



Fair Access Policy

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INTRODUCTION

1. Smart Awards strives to ensure that it does not create any unnecessary barriers to achievement and provides fair end point assessment opportunities (EPA) for all apprentices, including those with particular assessment requirements and protected characteristics. All apprentices and potential apprentices should be able to enter and successfully participate in an apprenticeship programme and end point assessment in pursuit of their learning objectives.

SCOPE

2. It is important that all involved in the delivery of apprenticeship standards ensure that they adhere to the requirements of this policy.

OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

3. D2.2: An awarding organisation must monitor qualifications which it makes available for any feature which could disadvantage a group of learners who share a particular Characteristic.
4. D2.3: Where an awarding organisation has identified such a feature, it must – (a) remove any disadvantage which is unjustifiable, and (b) maintain a record of any disadvantage which it believes to be justifiable, setting out the reasons why in its opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.

SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

5. Principle 11. The awarding body shall ensure that its qualifications and their assessment are inclusive and accessible to learners.

RESPONSIBILITY

6. Smart Awards Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented. This policy is for employers, training providers and apprentices accessing Smart Awards end point assessments and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards end point assessments. Smart Awards has overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations, and that all those under our control comply with it. Smart Awards has the day-to-day responsibility for implementing this policy and for monitoring its use and effectiveness and dealing with any queries on its interpretation.

R	Responsibilities	The person who actually carries out the process or task. The person is responsible for action/implementation. Responsibilities can be shared											
A	Accountabilities	The person who is ultimately accountable for the process or task being completed and who has the authority to make decisions, yes or no authority and veto power. Responsible person (s) are accountable to this person. Only one A can be assigned to a task											
C	Consulted	The person to be consulted prior to a final decision or action (two-way communication). People who are not directly involved with carrying out the task but are consulted with.											
I	Informed	Anyone whose work depends on the process or task and who has to be updated about the progress after a decision or action has been taken (one-way communication).											
POLICY		BOARD	CEO	MD.	OPS DIRECTOR	QUALITY PORTFOLIO MANAGER	STANDARDS COMPLIANCE OFFICER	QUAL ADMIN OFFICER	IT CONSULT	FINANCE AUDITOR	EQA	NOPS BOARD	TRAINING PROVIDERS/ EMPLOYERS

Fair access	A	R	R	R	R	R	C	I	I	C	I	R
ASSOCIATED POLICIES												
Equality and diversity												
Fair access												
Reasonable adjustments												
Special consideration												
End point assessment development												
Holiday/Sickness Cover												
The MD, CEO and Operations Director cover holiday/sickness and absenteeism for areas where the person is responsible for action/implementation of a task. The MD, CEO and Operations Director hold company wide experience to be able to carry out these tasks and hold no conflicts of interest.												

POLICY COMMITMENTS

7. Smart Awards is committed to ensuring:

- That all Smart Awards end-point assessment delivery locations has and implements a fair access policy
- That all end-point assessments are developed to be representative of the apprentices registered protected characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the end-point assessment or apprenticeship end point assessment.
- Fairness in our arrangements for end-point assessments.
- That apprentices with a protected characteristic are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in end-point assessments in comparison to apprentices who do not share that characteristic, ensuring that all achievement in end-point assessments is comparable.
- That adequate monitoring and review of equality and diversity throughout the process of developing and delivering end-point assessment products and services.
- That Smart Awards considers all access requests relating to end-point assessments that are received.
- That we monitor data related to apprentice achievement in order to detect and mitigate against any accidental bias.
- Materials are reviewed to ensure there is no unnecessary bias or barriers.

ACCESS TO THE END-POINT ASSESSMENT

8. Smart Awards takes steps to ensure that its end-point assessments do not inadvertently discriminate and lead a group of apprentices who share a common attribute or circumstance to experience an unreasonable disadvantage. Smart Awards takes steps to ensure that assessment materials do not contain language or images that may discriminate or offend in any way. Any images, references, names or other material used in the assessment process aim to be representative of the society that we live in and inclusive to all irrespective of age, gender, race, sexuality or other distinction.

MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

9. Smart Awards assessments permit reasonable adjustments to be made where necessary and appropriate so that barriers can be addressed for apprentices with particular requirements. Apprentices that may require reasonable adjustments include those with the following (these may be temporary or permanent): Physical impairments; Auditory impairments; Visual impairments; Dyslexia or literacy issues (provided literacy is not a requirement of the training or end point assessment).

10. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:
- Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a apprentice 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 apprentice
 - 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.
11. Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the apprentice access to the end-point assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of an apprentice's work.
12. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other apprentices that qualify for reasonable adjustments. Smart Awards must be notified at the point of registration of apprentices for the end-point assessment of any issue or proposed adjustment. If the need for a reasonable adjustment emerges after registration or during the assessment process, the assessor should apply this as appropriate so as not to disadvantage the apprentice and notify Smart Awards notify as soon as practicably possible. Note that apprentices must still cover the totality of the Standard that is to be assessed.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

13. All elements of the Standard must be achieved with verifiable evidence produced against each so that the competence of apprentices is established without any doubt. Special consideration will not normally be given for vocationally related end point assessments. If an apprentice misses an assessment, or there is a disturbance during an assessment, this must be re-arranged. In doing so, the apprentice is given the opportunity to evidence their competence against the relevant Standard.

MONITORING

14. All requests for reasonable adjustments are monitored by Smart Awards.
15. Smart Awards will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, regularly considering its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. Internal control systems and procedures will be subject to regular audits to provide assurance that they are effective in ensuring equality of opportunity.

VALIDITY

16. Validity and the principles of equity, fairness and practicability will be reviewed with any reported unfair concerns. This will include checking that the end point assessment is still valid and appropriate for its purpose. That it still effectively tests the knowledge, skills and behaviour as prescribed within the assessment strategy. Enable results to be trusted as a measure of what an apprentice knows and can do. Has a purpose and content that meets the needs of the apprentice and is graded in line with clear and defensible prescriptions contained in the assessment plan.

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

17. This policy is reviewed and revised annually in response to feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the regulators, SQA Accreditation or Ofqual.