



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT & SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY AND GUIDE



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Smart Awards have a duty to ensure that the integrity of its qualifications and assessment is maintained at all times. At the same time, Smart Awards approved centres have a duty to ensure that the rights of individual learners to access qualifications and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld.
- 1.2. A reasonable adjustment is an alteration that would enable a disabled person or someone who may have trouble carrying 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.
- 1.3. 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. PURPOSE

- 2.4. The purpose of this document is to inform centres of Smart Awards policy regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
- 2.5. Provide guidance and support to approved centres on the principles of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
- 2.6. Provide information to centres on the implementation of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations, including when and how to request approval from Smart Awards.
- 2.7. Satisfy Ofqual conditions and SQA Accreditation Principles regarding the use of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations by the various Qualification Regulators.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1. We seek to provide equal access to examinations for all learners, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers and that any reasonable adjustments or special considerations for learners preserve the validity, reliability, and integrity of the qualification.
- 3.2. We will endeavour 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.
- 3.3. We will give every consideration to reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to the examination and learner attainment. However, all requests will be considered on the information received. Requests which do not meet the reasonable adjustments policy will be declined.

4. SMART AWARDS RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.1. To meet our responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, Smart Awards will as far as is practicable:
- 4.2. Have a policy in place to prevent discrimination in the assessment of skills and knowledge. This policy will conform to the requirements of the Equality Act and should be subject to regular review. Smart Awards will communicate this policy to all their approved centres.
- 4.3. Have effective systems in place to approve reasonable adjustments and special consideration. Special considerations are 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.
- 4.4. Monitor and evaluate the use of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in order to ensure that these are effective and meet the requirements of current legislation. Smart Awards may approach this monitoring and evaluation activity in a way that best suits the needs of our centres and may include activities such as: centre visits, collation of learner feedback, comparisons of outcomes of cases where reasonable adjustments have/have not been applied etc.
- 4.5. Provide clear and comprehensive guidance to approved centres on the procedures for making adjustments to assessment. The guidance will include information about when a centre is permitted to allow adjustments to assessments and when it has to apply to Smart Awards for permission and the timescales for this. The guidance will specify the requirements for supporting evidence and record keeping. Smart Awards will regularly review these procedures in the light of changes in legislation and regulation.
- 4.6. Encourage centres to have policies and procedures in place to prevent discrimination against learners with access-related assessment needs.
- 4.7. Ensure that centres have effective internal systems to record where they permit reasonable adjustments. Smart Awards will monitor these systems to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of Smart Awards.
- 4.8. Require that centres undertake that buildings used as assessment venues are accessible to all learners.
- 4.9. Consider the needs of all potential learners when developing qualifications. Smart Awards take steps to ensure that the needs of all learners are considered when qualifications are being developed and reviewed and that inclusive assessment methods are incorporated. Assessment requirements will be clearly expressed so that any modifications to the assessment method or delivery may be made without compromising standards.
- 4.10. Continually review competence standards of qualifications or contribute appropriately to the review of national occupational standards to ensure that such standards can be objectively justified.
- 4.11. Consider the needs of all potential learners when developing assessment material. The

presentation of assessment material may prove a barrier for some learners, e.g. a cluttered layout, unclear font type, long sentences and unnecessary visual content may be problematic for some learners. The language used in assessment material will be clear, unambiguous and free from jargon. Externally set assessment tasks will be sufficiently varied and flexible to ensure that no particular group of learners is placed at a disadvantage.

- 4.12. Design assessment material, as far as possible, in such a way that it can be used successfully with assistive technology such as screen reading software. The layout, particularly the use of tables, can be problematic when used with some screen reading software.
- 4.13. Ensure that they have an effective appeals policy so that centres can appeal against decisions involving assessment arrangements for learners with access-related needs.
- 4.14. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and Smart Awards take all possible practical steps to apply reasonable adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CENTRES

- 5.1. To meet their responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, a centre should, as far as is practicable:
- 5.2. Have access to the assessment policy and communicate this to all staff and learners. The centre should cultivate an atmosphere in which learners feel free to disclose their access-related needs. It should be noted that the duty to make reasonable adjustments has an 'anticipatory' aspect. This means that the centre should consider what adjustments future learners with disabilities or difficulties may need and make appropriate provisions in advance.
- 5.3. Identify as early as possible, preferably before registering a learner for a qualification, any difficulties the learners may have in accessing assessment. To assist with this the centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise, or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. Early contact with Smart Awards is advised, in order to determine whether reasonable adjustments to the assessment process are possible.
- 5.4. Select an appropriate qualification for the learner, based upon his / her particular circumstances. The centre should explain to the learner the assessment requirements of the qualification and the planned programme of study. It should be made clear at the outset if the learner will not be able to meet all the assessment criteria. The learner may still decide to proceed with the qualification but enter only for part, or none, of the assessment. In this case, the centre should explain to the learner any restriction on progression to other qualifications as a result of not achieving all the criteria.
- 5.5. Select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible to the learner. In

order to decide whether an adjustment is appropriate, the centre should consider the nature of the skills that are being assessed and the implications for assessment of the learner's difficulties. The centre should involve the learner in making any decisions about appropriate adjustments to assessment. In cases of doubt, the centre should contact Smart Awards for advice on suitable and appropriate adjustments.

