

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy

Our policy on ensuring fair and equal access to assessment

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Reasonable adjustments policy

1 Introduction

1.1 Qualifications Network is committed to providing all learners with an equal opportunity to achieve qualifications through the provision of alternative assessment arrangements where necessary. (D2)

1.2 Inequality may arise through:

- A permanent or long-term disability or specific learning need
- A temporary disability, medical condition or specific learning need
- Indisposition at the time of the examination / assessment
- English being a second, or additional, language

1.3 An awarding organisation must, in accordance with Equalities Law, have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to qualifications which it makes available (G6.2)

2 Document review

2.1 Our policy is reviewed on a bi-annual basis

2.2 This policy will also be reviewed as required due to feedback from stakeholders or in line with changes in legislation or best practice and/or as a result of changes to regulations.

2.3 The next review date for this policy is 12/09/2020

3 Document audience

3.1 This policy is intended for Qualifications Network staff, including freelance staff, Centres and others who need to identify and manage requests for reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

4 Scope of document

4.1 This policy covers the identification and management of reasonable adjustments and special considerations across the scope of the development, delivery, assessment and awarding of Qualifications.

4.2 This policy applies to all staff including but not limited to:

- Contractors
- standards verifiers
- Committee members
- Assessors
- Centres
- Any person involved in the design, development, writing, printing or distribution of assessment materials

5 Document availability

5.1 This policy is available to all direct employees via our Compliance Department Operations Manual and Examinations Department Operations manual.

5.2 This policy is also available on the staff pages of our website.

5.3 This policy will be issued to all contractors and other non-direct employees on induction.

5.4 This policy is available to Centres via the Centre Support pages of the website at: MyQNUK.co.uk/qnuk-policies.

5.5 A guide to reasonable adjustments and special considerations is also available to support Centres via the Centre Support pages of the website at: MyQNUK.co.uk/qnuk-policies.

6 Risk management

6.1 Mishandled applications for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations could have a potential of malpractice or maladministration which could result in a Centre and/or Qualification Network would be in violation of its Conditions of Recognition or other regulatory requirements.

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- 6.2** Failure to respond to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations could adversely affect not only Qualifications Network but all stakeholders including learners and could be violation of legislation.
- 6.3** Should a case arise whereby a stakeholder has deliberately been refused reasonable adjustment or special considerations or unnecessary adjustments have been applied this would be considered under our malpractice/maladministration policy and such action will be investigated and acted upon immediately at the appropriate level.
- 7** **Conflicts of interest**
- 7.1** All Qualifications Network Staff, contractors, Centres and learners are required to adhere to the Conflict of Interest policy and process as outline in the policy document 'Conflict of Interest'.
- 7.2** For further information and guidance regarding conflict of interest please refer to the policy document.
- 8** **Resource requirements**
- 8.1** The EQA Co-Ordinator is responsible for identifying any additional resource requirements while managing incidents and/or requests relating to reasonable adjustments and special considerations and passing details of the requirements to the Chief Executive.
These resources may include:
- Independent reviewers
 - Consultants
 - Investigators
- 9** **Non-conformance reports**
- 9.1** Our non-conformance reports help to identify weaknesses in our quality procedures.
- 9.2** A non-conformance should be filed where weaknesses in our management of requests for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations is identified.
- 9.3** The procedure for identifying, recording and processing non-conformances is outlined in the compliance department operations manual.
- 10** **Informing our approach**
- 10.1** Requests for reasonable adjustments and special considerations will be monitored to identify any trends, the outcome of which may influence how we review our approach.
- 10.2** Any trends identified are notified to the Governance Committee and reviewed at Governance Committee meetings.
- 10.3** Where appropriate, identified trends may be added to our Risk Register and be updated in accordance with our Risk Management Policy and procedures.
- 11** **Training/competence**
- 11.1** All stakeholders should be able to identify issues that may require reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations and how to act upon them.
- 11.2** Additional support, guidance and training will be provided to any Centre or staff member where this is requested or where a training need has been identified.
- 12** **Responsibilities**
- 12.1** All staff have a responsibility to identify and declare possible requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations.

