

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Introduction

This policy is provided for Training Qualifications UK centres who are delivering TQUK qualifications and for learners who are registered on or have taken a TQUK qualification. It is also for use by TQUK staff members, to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests in a consistent manner.

TQUK Internal Responsibility

The Quality Manager is responsible for the maintenance and compliance of this policy. If the Quality Manager is absent the Managing Director would appoint another member of the SMT to ensure all TQUK actions and activities are in line with the content of this policy.

This policy outlines:

- our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to our qualifications
- how learners qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- the reasonable adjustments we will permit and those where permission is required in advance before they are applied
- what special considerations will be given to learners

Centre's responsibility

It is important that staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of TQUK qualifications and learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

During EQA Activities, TQUK External Quality Assurers may check that relevant staff members and learners are aware of the contents and purpose of this policy.

Review Arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

The annual review of this policy will be undertaken by the Quality Assurance Department approximately four weeks prior to the submission of TQUK's Statement of Compliance to regulators. Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by TQUK's SMT.

If you have any points or feedback regarding this policy, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

Arrangements not covered by this policy

Circumstances for both internal and external assessment not covered in this policy should be discussed with TQUK before assessment takes place. Please contact TQUK via the details provided at the end of this policy.

Appeals

If a centre wishes to appeal against a decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to the TQUK Appeals Policy.

Policy overview

TQUK is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation in relation to the development and delivery of our qualifications and, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. TQUK seeks to uphold human rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and special educational needs of our learners and to provide equal reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered on TQUK qualifications.

Assessment undertaken within recognised TQUK centres should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and performance skills. However, for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable.

TQUK recognise that reasonable adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of assessment where:

- learners have a permanent disability or individual learning need/s
- learners have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning need/s
- learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for learners, or to give learners an advantages over others.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained:

- through reasonable adjustments and
- through special considerations.

Process for requesting reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations

If a centre is making a request on behalf of a learner/s, it should complete a Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Request Form (accessible from TQUK systems) and in doing so supply relevant supporting information. For example:

- learner's name and TQUK registration number
- nature of, and rationale for, the request
- supporting information/evidence (eg medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information)

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted no later than 7 days before the assessment.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than 5 working days after the assessment. Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the centre co-ordinator

- medical evidence comes to light about a learner's condition, which demonstrates that the learner must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment
- for onscreen assessments where results are immediately available.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

How TQUK will deal with requests

We will acknowledge all requests within 48 hours of receipt. In most cases we will be able to provide an outcome within the timescale as well, but in more complex cases which require input from experts it may take longer. We aim to have issued outcomes to all requests within 5 working days. If we are unable to respond in this time, we will provide you with an estimated response date.

Definition of reasonable adjustments

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. They are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, 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 an autistic learner
- 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
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

Reasonable adjustments must be approved before any assessment activity takes place. The use of reasonable adjustment/s will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

TQUK and recognised 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, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

TQUK will review a request for reasonable adjustment/s on a case by case basis and will take into consideration the particular need of each individual learner when making a decision to grant the request.

Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment, if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who had temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control
- and which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

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.
- present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working and enables them to meet the specified assessment criteria. For example, materials do not have to be in written or spoken format, unless specified by the assessment requirements.
- 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 or spoken format unless specified by the assessment criteria.

The centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements. The centre is advised to contact the Quality Assurance Department to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used
- be assessable
- be able to be moderated or verified.

In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition or 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 qualifications.

Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for these types of assessments, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from the Quality Assurance Department. The centre should ensure that they adhere to TQUK's requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

- Identify the appropriate adjustment

When identifying which adjustments the learner will need in the assessment, centre staff should take into consideration the learner's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during informal assessments and the assessment requirements of the qualification.