- 5.6. Ensure that it can resource the selected adjustment to assessment. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange any assistance for the learner, such as a reader, scribe, additional invigilator, British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, etc.
- 5.7. Follow Smart Awards procedures for requesting adjustments to assessment. The centre should apply for reasonable adjustments on behalf of the learner, where necessary. All applications for adjustments to assessment must be supported by the Head of Centre or other member of staff with designated responsibility.
- 5.8. Follow Smart Awards procedures for implementing adjustments to assessment. The centre will be required to implement the adjustments to the assessment in accordance with the guidance given. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the learner only uses the appropriate adjustments and that they keep records of these reasonable adjustments for audit purposes. If the centre exceeds the level of assistance and type of assistance as set out in these sections it may lead to malpractice investigations.
- 5.9. Ensure that it has effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner can query any decision taken by the centre not to allow an adjustment to the assessment. These procedures should be made available to the learner and should include details of the grounds for appeal and the timescales associated with investigations of appeals.
- 5.10. Design centre-set assessment activities or material in an inclusive way so that they are accessible to learners with access-related needs. The centre should ensure that the language of the assessment is clear, unambiguous and free from jargon.
- 5.11. Ensure that buildings used for assessment are accessible to all learner, as far as is practicable.
- 5.12. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and centres must take all possible practical steps to apply reasonable adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.
- 5.13. Centres must complete and submit a reasonable adjustment request at the point of registering the learner on Smart Awards Management System (Quartz Web). It is important that reasonable adjustments do not affect the reliability or validity of the assessment and they should not give the learner an advantage over other learners undertaking the same assessment.

6. DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes.
- 6.3. Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:
 - 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.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Where reasonable adjustments have been applied the work produced by the learner will be marked to the same standard as the work of other assessed learners.
- 6.6. 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, the impact of the disability on the individual, 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 be taken into consideration.

7. DEFINITION OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

- 7.1. 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 is a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. 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.

- 7.4. The Centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of 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.

8. PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- 8.1. The following principles must be followed by the Centre when reviewing whether a Reasonable Adjustment is required and is appropriate for a learner regarding their completion of an assessment. A Reasonable Adjustment must:
- Be based on the individual needs of the learner.
 - Reflect on the learner's usual way of working.
 - Enable the learner to produce evidence of equal vigour to meet the specified assessment criteria, regardless of process or method used.
 - Not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage in comparison to other learners.
 - Not cause, or create the potential of, an instance of learner or Centre malpractice or maladministration.
 - Not be prohibited by, or does not invalidate, Smart Awards assessment requirements.
 - Be in place and have had the required approval (either within the Centre or by Smart Awards dependent on the assessment and adjustment type) in writing before any assessment takes place.
 - Allow the evidence generated by the learner to be successfully internally quality assured by the Centre and externally quality assured by Smart Awards.
- 8.2. When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, centres must ensure that adjustments do not compensate for a learner's lack of knowledge and skills. Although it may be possible to change the delivery or process of an assessment, competency standards must remain unchanged. As vocational qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do. Therefore, it is important that a learner with an adjustment is able to cope with the content of the assessment and is able to work at the level required.
- 8.3. Any adjustment to assessment must not provide an unfair advantage or disadvantage to the learner. The achievement of the assessment for a learner who had an adjustment to the assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner.
- 8.4. Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the individual needs of the learner and the learner's normal way of working, providing this does not affect what is being assessed in

any way. The learner should have experience and practice in the use of the adjustment.

- 8.5. A Centre should not assume that the same adjustment will be required by the learner for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. Therefore, it is important that the learner is consulted with throughout the training and assessment processes.