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- 12.2** Qualifications Network have a responsibility to:
- Take all reasonable steps to support requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
 - Have up-to-date written procedures for managing requests for reasonable adjustment/special considerations
 - Ensure that all requests are reviewed quickly and effectively
 - Review how each Centre deals with, or intends to manage requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations.
 - Provide (upon request) guidance to Centres on how best to support requests for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
 - Investigate and manage any cases of suspicions of malpractice/maladministration associated with reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
- 12.3** The EQA Co-ordinator is responsible for:
- Recording requests and approval or denial of reasonable adjustments/special considerations
 - Ensuring incidents of mishandled requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations, are investigated and any suspected cases of malpractice or maladministration are passed to the Compliance Manager as per the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- 12.4** Centres should:
- Decide that learners are ultimately capable of meeting the requirements of the qualification
 - Identify any learner requirements and give due consideration as to how this might affect successful completion of the qualification
 - Diagnose the requirements of each learner individually, making use of specialist advice where necessary and advise learners accordingly
 - Agree with the learner prior to commencing the course the adjustments that are required
 - Ensure that the learner is adept in the use of the special arrangements
 - Ensure that suitably qualified personnel check that the evidence is current and relevant to the learner
 - Ensure that all records and evidence relating to reasonable adjustments are kept for three years following certification.
- 13** **Definition of Reasonable Adjustments (G6)**
- 13.1** Reasonable Adjustments are defined by the Conditions of Recognition as: “adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification. (G6.1)
- 14** **Examples of reasonable adjustments**
- 14.1** Any reasonable adjustment for assessment must ensure that the learner can still present evidence which:
- Meets the specification
 - Allows assessment
 - Does not unfairly advantage the learner
- 14.2** **Physical Impairment**
- 14.2.1** The use of:
- a reader and/or writer and/or interpreter
 - suitable mechanical/electronic aids
 - other suitable physical aids which do not impact the compliance with 14.1 above.
- 14.2.2** Extra 25% time allowance

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14.3 Visual Impairment

14.3.1 The use of:

- a reader and/or writer and/or interpreter
- suitable mechanical /electronic aids
- an alternatively presented question paper, e.g. enlarged or modified print, paper colour to regulations/legislation/Qualification Network policies and procedures

14.3.2 An extra 25% time allowance

14.4 Hearing Impairment

14.4.1 The use of:

- a communicator and/or interpreter
- suitable mechanical/electronic aids, e.g. Induction Loop system
- any additional aids as recommended by a specialist teacher of deaf people

14.4.2 Extra 25% time allowance

14.5 Learning Disabilities / differences (e.g. dyslexia or Autism)

14.5.1 The use of:

- a reader and/or writer and/or interpreter
- suitable mechanical/electronic aids
- an alternatively presented question paper, e.g. enlarged or modified print, paper colour, easy read format

14.5.2 Extra 25% time allowance

14.6 English as a second or other language

14.6.1 The use of:

- A non-electronic bi-lingual dictionary
- A reader and/or writer

14.6.2 Extra 25% time allowance

14.7 Medical Conditions

14.7.1 Individual arrangements as appropriate to the learners needs

14.7.2 Extra 25% time allowance

15 Notification of reasonable adjustments

15.1 A Centre may apply any of the reasonable adjustments listed in Section 14 above without prior notification to Qualifications Network but, where this is done, they must ensure that the Request for Reasonable Adjustments form is completed and submitted with the request for results and/or certificates.

15.2 Requests for all other, non-listed reasonable adjustments must be submitted to Qualifications Network as soon as the need is identified, but no later than one calendar month prior to the proposed date of assessment.

15.3 On receipt, Qualifications Network will assess each case. In the event of a request being declined a reason will be given.

15.4 Centres may appeal against the decision, in writing, within 28 calendar days of the decision being issued by Qualifications Network. Please see our Appeals Policy for full details of the process for this.

15.5 Where a specific request has been made which is not within the normal processes of Qualifications Network, Centres should be aware that additional time may be required to action the request and make provision for that when submitting their request. Whilst all efforts will be made to meet the

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required dates for assessment, this cannot be guaranteed within the minimum one calendar month notice.

16 Special considerations

- 16.1** Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced –
- (a) an illness or injury, or
 - (b) some other event outside of the Learner’s control, which has had, or is reasonably 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 (G7.1)
- 16.2** Any Special Consideration undertaken must ensure that the learner can still present evidence which:
- Meets the specification
 - Allows assessment
 - Does not unfairly advantage the learner
 - Does not adversely affect the security of the assessment or the integrity of the assessment results
- 16.2** A request for special consideration must be submitted to Qualifications Network by the Centre as soon as possible, but prior to any results being issued:
- Experiences unforeseen circumstances during an examination/assessment e.g. a fire alarm, a learner falls ill *or*
 - Finds that the provisions outlined in the “Procedure for reasonable adjustment” do not meet the needs a learner.