Simple adjustments may be appropriate e.g. adjusting seat height or providing an arm rest, etc. The learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Different qualifications make different demands. For example, a learner with dyslexia may need extra time to complete a written test, but may not need extra time for a purely practical activity. Once the adjustment has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

- Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with the guidelines in this policy

The centre must ensure that the adjustment will not impair the ability to assess the learner's performance, skill or knowledge fairly in each assessment.

Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable using the form at the end of this policy.

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 additional learning need.

Where the centre can verify evidence of the disability or additional learning need and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical disabilities, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the centre does not need to provide further evidence of these physical disabilities.

Where the implications of a particular need are not clear, such as some additional learning needs, or mental health issues, 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 learner 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 previously received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during initial and 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 carried out the assessments and wrote the report.

The report should set out the nature of the disability or additional learning need and extent to which the learner is affected, 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, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

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 that have been made.

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 and external quality assurers have a duty to seek advice from the Quality Assurance Department, 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.

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 Quality Assurance Department, 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 qualifications. Some learners 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
- Modifications to presentation of assessment material
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Use of access facilitators

Changes to assessment conditions

Extra time

- Where assessment activities are time constrained, a learner 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 learner's additional learning need. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. It is the centre's responsibility to specify the amount

of extra time the learner 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 onscreen assessments may have to be customised for each learner. In these cases the centre is advised to contact the Quality Assurance Department to apply for a time extension to be set up.
- Before allowing extra time for the assessment, the centre should be satisfied that the learner can cope with the content of the qualification and that the learner 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 learner'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 learner an unfair advantage over others.

Change in the organisation of the assessment room

- Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.
- Visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good light.
- Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.
- Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

Summary:

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

On-screen assessments

If the default font and text size used for an on-screen assessment is not suitable for the learner, screen magnification software programmes may provide an option to magnify the text to a suitable size.

Summary:

- Where appropriate, the centre should meet TQUK 's deadlines for requesting enlarged assessment material, normally not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment.
- In cases where the centre is permitted by TQUK to enlarge assessment material, the centre should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged.
- Learners should become familiar with the ways the screen may be adapted in onscreen exams by using the practice tests.

Other languages and use of translators

- TQUK primarily offer its qualifications and units in the language of English. Nonetheless TQUK will undertake to support the delivery of our qualifications in other languages, most notably Welsh, Irish (Gaeilge) and British Sign Language where appropriate and upon request and evidence of sufficient demand. For example a learner may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification:
 - for the Learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language, or
 - to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English, Irish or Welsh is not required for the role supported by the qualification.
- In implementing any arrangements to support other UK-based languages, TQUK may engage with the relevant regulatory body to seek further advice and guidance on the most appropriate arrangements to put in place to ensure comparability of assessments, moderation and awarding.
- Assessments in other languages will only be allowed where proficiency in English, Welsh or Irish is not required in the workplace for individuals to be deemed capable of carrying out the role (associated with the qualification). At all times requests from centres/learners for reasonable adjustments in relation to the use of other languages must be approved by TQUK

in advance so as to ensure that final assessments would be comparable to that offered in English (Welsh and/or Irish)

Summary

- TQUK may permit the user of a translator if there is a strong rationale and it is clear that the lack of English, Welsh or Irish would not prevent a learner carrying out the role that the unit/qualification relates.
- TQUK will not permit the use of an interpreter.
- If the centre were to employ the translator themselves TQUK reserves the right to quality assure the assessments and the centre must be able to produce evidence of the translator's credentials.
- TQUK also reserve the right to employ its own translator to carry out an assessment and/or support our quality assurance of the centre's arrangements.
- Should a translator be used at the centre then TQUK's field staff (ie external quality assurer) will include learners that have had the support of a translator within their monitoring sample.

Section 2 - Making special considerations

We 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 learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage.

A learner 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 learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment
- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner 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, eg disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.
- the disadvantage is caused by disregard for the centre or TQUK requirements, recreational drugs or misreading of exam instructions.
- disruption in a controlled assessment environment is minor and momentary (such as a mobile phone ringing) and dealt with immediately by the assessment invigilator.