9. PRINCIPLES FOR MAKING A SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

- 9.1. A Learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:
 - 9.2. 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.
 - 9.3. Technical failure relating to accessing Smart Awards online assessment platform
 - 9.4. Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.
 - 9.5. Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the Learner.
 - 9.6. 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.
 - 9.7. Misses part of the assessment due to circumstances outside their control.
 - 9.8. Centre should note that where an assessment requires 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.
 - 9.9. If there is to be an evacuation, then learners should be closely supervised to ensure that there is no collusion. It will be necessary to safeguard the security of the tests if an emergency was to occur without closing down the software.
 - 9.10. Due to technical issues or failure, support should be sought straight away and if it is just one learner, then a spare laptop or tablet should be used as a backup.
 - 9.11. Technical issues of failure affecting multiple learners (for example, a serious network issue) may necessitate rescheduling the test activity for all those involved or contacting Smart Awards to request a paper version as a special consideration. Paper-based examination materials must be stored securely at the centre.

- 9.12. It is important to assure learners that the full timings will be given by not considering any stoppage time from evacuation or technical disruption.
- 9.13. Any disruptions at all should be noted by the Invigilator, with a description of the event, those involved and the action taken.
- 9.14. If a learner takes a test under adverse circumstances and the centre wants to submit an application for special consideration, they must make the application in line with the procedures set out in Smart Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy.
- 9.15. 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.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTICAL ASSESSMENTS

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. 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.
- 10.3. 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.

11. INTERNALLY SET ASSESSMENTS

- 11.1. Assessments that are assessed through internally set assessments, such as through a portfolio of evidence, a centre-devised assessment or coursework. With these types of assessments, the Centre has flexibility in adapting assessment methodologies (as long as they still meet Smart Awards requirements) to allow a learner to meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid.

- 11.2. Centres are advised to adopt a flexible approach in providing learners with alternative ways of accessing and completing assessments. The flexibility on internally set assessments allows a Centre to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and to choose an assessment method that will allow them to demonstrate attainment. A learner's varying needs must be identified, considered and recorded during the learner's induction and initial assessment with the Centre.
- 11.3. In designing and setting internally set assessments, the Centre's Internal Quality Assurer is responsible for carrying out the pre-verification of assessment tasks before their use. This activity should ensure that the assessment is valid and in line with Smart Awards requirements, as well as ensuring that the assessment activity is accessible to learners of varying needs.
- 11.4. Wherever relevant, differentiation of an assessment activity should be planned for any learner who may have differing needs from the rest of a cohort. For example, a written question-and-answer task may be designed by the Centre to fulfil knowledge-based assessment criteria, which may be adapted to a verbal question-and-answer assessment where a learner has low-level writing skills, where written skills are not being assessed as part of the assessment.
- 11.5. The learner must fulfil the demands of the assessment criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of the method used to obtain evidence. The assessment criteria must not be amended or omitted, although the actual assessment can pose questions to learners in a way that relates particularly to the learner's workplace, employer or circumstance, as long as the integrity of the assessment criteria is not compromised.
- 11.6. While Assessors, Internal Quality Assurers and External Quality Assurers usually prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence that is varied, the Centre may be required to accept a more restricted variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. This must be determined on an individual learner basis through initial assessment and consideration of Reasonable Adjustment. The Centre is encouraged to discuss this with their Internal Quality Assurer and External Quality Assurer at an early stage.
- 11.7. Centres are advised to contact Smart Awards to discuss alternative assessment arrangements where they are unsure if they meet the above requirements.
- 11.8. Reasonable Adjustments for internally set assessments can be requested, approved and applied at the centre's discretion, without the need for Smart Awards approval. A formal record of all Reasonable Adjustment applications must be kept for internal quality assurance and external quality assurance purposes.

12. EXTERNALLY SET ASSESSMENTS

- 12.1. Externally set assessments can either be internally or externally assessed. Whether the assessment is internally or externally assessed will determine whether approval is required from Smart Awards to apply certain types of adjustments.

- 12.2. Assessments that are externally set and internally assessed are created and provided by Smart Awards but are marked internally by Assessors within a Centre. Typical examples of this type of assessment are any qualifications that have a benchmark practical assessment. The benchmark practical assessment will be created and provided by Smart Awards.
- 12.3. Assessments that are externally set and assessed are those that are created, provided and marked by Smart Awards. This covers both paper-based and online assessment tests.
- 12.4. In all cases where an assessment is externally set by Smart Awards, centres must ensure that, as standard, assessments are sat and assessed in line with Smart Awards requirements. In these assessments, the method of assessment is more rigidly determined and therefore there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements to provide access to some learners.
- 12.5. Where an adjustment to assessment conditions or format may be required due to a learner's individual needs or disabilities, the Centre must consult Smart Awards Permission Table to determine whether the request can be applied at the Centre's discretion or whether the request must be approved by Smart Awards.
- 12.6. All assessment documentation must be retained and stored in line with Smart Awards requirements.

