scribe clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do and what he/she is not allowed to do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- The apprentice using a scribe should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other apprentices.

- A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.
- The scribe is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During the assessment a scribe:

- should check with the apprentice for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The apprentice may choose to write some responses him/herself.
- should neither give factual help to the apprentice nor offer any suggestions. o should not advise the apprentice regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- should write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the apprentice. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words. o should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the apprentice.
- should not assist the apprentice to produce any diagrammatical or graphical material. May, at the apprentice's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the apprentice's response. o should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

Summary:

- The centre should check that the use of scribe is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the apprentice to undertake the assessment.
- The centre should select a scribe and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used.
- A scribe should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.



Section 2 – Making special considerations

The ECQN will review the circumstances and evidence surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the apprentice and does not give the apprentice an unfair advantage.

An apprentice who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the apprentice e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment

An apprentice will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre that the apprentice has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g.
- disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

The following are examples of special considerations and what the ECQN may offer:

- (a) Recent personal illness, accident, bereavement: candidates may be offered a deferral for the exam, allowing them to sit at a later date.
- (b) Serious disturbance during the examination: examiners will be advised of the circumstances prior to marking the exams and they may take this into consideration.
- (c) Reasonable adjustments which were made in respect of a permanent or long-term disability proved inappropriate or inadequate: candidates may be offered the opportunity to retake the examination or the examiner may be informed of the circumstances prior to marking the exam and it may be taken into consideration.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Access to Assessment	The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.
Appeal	A process through which an awarding organisation or centre may be challenged on the outcome of a decision
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a apprentice's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment criteria	The requirements that a apprentice needs to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade) in a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment method	The means by which an individual's competence is judged.
Assessment needs	The adjustments that some individuals require to the assessment strategy and/or assessment task in order to demonstrate that they can meet the required standard.
Assessment task	An activity undertaken by an individual apprentice to show that he or she can meet the required standard.
Assessor	The person who assesses a apprentice's work.
Assistive technology	Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.
BSL/ISL English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language/Irish Sign Language
Carrier language	The language communication used by the awarding organisation to set an assessment task or test (which may not be the first/preferred language of the apprentice)
CCTV	Closed circuit television
Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to a qualification or units.
Competence	The ability to perform to the required standard
Enabling technologies	See assistive technology
Externally set	Examinations or assessment tasks or assignments which are determined by the awarding body
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment
Learning programme	A course of study
Oral language modifier	Person who can modify/rephrase the carrier language of an assessment for a apprentice whose first/preferred language is English, but who has specific difficulties with written language
Malpractice	Actions and practices which threaten the integrity of public qualifications

Moderation	The process of checking that assessment standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors, between centres and over time, and making adjustments to results where required to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered.
Portfolio	A collection of work submitted for assessment.
Prompter	Person who draws the apprentice's attention back to the task in hand
Practical assistant	Person who carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the apprentice
Reasonable adjustment	Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the apprentice at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Arrangements are approved in advance of an examination or assessment.
Risk assessment	An estimation of the likelihood of something unfortunate happening as a result of a course of action.
Scribe	Person who writes down or word processes a apprentice's dictated responses
Qualification specification	A detailed statement or document which sets out the aims, purpose, content, structure, and assessment arrangements for a qualification.
Standards	The combination of knowledge, understanding and skills required to perform a job or task to the level of competence required in the workplace.
Special consideration	Procedures implemented at the time of an examination to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a apprentice who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the examination.
Speech software	A computer programme that reads text
Transcript	A full written or typewritten copy of information or material originally provided in writing, speech or sign language.
Voice activated software	A computer programme which responds to spoken instructions.

END OF POLICY