



# FAIR ACCESS POLICY



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Smart Awards strives to ensure that it does not create any unnecessary barriers to achievement and provides fair qualifications for all learners, including those with particular assessment requirements and protected characteristics. All learners and potential learners should be able to enter and successfully participate in a qualification in pursuit of their learning objectives.

# 2. SCOPE

2.1. It is important that all involved in the delivery of qualifications ensure that they adhere to the requirements of this policy. This policy maps to Ofqual general conditions and SQA Accreditation principles.

# 3. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.1.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.

3.2.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.

# 4. SQA ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

4.1. Principle 3. The awarding body must have the necessary resources to effectively carry out their operational functions to meet regulatory requirements.

4.2. Principle 12. The awarding body and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment.

4.2. Principle 14. The awarding body shall ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to learners.

# 5. RESPONSIBILITY

5.1. This is policy is for qualifications offered by Smart Awards. This policy is for centres and learners accessing Smart Awards qualifications and related services and all those involved with the development, delivery and quality assurance of Smart Awards qualifications. 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.

# 6. POLICY COMMITMENTS

6.1. Smart Awards is committed to ensuring:

- That all Smart Awards centres has and implements a fair access policy
- That all assessment materials are developed to be representative of the learners registered protected characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the qualification.
- Fairness in our arrangements for assessments
- That learner with a protected characteristic are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in the assessment in comparison to learners who do not share

that characteristic, ensuring that all achievement in qualification is comparable.

- That adequate monitoring and review of equality and diversity throughout the process of developing and delivering qualifications.
- That Smart Awards considers all access requests relating to qualifications that are received.
- That we monitor data related to learner achievement in order to detect and mitigate against any accidental bias.
- Materials are reviewed to ensure there is no unnecessary bias or barriers.

## 7. ACCESS TO THE QUALIFICATION

7.2. Smart Awards takes steps to ensure that its qualifications do not inadvertently discriminate and lead a group of learners 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.

## 8. MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

8.1. Smart Awards assessments permit reasonable adjustments to be made where necessary and appropriate so that barriers can be addressed for learners with particular requirements. Learners 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 qualification).

8.2. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- a. Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity.
- b. Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille
- c. Providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or reader
- d. Re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner.
- e. Changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- f. Using assistive technology, such as screen reading, or voice activate software.
- g. 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.
- h. Providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers.

8.3. 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 The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learners work.

8.4. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other learners that qualify for reasonable adjustments. Smart Awards must be notified at the point of registration of learners for the 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 learner and notify Smart Awards notify as soon as practicably possible. Note that learners must still cover the totality of the assessment that is to be assessed.

## 9. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

9.1. All elements of the qualification must be achieved with verifiable evidence produced against each so that the competence of learners is established without any doubt. If a learner misses an assessment, or there is a disturbance during an assessment, this must be re-arranged. In doing so, the learner is given the opportunity to evidence their competence against the relevant qualification.

## 10. MONITORING

10.1. All requests for reasonable adjustments are monitored by Smart Awards. Smart Awards will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of this policy, annually 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 annual audits to provide assurance that they are effective in ensuring equality of opportunity.

## 11. VALIDITY

11.1. Validity and the principles of equity, fairness and practicability will be reviewed with any reported unfair concerns. This will include checking that the qualification 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 a learner knows and can do. Has a purpose and content that meets the needs of the learner and is graded in line with clear and defensible prescriptions contained in the assessment plan.

## 12. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

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