13. LEARNER REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT ELIGIBILITY

- 13.1. Learners are only eligible for reasonable adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a disadvantage in the assessment situation, in comparison to a person who is not disabled.
- 13.2. Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.
- 13.3. Communication and interaction needs - A learner with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with reading or writing, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a reader, word processor, scribe, BSL/English interpreter, screen reading software or voice activated software. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.
- 13.4. Cognition and learning needs - A learner with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained examinations. They may also need assistance with reading and writing.
- 13.5. Sensory and physical needs - A learner may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader and scribe. In addition they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and extra time to complete assessments.

- 13.6. Behavioural, Emotional and Social needs - The learner may benefit from supervised rest breaks and separate accommodation, either within the centre or at an alternative venue. A learner with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter.
- 13.7. Learners for whom English is an additional language - A learner may benefit from extra time during assessments that are time constrained or the use of bilingual dictionaries.
- 13.8. The learner will be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their performance during an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. Many of these learners will be defined as being disabled under the Equality Act.
- 13.9. An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, the centre should assist the learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.
- 13.10. A learner does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Equality Act) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Every learner who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for reasonable adjustments.
- 13.11. Identifying learners' needs - Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment.
- 13.12. The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of equality legislation.

14. LEARNER SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ELIGIBILITY

- 14.1. Learners who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged. Learners should complete assessments, in full, wherever possible. If learners complete an assessment but are disadvantaged, they may be eligible for a special consideration.
- 14.2. In the case of an on-demand assessment, where a learner's performance is likely to be affected by circumstances beyond their control, the assessment should be rescheduled. However, if this is not possible, the centre should contact Smart Awards as soon as possible. Where an assessment has been missed or is in the form of an on-demand test, such as an electronic test set and marked by a computer, the centre should offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.
- 14.3. It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where:
- an assessment requires the demonstration of a practical competence,
 - the assessment criteria must be fully met,
 - units/qualifications confer 'Licence to Practise'.

- 14.4. Where learners have missed externally moderated assessments, the centre should first consider applying for an extension to the deadline for the submission of work.
- 14.5. In the case of an on-demand assessment, if a learner's performance is likely to be affected by illness, injury or any other event outside the learner's control, the assessment should be rescheduled to a later date. Before starting any assessment, the centre must check the learners are able to complete the assessment at that time. Learners should be encouraged to tell their centre if they feel unwell at the time of an assessment or if something has happened that might affect their performance in the assessment.
- 14.6. If learners are only able to complete some of the tasks within an assessment due to disruption or adverse circumstances, centres should check whether any permissible adaptations would be appropriate or useful to allow the learner(s) to complete the assessment in the first instance.
- 14.7. Where a learner has been registered for a qualification and has subsequently died or is terminally ill and unable to complete the full qualification, the centre may request an honorary certificate/posthumous award.
- 14.8. Special Consideration is not applicable where: The Centre does not supply any evidence that the learner has been affected, or would be affected, at the time of the assessment by a particular condition. Any part of the assessment is missed, or will be missed, due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absences. Preparations for an assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, such as disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes or shortages in staff or industrial disputes.

15. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- 15.1. Any application for a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration must be supported by valid and sufficient evidence. In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving the learner an unfair advantage over others, the Centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.
- 15.2. Where the Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, or a hearing/sight impairment, the Centre does not need to provide further evidence.
- 15.3. Where the implications of the difficulty are more complex or not visible, such as for learning or mental health difficulties, 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:
 - a) Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs made within the Centre by an appropriate and specialised individual with responsibility in this area, such as learning support staff, teaching staff, Tutor/Trainers, Assessors and other specialist staff. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included.

- b) History of provision within the Centre. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme must be documented for audit purposes.
 - c) Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments.
- 15.4. Centres can use a learner's completion of a Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) in order to evidence the requirement for a Reasonable Adjustment. The completion of the test may be included as part of the Centre's initial assessment process in determining if and what adjustments to assessments are required for the learner.
- 15.5. A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustment. It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for Reasonable Adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner in relation to the individual assessment and that the evidence in support of the application is valid and sufficient.
- 15.6. It is important that centres provide full documentary evidence supporting their Reasonable Adjustment request and that the evidence must in fact show a need for an adjustment to be applied. Evidence must be reviewed and authorised as valid and sufficient for supporting adjustment to assessment by a member of Centre staff with delegated authority, such as a Tutor or a staff member qualified in assessing special educational needs.

16. APPLYING FOR A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT OR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

- 16.1. A centre should apply for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration using the online form supplied by Smart Awards which is accessed through the centre portal (SAMS). A separate form should be completed for each Learner for each qualification. However, in cases where a group of learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event (for example, fire alarm) a single form should be submitted. A list of Learners affected should be attached to the form.
- 16.2. The centre needs to submit evidence in support of reasonable adjustments/special consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate person.
- 16.3. Smart Awards will review a reasonable adjustment application and provide its response within 5 working days of receipt.
- 16.4. 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 form should be submitted as soon as possible.
- 16.5. 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.

