

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy

Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at Smart Awards centres and their learners, who are delivering, registered on or have taken Smart Awards qualifications. It is also for use by Smart Awards staff to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requested in a consistent manner.

A reasonable adjustment is an alteration that would enable a disabled person or someone who may experience difficulty to carry out qualification or assessment activities without being at a disadvantage compared to others. Under the Equality Act 2010, there is a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.

Special consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced; An illness or injury or 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.

2. Reasonable Adjustments Policy Statement

We seek to provide equal access to examinations for all learners, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers and that any reasonable adjustments for learners preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification.

We will endeavor to accommodate the needs of learners with a particular examination requirement, according to individual circumstances, ensuring such learners are not disadvantaged in relation to other learners and that certificates accurately reflect learner attainment.

We will give every consideration to requested extra time (up to 25%), ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to the examination and learner attainment. However, all requests will be considered on the information received. Requests for extra time which do not meet the Reasonable Adjustments Policy will be declined.

3. Centre's Responsibilities

It is important that centre staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications offered by Smart Awards and learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

4. Smart Awards Responsibility

Smart Awards is principally responsible for making reasonable adjustments for a learner defined as disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Secondly, to ensure that the process of approving reasonable adjustments and special considerations is applied fairly and consistently.

5. 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 and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

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 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 activate software
- Providing the mechanism to have different coloured 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 are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the qualification/assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

Smart Awards and 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.

6. Principles

- A risk assessment must be carried out to ensure health and safety is not compromised by setting reasonable adjustment
- Adjustments to qualification or assessment should not invalidate the qualification or assessment requirements
- A reasonable adjustment must be in place before the qualification or assessment takes place
- A reasonable adjustment must not give the learner an unfair advantage
- A reasonable adjustment must reflect the learner's normal way of working
- Adjustments should be based on the individual needs of the learner
- Adjustments should not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills
- Any adjustments must be supported by evidence
- All reasonable adjustments must be recorded.
- Types of Reasonable Adjustments
- Different types of assessment/qualifications make different demands on the learner and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.

The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- The specific assessment requirements of the qualification/assessment
- Type of assessment
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

7. Health and Safety considerations for practical assessments

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised in the name of assessment. In a practical activity, if there is a concern that the effects of a person's disability or difficulty may have health and safety implications for him/herself and for others, a suitably qualified person in the centre should carry out a risk assessment related to the learner's particular circumstances.

The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with the particular activity but should also take account of any reasonable adjustments put in place for the learner which may remove or reduce the risk. The risk assessment may reveal that it is not possible for the learner to fulfil all the requirements of the assessment. In this case it may be appropriate to substitute another task. The centre should contact Smart Awards to discuss individual cases where further clarification is necessary.

Assumptions should not be made about a disability or difficulty posing a health and safety risk but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

8. Assessments which are not taken under examination conditions

With these types of assessments, the centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment.

The centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways or achieving the assessment requirements. The centre is advised to contact Smart Awards 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/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 Smart Awards. The centre should ensure that they adhere to Smart Awards requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

9. Assessments for externally quality assured qualifications

With vocational qualification learners are often required to compile a portfolio of evidence which can consist of a mixture of work products, observations reports, witness statements, knowledge test, etc. Making appropriate access arrangements in qualifications of this type can be more straight-forward than in qualifications where the mode of assessment is more firmly fixed.

The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when the learner is first accepted onto a programme.

Where there is an identified need, the Learner may present their evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. For example, a Learner may

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audio cassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses.

Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto video, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or sign language is available to translate the material for the internal and external verifier if this is required.

Where the Learner uses alternative means of providing evidence, the method must have equal rigour to those used to other learners.

The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.

The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids which are available in the workplace or which are commercially available in order to demonstrate competence. For example, these may include specially adapted equipment or assistive technology.

The centre is required to provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs to produce evidence of developing the portfolio.

All adjustments should be consistent with the learner's normal way of working and must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.

While assessors, internal and external quality assurers normally prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence which is varied, the centre should be prepared to accept a more restricted variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. It is sensible, however, for the centre representatives to discuss this matter with the internal and/or verifier at an early stage.

The learner must achieve all the required units to gain a qualification. It may sometimes be the case that some full qualifications are inaccessible because of a learner's inability to demonstrate competence in all parts of the qualification. In these cases, unit certification should be available.

Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for assessments that are externally quality assured, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from Smart Awards or the EQA. The centre should ensure that they adhere to Smart Awards requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

Any Reasonable Adjustment will be based on Learner Needs; Examples may Include:

- Communication and interaction needs - A learner may have problems with reading and writing, the effects could be reduced through the use of a reader, word processor, Learners may also benefit from extra time
- Cognition and learning needs - Learners may benefit from extra time and assistance with reading and writing
- Sensory and physical needs - A learner may need to have their training/assessment /materials modified for hearing or visual impairment Behavioral, emotional and social needs - learner may benefit from 1:1 supervision
- English as an additional language - A learner may benefit from extra time.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

- Extra time - the amount of extra time should accurately reflect the extent to which the task can be completed (up to 25%), unlimited extra time is not allowed. Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial element of the qualification or assessment. Extra time for online assessments may have to be customised.
- Supervised rest breaks - the duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the qualification or assessment time, the learner must not leave the room
- Change in the organisation of the assessment room
- 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.
- Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.
- Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise distractions removed from the assessment room
- Modifications to materials
- Enlargements of paper-based materials or assessments may be used. Qualification materials and assessments may be provided in braille.
- Language modification - a learner can sign full responses in British Sign Language BSL.
- Reader - a reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the learner all or part of the qualification or assessment material. The reader should read only as requested by the learner and read accurately and not advise the Learner regarding the choice of assessment questions.
- Scribe – a scribe is a person who writes down a learner’s dictated response. A scribe must be given clear instructions and should immediately refer any problems to Smart Awards in communication during qualification or assessment questions. A scribe may be used where the learner’s handwriting is illegible, or the learner is unable to use computer or the learners’ response is in braille or BSL.
- Practical assistant - a practical assistant is a person who, during qualification or assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks which a practical assistant may assist are turning the pages on a workbook or question paper. A practical assistant would not undertake any practical skills on behalf of the learner

10. Definition of Special Consideration

Each request for special consideration will be unique to that learner or assessment. These guidelines offer some broad principles for the centre to follow. Further information should be sought in each case from Smart Awards. Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment

Special consideration may be given following a scheduled assessment to a Learner;

- Is present for the assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which arose at or near the time of assessment
- Misses part of the assessment due to circumstances outside their control
- Centres should note that, where an assessment required the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria must be fully met, or in the case of qualifications that confer a ‘License to Practice’, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner’s achievements. The learner’s results must reflect his/her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his/her potential ability.

Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

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.

11. Eligibility Criteria

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 example 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 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, example disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

12. Applying for special consideration

A centre should apply for special consideration using the form supplied by Smart Awards. A separate form should normally be completed for each learner for each qualification. However, in cases where a group of learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event (example, fire alarm) a single form should be submitted. A list of learners affected should be attached to the form.

The learner needs to submit evidence in support of special consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information.

The application should be signed and dated by the assessor or the centre manager. The signatory must declare that the information given is accurate. The application for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible.

Where an application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the Centre Manager. 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 examination, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment; For on-screen 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.

Doc Ref	QUA027- 5.0
Date of issue	01/03/2016
Review date	01/12/2021
Classification	Public

13. Malpractice

A centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to assessments/qualifications set out by Smart Awards has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead the Smart Awards to withhold the Learner’s results. Failure to comply is defines any or all of the following;

- Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from Smart Awards
- Exceeding the allowances agreed with Smart Awards
- Failing to maintain records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations for audit
- Failing to report delegated adjustments to Smart Awards, where this is required.

14. Internally Assessed Qualifications

For qualifications/assessments which are internally assessed, Centres do not need to apply to Smart Awards for approval of reasonable adjustments. All reasonable adjustments made by the Centre must be recorded on the SMART Awards’ Reasonable Adjustment Form and should be made available to Smart Awards upon request.

15. Externally assessed Qualifications

For qualifications/assessments which are externally assessed, Centres must apply to Smart Awards for approval no later than 10 days prior to the assessment date. The Smart Awards Reasonable Adjustment form must be completed and submitted to apply for approval.