In the event that special considerations are granted the learner will receive a 1%-5% lift in marks for a graded exam. For qualifications where the grading is only pass/fail the learner will be given another opportunity to demonstrate competence, or TQUK may accept evidence of the candidates previously having met the requirements of a particular criteria.

Appendix 1 – Reasonable adjustments permissions table

This table outlines some of the decisions on reasonable adjustments that can be made. However, centres and external quality assurers have a duty to seek advice from TQUK in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

- Permitted – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre
- Apply – Apply to TQUK for permission

Reasonable adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	Permitted	Permitted / Apply *
Extra time in excess of 25%	Permitted	Apply
Supervised rest breaks	Permitted	Apply
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Permitted	Permitted
Separate accommodation within the centre	Permitted	Permitted
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	Permitted	Apply
Language modified assessment material	Apply	Apply

Assessment material on coloured paper	Permitted	Apply
Use of ICT	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Responses in British Sign Language	Permitted	Apply
Responses in Irish Sign Language	Permitted	Apply
Other	Apply	Apply

* Permitted at the discretion of the centre unless ICT is implicitly or explicitly excluded in the Standard being assessed or in its associated Assessment Strategy or Qualification Manual

Appendix 2 - 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 learner's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment criteria	The requirements that a learner 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 learner to show that he or she can meet the required standard.
Assessor	The person who assesses a learner's work.
Assistive technology	Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.
BSL/English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and from British 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 learner)
CCTV	Closed circuit television
Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to an awarding organisation 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
External Quality Assurer	Person who checks that a centre's assessment and quality assurance procedures comply with the requirements of the awarding organisation and the regulators.
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 learner 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 learner's attention back to the task in hand
Practical assistant	Person who carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner
Reasonable adjustment	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. 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 learner'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.
Sector body	A body (such as a Sector Skills Council) recognised by the regulatory authorities as responsible for formulating and reviewing standards of occupational competence for an employment sector.
Special consideration	Procedures implemented at the time of an examination to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a learner 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.

Notes on the completion of the Reasonable Adjustment Form

1. TQUK has designed this form to ensure that it is easy to understand and complete. However, we have provided some additional guidance for key fields below.
2. Please fill in all a separate form should normally be completed for each learner, for each qualification, listing all units/components affected in the same specification.
3. In the box Reason for application, please state precisely the nature of the disability or indisposition and its effects in relation to the assessment (e.g. cerebral palsy affecting movement of hands).
4. The centre is advised, wherever possible, to consult a specialist advisory service or other external service on the most appropriate arrangements for the learners concerned and then consider their advice in the light of the course specifications.
5. Please specify any information/evidence enclosed with the application which will assist understanding of the case. Medical or other appropriate evidence will not always be required but must be provided for cases that the head of centre/examinations officer is unable to verify to the satisfaction of the awarding body.
6. The head of centre/examinations officer must support an application for it to be accepted.
7. Please send completed forms to the Quality Assurance Department, via e-mail to quality@tquk.org

Notes on the completion of the Special Consideration Form

1. TQUK has designed this form to ensure that it is easy to understand and complete. However, we have provided some additional guidance for key fields below.
2. Please fill in all a separate form should normally be completed for each learner, for each qualification, listing all units/components affected in the same specification. However, in cases where a group of learners have been disadvantaged by a particular event (eg fire alarm) a single form should be submitted. A list of learners affected should be firmly attached to the form.
3. Please state on the form the precise nature of the adverse circumstances affecting the learner, including, in the appropriate boxes, the date when the circumstances first began to affect the learner and whether the learner is still affected by them during the examination.
4. In cases where medical/psychological evidence is required, please ensure that this is securely attached to the form.
5. The head of centre/examinations officer must support an application for it to be accepted.
6. After the publication of results, late applications may be accepted only in the most exceptional circumstances and only before the deadline for enquiries about results for the respective examination series.
7. Please send completed forms to the Quality Assurance Department, via e-mail to quality@tquk.org