- 16.6. 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.

17. MALPRACTICE

- 17.1. 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 defined any or all 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 audits
- Failing to report delegated adjustments to Smart Awards, where this is required.

18. APPEALS

- 18.1. Learners must be aware of their right to access the Centre's appeals and complaints procedures if they are not satisfied with the Centre's consideration or implementation of a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration. If a learner wishes to appeal a Centre's decision regarding the application of a Reasonable Adjustment, they will need to exhaust the Centre's own appeals procedure first before being able to raise their appeal to Smart Awards directly.
- 18.2. Centres also have a right to appeal a decision or judgement made by Smart Awards regarding a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration application they have made.

19. REGULATORY REFERENCE

- 19.1. UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies and guides that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address. This guide addresses the following regulatory principles:

Qualification regulator	Regulatory condition, criteria, or principle	
Ofqual	D2.1	An awarding organisation must ensure that it complies with the requirements of Equalities Law in relation to each of the qualifications which it makes available.

Ofqual	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.
Ofqual	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.
Ofqual	E4.2	In designing such an assessment, an awarding organisation must in addition ensure that the assessment – (d) permits Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.
Ofqual	G2.2	A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment.
Ofqual	G6.1	For the purposes of this condition, Reasonable Adjustments are 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.
Ofqual	G6.2	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.
Ofqual	G6.3	An awarding organisation must publish details of its arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments, which must include details as to – (a) how a Learner qualifies for a Reasonable Adjustment, and (b) what Reasonable Adjustment will be made.
Ofqual	G7.1	For the purposes of this condition, 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.
Ofqual	G7.2	An awarding organisation must have in place clear arrangements for Special Consideration to be given to Learners in relation to qualifications which it makes available.
Ofqual	G7.3	An awarding organisation must publish details of its arrangements for giving Special Consideration, which must include details as to – (a) how a Learner qualifies for Special Consideration, and (b) what Special Consideration will be given.
Ofqual	G8.1	An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that, in relation to qualifications which it makes available – (a) evidence generated by a Learner in an assessment is generated by that Learner (or includes evidence generated by that Learner as a contribution to group work), and (b) where an assessment is required to be completed under specified conditions, Learners complete the assessment under those conditions (other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require alternative conditions).
Ofqual	G9.2	An awarding organisation must ensure that, on delivery of every assessment for a qualification that it makes available, the assessment: (a) is fit for purpose,

		(b) permits Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.
Ofqual	H5.4	Where an awarding organisation sets a rule as to how the final mark for a qualification will be calculated from marks for different assessments, it must ensure that – (b) the rule is applied to all Learners taking the qualification (other than where any Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration require it to be altered).
Ofqual	I1.1	An awarding organisation must establish, maintain and comply with appeals process in relation to all qualifications which it makes available, which must provide for the appeal of – (a) the results of assessments, (b) decisions regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.
SQA Accreditation	Principle 12	Smart Awards and its providers must ensure that they have the necessary arrangements and resources required to manage and administer qualification delivery and assessment
SQA Accreditation	Principle 13	The Smart Awards and its providers must ensure that they have systems and processes that ensure the effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications.
SQA Accreditation	Principle 14	The Smart Awards and its providers must ensure that its qualifications and their delivery and assessment are fair, inclusive and accessible to learners.

20. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

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

21. PROCESS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

Process Step Description	Process	Person Responsibility	Organisation Responsibility
Request reasonable adjustment via SAMS	Process	Centre Manager	Centre
Review reasonable adjustment request	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Approved or decline request	Decision	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Communicate outcome to centre	Process	Standards and Compliance Officer	Smart Awards
Apply reasonable adjustment	Process	Centre Manager	Centre
Stop	End		Smart Awards

APPENDIX 1 – RANGE OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

This appendix details the most commonly requested Reasonable Adjustments to standard assessment arrangements and is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Centres have a duty to seek advice from Smart Awards in any case where they believe other adjustments may be required.

Assessment material on coloured paper

Depending on the mode of assessment, both centres and Smart Awards (check permissions table) are able to provide modified assessment materials such as in an enlarged format or on coloured paper. In all cases, the centre is responsible for ensuring the security of modified assessment materials and they must be handled and stored in line with Smart Awards requirements.

Where the centre is permitted to photocopy externally set assessment material onto coloured paper, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied.

The learner may be penalised for any errors in his / her script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.