17 Examples of Special Considerations

17.1 Fire alarms and/or evacuation of a building during assessment

- 17.1.1** Where an assessor / invigilator / trainer can confirm that the assessment papers have remained secure throughout the time of the disruption (e.g. the examination room was locked during the evacuation or the Learners remained in their seats during the disruption and were observed during the entire time) then the assessment may continue, allowing for the full time of the disruption to be added to the end of the examination time.

17.2 Illness or Injury

- 17.2.1** Where a learner falls ill during the assessment, if they have been accompanied by a member of Centre Staff during the period of illness (e.g. if they have been in the lavatory) and it can be confirmed that they have had no access to their mobile phone or tablet or otherwise been able to access additional information which could compromise the integrity of the assessment, the learner should be allowed to continue their assessment, allowing for the time missed to be added to the end of the examination time.
- 17.2.2** Where a learner falls ill during the assessment and needs to leave the examination completely, they should be allowed to re-take the assessment using a different version of the assessment paper at a later date.

17.3 Bereavement / Family Emergency

- 17.3.1** If a learner is called away just prior to the assessment or during the assessment, they should be allowed to take that assessment at a later date using a different version of the assessment paper to the others in their original cohort.

17.4 Specific Qualification Requirements

Centres should be aware that there are some instances where an assessment must be taken within a set timeframe of the commencement of the training, usually where the qualification has an expiry date. Details of the set timeframes for qualifications can be found in the relevant Qualification Specification available from the Qualifications Network website or via MyQNUK.co.uk/qnuk-policies.

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18 Requests for special considerations

- 18.1** If a Centre requests special consideration, the 'Request for Special Consideration' form should be completed by the Centre and returned to Qualifications Network together with any relevant documentary evidence attached to the assessment paper. The 'Request for special consideration form' may be photocopied or requested from Qualifications Network
- 18.2** On receipt, Qualifications Network will assess each case. In the event of a request being declined, a reason will be given. Centres may appeal against this decision, in writing, within 28 days of the decision being issued by Qualifications Network.
- 18.3** The completed form should be sent with the request for results and/or certificates.
- 18.4** If a Centre is unsure of whether a Special Consideration should be made, they should contact Qualifications Network as soon as possible by telephone to ask for guidance on their specific circumstances.

19 Guidance on reasonable adjustments

19.1 General responsibilities of readers and writers

- 19.1.1** A reader/writer is a person who, on request, will read/write for the learner:
- All or any part of the examination/assessment paper
 - Any part / all of the learners answers
- 19.1.2** A reader may also act as a writer and vice versa.
- 19.1.3** The use of a reader/writer should neither advantage the learner unfairly nor disadvantage the learner further.
- 19.1.3** The reader/writer should not normally be the learner's facilitator or a subject specialist, but there may be circumstances where this is unavoidable. In such cases, it should be noted in the relevant place on the "Notification of reasonable adjustment" form. On no account should a relative, colleague or friend of the learner be used as a reader/writer.
- 19.1.4** Readers and writers must not in any way attempt to modify either the content of the answers given by the learners or any of the specific qualification requirements.
- 19.1.5** It is recommended that prior to undertaking the examination/assessment the learner, wherever possible, should have practice with a reader/writer.
- 19.1.6** Learners using the services of a reader/ writer should be accommodated separately to avoid disturbing other learners. However, several such learners attempting the same paper may be accommodated together in the same venue.
- 19.1.7** During the examination/assessment the reader/ writer must not give any factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestions concerning which questions to attempt, when to move onto the next question or in which order the questions should be answered.
- 19.1.8** Both readers and writers are responsible to the Accountable Officer.
- 19.1.9** Invigilators may not act as either a reader or a writer.
- 19.1.10** It should be noted that failure to comply with any of these guidelines could result in the learner being disqualified and the Centre being investigated for suspected malpractice or maladministration.
- #### 19.2 Further guidance to centres using readers
- 19.2.1** Learners may be assisted by the services of a reader if they have either a long-term or a temporary disability that prevents them from completing the examination/assessment in the usual way.
- 19.2.2** The reader should be a responsible person who is able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate.
- 19.2.3** The reader may read the same questions(s) as often as requested providing it is within the time allowed

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19.2.4 The spelling of a word can be given only if requested

19.3 Further guidance to centres using writers

19.3.1 Learners may dictate answers to writers if they have either a long-term or a temporary disability that prevents them from completing the examination/assessment in the usual way

19.3.2 The writer should be a responsible adult who is able to produce an accurate record of the learner's answers and who can write legibly and at a reasonable speed.