The table below outlines some of the areas that reasonable adjustments can be made. However, centres have a duty to seek advice from Smart Awards in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

Extra time up to 25%
Supervised rest breaks
Change in the organisation of assessment room
Separate accommodation within the centre
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners
Use of assistive software
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries (English, Welsh, Gaelic)
Assessment material in enlarged format
Assessment material in braille
Language modified assessment material
Assessment material in BSL
Assessment material on coloured paper
Assessment material in audio format
Use of ICT
Responses using electronic devices
Responses in BSL
Responses in braille
Reader+
Scribe+

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

BSL
Prompter
Practical Assistant
Other

16. Reasonable Adjustments Form

Please complete a separate form for each individual learner and send a completed copy to Smart Awards.			
Centre Number		Centre Name	
Learner Number		Leaners Name	
Assessment Date		Assessor Name	
Title of Course/Qualification			
Reason for application:			
Reasonable adjustments required (please be specific);			
Evidence in support of the application. This may include; The centre's assessments of the learner's needs; History of provision within the centre; Medical certificate; Psychological or other professional assessment report.			
Please provide details of access facilitator required (where applicable):			
Declaration			
I confirm that:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information provided is accurate • The centre will be able to provide the arrangements requested • The reasonable adjustments will be implemented in accordance with the guidance given by SMART Awards 			
Name		Signature	
Position		Date	
For use by SMART Awards only:			

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

17. Special Consideration Form

Smart Awards 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.

Please fill in a separate form for each learner and 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 (e.g. fire alarm) a single form should be submitted. A list of learners affected should be firmly attached to the form.

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. In cases where medical/psychological evidence is required, please ensure that this is securely attached to the form.

The Centre Manager must support an application for it to be accepted. 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/assessment.

Special Conditions Application Form

Please complete a separate form for each individual learner and send a completed copy to Smart Awards.			
Centre Number		Centre Name	
Learner Number		Learners Name	
Assessment Date		Instructor Name	
Course title			
Summary of adverse circumstances affecting performance in assessment:			
Please provide evidence in support of the application. This may include; Medical or psychological evidence; Statement from the invigilator			
Optional Information			
In cases of partial absence, Smart Awards may require the following information from the centre; List four learners estimated to be of comparable standard			
Learner Reference Numbers:			
1		3	
2		4	
Declaration: I confirm that the information provided is accurate.			
Name		Signature	
Position		Date	
For official use by Smart Awards only:			

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

18. Reasonable Adjustment Quality Assurance

To complete where the centre or the external verifier has permitted reasonable adjustments. Please list the learners granted reasonable adjustments by the centre or by the EQA. Please do not list learners for whom applications have been made to Smart Awards

Centre Number Centre Name

This form should be returned to Smart Awards with the qualification paperwork submission or within 10 days of the adjustment being made (whichever is sooner).

Please complete as appropriate

Learner Number	Learner Name	Qualification Code	Level	Qualification Unit	Reason for Application	Reasonable Adjustment Made	Support Evidence

I confirm that:
 This form contains the details of all the reasonable adjustments permitted by the centre or EQA
 The adjustments to assessment/qualification has been made in accordance with the guidance of Smart Awards.

Name: _____ Signature: _____
 Position: _____ Date: _____

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

19. Permission Table

Permissions Table (to be completed by Smart Awards)		
The following key indicates where the decisions on reasonable adjustments can usually be made. However, centres and external quality assurer have a duty to seek advice from Smart Awards 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.		
A	Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre	
B	Consult EQA for permission	
C	Apply to Smart Awards for permission	
Reasonable adjustment	Assessment/qualification which are NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments/qualifications which are taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 1 hour	A	A
Extra time in excess of 1 hour	C	C
Supervised rest breaks	A	A
Change in the organisation of assessment room	A	A
Separate accommodation within the centre	A	A
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	A	A
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	A	C
Use of assistive software	A	A
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries (English, Welsh, Gaelic)	A	A
Assessment material in enlarged format	A	A
Assessment material in Braille	A	A
Language modified assessment material	C	C
Assessment material in BSL	C	C
Assessment material on coloured paper	A	A
Assessment material in audio format	C	C
Use of ICT	C	C
Responses using electronic devices	A	A
Responses in BSL	A	A
Responses in Braille	A	A
Reader	A	A
Scribe	C	C
BSL	A	A
Prompter	B	B
Practical assistant	B	B
Other	A	A

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

20. 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 body 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 method 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	An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language.
Carrier Language	The language used by Smart Awards to set an assessment task or test (which may not be the first/preferred language of the learner)
CCTV	Closed circuit television
Qualification Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to Smart Awards for the assessment arrangements leading to a qualification or unit.
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 Smart Awards.
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment.
Learner programme	A programme or 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. Making adjustments to results 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.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy



Doc Ref QUA027- 5.0
 Date of issue 01/03/2016
 Review date 01/12/2021
 Classification Public

	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. A full written or typewritten copy of information or material originally provided in writing, speech or sign language.
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.
EQA	Person who checks that a centre’s assessment and quality assurance procedures comply with the requirements of the awarding organisation and the regulators.
Voice activated software	A computer programme which responds to spoken instructions.