Where an assessment is taken online, Smart Awards online testing platforms may be able to accommodate some modifications to assessment materials, dependent on the exam type. It may be possible to provide a screen background in a colour that is suited to the learners needs.

Where assessments are internally set, the centre is responsible for providing the modified assessment material to the learner. The centre is also responsible for ensuring any equipment such as electronic devices and resources required for the learner to access the modified assessment material (other than the material itself) is provided to the learner to facilitate assessment.

Assessment material in enlarged format for paper-based assessments

Enlargements for paper-based assessments may be used. Examples of these include:

- Unmodified enlarged papers where the standard paper is photocopied from A4 to A3, thus enlarging
- The whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation.
- modified enlarged paper where the paper is modified by simplifying the layout and where necessary reducing the content while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original paper.
- Where the centre is permitted to make the enlargements to externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of incomplete enlargement of the material.
- Centres should note that assessment material containing scale diagrams cannot be enlarged.
- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for 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. Advanced screen magnification software programmes provide options to change colours and fonts.

Language modified assessment material

The carrier language in assessment material may be modified for a deaf learner whose first language is either English or British Sign Language (BSL). In either case, the learner's English may be limited and modified assessment material may be necessary. BSL is a language in its own right and has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary and written assessment material will have to be modified for most deaf learners for whom BSL is their first language.

Technical language may not be modified. The modified version of the assessment material should contain the same questions as the standard version and the same answers will be expected from the learner.

In listening tests, a transcript of the test may be provided, which can be read to the learner by a live speaker. This will enable the learner to lip-read the text.

Where the centre is permitted to modify externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the modification. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of inaccurate modification of the material.

It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the modification of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Assessment material in audio format

Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format. This facility is not available if reading is the competence being assessed or if the assessment material has visual content that is crucial to the understanding of the questions, such as illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketches.

Where the centre is permitted to produce an audio version of externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the recording is accurate. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the recording.

It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

Assessment in braille

Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner. The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailleing. Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams.

If Braille assessment material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the centre should inform the Smart Awards immediately as any costs incurred in producing such material may be passed to the centre.

Where the centre is permitted to Braille externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is brailled. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work that occur as a result of errors in the brailled material. Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner, not all blind people are fluent in Braille.

It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the braille of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Responses in braille

Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to present their responses in Braille. In these cases an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses should be provided by the centre. It will be the centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep the transcript for their records.

Assessment in BSL (British Sign Language)

Where the centre cannot provide a BSL/English interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL version of assessment material may be provided on videotape instead of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English. This facility may not be permitted for assessments where reading or listening is the competence being assessed.

Where Smart Awards will provide externally set assessment material in BSL, the centre will have to apply by the deadlines set by individual awarding bodies.

Where the centre is permitted to translate externally set assessment material into BSL, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the translation. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the material.

It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL.

Centres should note that this adjustment will not be suitable for all assessments and that they need to contact the Smart Awards for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.

Responses in BSL

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be allowed to sign their responses to questions.

Signing of responses should not be permitted if the ability to write or speak English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) is being assessed.

A learner can sign full responses in BSL. Where the learner is required to show knowledge of an expression / name in their response, this must be finger-spelt. This must all be videoed for quality assurance purposes.

The centre will provide a translation of the responses for assessment. The centre should ensure that the person doing the translation is appropriately qualified. The centre should ensure that sufficient

recording equipment is available and that it is in good working order.

Where the centre provides a transcript of the learner's response, the centre should ensure that the transcript is authenticated and an accurate reflection of the learner's responses. The centre should keep this as a record of the assessment.

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.

Smart Awards recognises that it is common where learners do require extra time, that up to 25% extra is sufficient. Where a Centre requests extra time above 25%, the Centre must ensure that this need is clearly evidenced within the documentation they submit to support their application.

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 difficulty. '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 online assessments may have to be customised for each learner. In these cases, the centre is advised to contact Smart Awards to apply for a time extension to be set up.

Before the centre allows extra time for the learner, 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.

Supervised rest break

Where assessment activities are time-constrained, a learner may, if there is a demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment.

Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room. The duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the assessment time. The centre should be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the learner is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing the conduct of assessments will apply during this time.

Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, supervised rest breaks can be allowed.

For online assessments, the centre needs to check with the Smart Awards whether the time for rest breaks must be built into the extra time requested for the assessment. This will be necessary if the

test runs continuously on the system. The system must also be supervised during the break to ensure that no one else can interfere with the learner's test during the break.

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.

Separate accommodation within the centre - It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL/English interpreters, or word processing equipment which may disturb other learners.

Taking the assessment at an alternative venue - In certain circumstances the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue, for example at home or in hospital.