19.3.3 The writer should at all times write down answers exactly as they are dictated by the learner.

19.4 Guidance to centres using communicators for hearing-impaired learners

19.4.1 Arrangements for the use of a communicator will be made by the Assessor or Invigilator in consultation with a teacher of deaf people or local advisory service as appropriate

19.4.2 The communicator must be a qualified teacher of deaf people and should work in accordance with the guidelines specified in "The Language of Examinations" booklet produced by the "National Association for Tertiary Education of the Deaf".

19.4.3 The communicator should be a responsible adult known by the learner but must not be a relative, colleague or friend of the learner

19.4.4 The role of the communicator is primarily to be available to interoperate when requested to do so by the learner

19.4.5 A note detailing the communication method employed should be entered on to "Notification of reasonable adjustment" form

19.4.6 It should be noted that failure to comply with any of these guidelines could result in the learner being disqualified and the Centre being investigated for suspected malpractice or maladministration.

19.5 Guidance to centres on the use of computers and I.T

19.5.1 The use of computers and/or IT equipment by learners with disabilities may be necessary as the primary means of communication.

19.5.2 The use of the term 'computer' refers specifically to word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text, graphics or diagrams. The following guidelines should be observed:

19.5.2.1 Advanced level learners with disabilities may be permitted to produce their answers via a computer in cases where the disability means they are not able to produce their answers in the usual way.

19.5.2.2 Where a computer has been used, the Centre may be asked to supply additional information concerning the means used by a learner(s) to answer particular questions.

19.5.2.3 The computer must be solely used by the learner who is the subject of the access arrangements and not by someone acting on the learner's behalf. The learner must therefore be proficient in the use of the computer and its software.

19.5.2.4 Checks should be carried out to ensure that the computer is working correctly at the time of the examination/assessment.

19.5.2.5 The learner must only have access to those facilities that have agreed in advance. Similarly, learners must not be able to gain access to existing files, documents, web pages etc. that could give them an unfair advantage. The invigilator is responsible for ensuring no malpractice occurs in the use of the computer.

19.5.2.6 Learners using computers in circumstances where their use may distract other learners should be accommodated separately in order to undergo their formal examinations/assessments.

19.5.2.7 Learners should be strongly recommended to frequently save their work.

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19.5.2.8 The printing of answers may take place after the time allowed for the examination/assessment has expired. The learner should be present in order to verify that his/her printing is complete. Then finally the system must be cleared of all work.

20 Confidentiality of assessment (G4.5)

20.1 During any request for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations the confidentiality and validity of assessments must be maintained.

20.2 All material collected as part of a request/approval for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations will be kept securely and should not be disclosed to any third parties (other than the regulators or the police where appropriate).

20.3 All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that no person connected to the request for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations, or previously connected to such a request, offers to disclose information about any assessment or the content of any assessment materials where that information is (or is said or implied to be) confidential (G4.5)

20.4 Where any breach of such confidentiality (including through the loss or theft of confidential assessment materials) is either suspected by a Centre or Qualification Network or alleged by any other person and where there are reasonable grounds for that suspicion or allegation an investigation will be instigated and acted upon at the appropriate level.

21 Data protection and confidentiality

21.1 Qualification Network will ensure any and all information provided to it will be held in accordance with all current data protection legislation, including, but not limited to, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations. Information shared will only be used to ensure all those involved with the awarding body act in the best interest of the organisation. Information will not be used for any other purpose.

21.2 All staff and Centres are responsible for ensuring that information it holds and/or shares in done so in accordance with all current data protection legislation, including, but not limited to, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations, plus Qualifications Network's requirements.

21.3 Qualifications Network takes the confidentiality of all information held very seriously including the integrity and validity of qualification and assessment materials and resources. Any breach in confidentiality will be investigated and acted upon at the appropriate level.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Reasonable adjustments request form

This form should be used by the centre to request permission for the use of reasonable adjustments in assessment. This form should be completed in consideration with our reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy; available in the centre support area of our website. The form should be submitted at least 28 days prior to the assessment.

Centre name:

Centre number:

Learners name:

Qualification title:

Date of assessment:

Summary of circumstances:

Evidence to support request:

FOR QN UK STAFF ONLY

Outcome:

Approved by:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 2
Special considerations request form

This form should be used by the centre to request permission for the use of special considerations in assessment. This form should be completed in consideration with our reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy; available in the centre support area of our website. The form should be submitted at least 28 days prior to the assessment.

Centre name:

Centre number:

Learners name:

Qualification title:

Date of assessment:

Summary of circumstances:

Evidence to support request:

FOR QNUK STAFF ONLY

Outcome:

Approved by: _____ Signed: _____
Date