The centre should ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment.

Separate accommodation and alternative venues

It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately, within the Centre, from other learners taking their assessment at the same time if they are using readers, scribes, prompters or interpreters. This will enable the learner to focus on the assessment and obtain the required support from their facilitator without distraction from others who do not require the adjustment.

In all instances, the Centre must ensure that the confidentiality of assessment materials are maintained at all times and that any separate rooms that are used for learners who require the adjustment meet Smart Awards examination venue requirements.

In certain circumstances, the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue, for example at home or in a hospital. The Centre must ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment.

It is important that the regulations of the assessment regarding security confidentiality and validity are met at all times. Therefore, centres must contact Smart Awards in the first instance for approval prior to making any arrangements for alternative venues.

Use of Mechanical, Electronic and Technological Aids

The use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids may include the use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners. The centre should ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.

For assessments taken under examination conditions, the learner should be accommodated separately with separate invigilation if the use of any of these aids will disturb other learners. In these cases the invigilator should be fully informed of the learner's support.

A centre should contact Smart Awards if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements.

Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice activated software. Some learners may benefit from the use of software that reads the assessment material to them and records their spoken responses.

Speech software should not be allowed for qualifications where reading is the competence being assessed. Elsewhere, and especially in vocational areas, such software may be used to allow learners to have access to assessments that are appropriate for them and enable them to show their proficiency.

The centre should ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the learner an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, the centre should seek advice from the Smart Awards if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.

It should be noted that the use of such software may introduce a hidden assessment agenda, in that the learner has to master the use of the software in addition to mastering the assessment criteria. Some learners may need extra time if they use such software.

Use of assistive technology, such as speech/screen reading or voice activated software, may also benefit learners who have a disability or difficulty which affects their reading or speech, as long as this is not a competency being assessed. In these cases, the Centre must ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of the aid and that any electronics are in good working order. Where approved, the Centre is responsible for providing the aids to the learner and in training their Centre staff and Invigilators on their use.

In these cases, the Centre must ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of the aid and that any electronics are in good working order. The Centre is responsible for providing the aids to the learner, where approved and in training their Centre staff and Invigilators on their use.

The Centre must consider that where these adjustments are requested, whether the learner should be separately accommodated within the Centre to avoid disruption to other learners completing their assessment.

The Centre must consider that where these adjustments are requested, whether the learner should be separately accommodated within the Centre to avoid disruption to other learners completing their assessment.

Use of bilingual dictionaries or bilingual translation dictionaries (manual or electronic)

The use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries (including BSL/English dictionaries/glossaries) can be allowed in all vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements.

For timed assessments, if the centre is satisfied that the learner can cope with the subject content, but the learner's knowledge and comprehension of English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) impairs his/her ability to complete the assessment within the normal time allocated, an additional allowance of extra time may be permitted.

The centre should check the dictionaries used by the learner to make sure they do not contain notes which would give the learner an unfair advantage. Where permission is given to use electronic dictionaries, the centre must check that the equipment does not contain additional functionality that will give the learner an unfair advantage. If such functionality is present, it must be disabled or the equipment disallowed.

Use of Recording Devices to Present Responses

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to use electronic recording devices, for example a voice recorder or Dictaphone and for the assessment to be presented in CD, memory stick or cassette format. The use of recording devices is only permitted where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material or for writing assessments.

Where the learner's responses are recorded electronically, the Centre must provide an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses for assessment/marketing and for external quality assurance purposes.

Use of ICT to present response

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment. The use of ICT is generally perceived to have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessment.

The use of ICT in this context should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.

For many learners with additional support needs, computers provide an effective means of independent communication. Consideration should be given to whether the learner can meet the assessment criteria using a computer.

A computer should only be used if it is appropriate to the learner's needs and if the learner is confident in its use, can use it effectively and if it reflects his / her normal way of working. The learner should be consulted before a decision is taken whether the use of ICT is an appropriate adjustment.

When a computer is used, other than as a basic word processor, the centre needs to consider the effect and appropriateness of facilities like spell-checkers, electronic dictionaries, thesauri, calculators, predictive software, etc that are available.

The use of the computer should not create a misleading impression of the learner's attainment or confer an unfair advantage over other learners.

The centre should ensure that workstations are adapted for the needs of the learner, and that enabling technologies, (for example screen reading software, coloured background, adapted keyboard, large tracker ball mouse, sticky keys) are available.

Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a computer is used, the centre should suggest alternative arrangements.

Spoken responses using electronic recording devices, for example CD Roms, memory sticks, audio cassettes.

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to record their responses electronically.

This arrangement will only be available for assessments where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material.

Where the learner's responses are recorded electronically, the centre should provide an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses.

It will be the centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep this and the original recording as a record of the assessment.

Use of facilitators/reader

A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the learner all or part of the assessment material and the learner's written responses.

Where there is evidence of need a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading or understanding of the written word is not an assessment requirement or the competence being assessed.

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective arrangement. The learner may be more comfortable with the use of speech/screen reading software which reads out the material without decoding or interpreting it accessing the assessment material in electronic format, in Braille or through sign language.

The centre is for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader.

The reader should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the Smart Awards should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.

The centre should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner.

The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during the training programme leading up to the assessment.

The centre should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.

A separate invigilator must be present when a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.

The centre should give the reader clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.

For a learner requiring a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.

The learner using a reader should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

Where a learner is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the learner to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances the learner must be accommodated in a separate room so that other learners are not disturbed. Separate invigilation should be arranged in these cases. The invigilator may not correct the reading of the learner.

The reader is responsible for and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

The reader should:

- read only as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment him/herself.
- should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing impaired learner, the reader should articulate clearly.
- should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything.
- should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the learner.
- may consult a dictionary, where this is allowed, at the learner's request and read out entries
- should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proof-reader
- should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered
- may enable a visually impaired learner to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question, but should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestion
- is permitted to help a visually impaired learner using diagrams, graphs and tables to

obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted learner

- should, if requested, give a visually impaired learner the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise spellings must not be given.
- should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Scribe

A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a learner's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed.

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires high level communication skills from the learner, the centre is advised to consider whether the learner would be more comfortable with the use of a computer. The learner is also more likely to use a word processor rather than a scribe in the workplace.

For a learner requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.

The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases, the writing of answers by the learner may be the skill being assessed.

The centre should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. A scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the learner's responses, write legibly and/or word process at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe. A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing. A scribe should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the Smart Awards should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.

The centre should ensure that the learner and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.

The centre should give the scribe clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do/what he/she is not allowed to do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.

The learner using a scribe should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.

The scribe is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During the assessment a scribe:

- should check with the learner for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The learner may choose to write some responses him/herself.
- should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestions.
- should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- should write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the learner. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words.
- should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the learner.
- should not assist the learner to produce any diagrammatical or graphical material. If assistance with this is needed, approval should be obtained from the Smart Awards in advance of the assessment.

Exceptions to this are Entry Level qualifications where the scribe is allowed to draw or add to diagrams in accordance with the learner's instructions.

- may, at the learner's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the learner's response.
- should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

British sign language/ English interpreter

Although British Sign Language (BSL) is now recognised as an official language of the UK, it is not a statutory language, unlike English, Welsh and Irish (Gaelige).

Where BSL is the primary means of communication for a deaf learner, these learners may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the questions (or part questions) where they are undertaking written assessments.

For assessments where reading or speaking and listening are the competences being assessed, BSL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions.

The centre should ensure that the BSL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment. Some awarding bodies may provide the centre with a specification for the person allowed to interpret the written assessment material into BSL.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during the learning programme leading up to the assessment.

The centre should ensure that the learner and the person providing the interpretation is clear about the limitations of the latter's role in the assessment situation.

The centre should ensure that the person providing the interpretation has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing. This arrangement should be agreed with the Smart Awards.

The interpretation should not give the learner an unfair advantage and care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, where the learner's understanding of these words is inherent in the purpose of the question. The interpretation should not explain or clarify. In some instances it may be more appropriate to finger-spell a word.

Any words or phrases interpreted for the learner because a standard sign is not available or appropriate should be underlined on the assessment material, which, if separate from the answer book, should be attached to the learner's answer book. Amended versions of questions should be shown on the assessment material.

The learner using a BSL/English interpreter should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

A separate invigilator should be present when a BSL/English interpreter is used to ensure that guidance regarding BSL/English interpreters is followed.

The BSL/English interpreter:

- should have access to the assessment material in advance of the examination to prepare for the signing. The Smart Awards should advise how long before the assessment the BSL/English interpreter can have access to the assessment material
- should not interpret technical language or give additional explanations may, at the learner's request, sign any labels or text connected with reference material such as maps, diagrams or graphs. The learner should, however, study the reference material independently.

Prompter

A learner with severe attention problems may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.

Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to allowing supervised rest breaks rather than a prompter.

A prompter should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it may be necessary to do so. In such cases the Smart Awards should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.

Prompters should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when his / her attention is no longer on the assessment task and that he or she is not, for example, looking away from the paper whilst thinking.

Under no circumstances may the prompter draw the attention of the learner to part of the question paper or the learner's answer paper.

The prompter should sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and draw his / her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The learner's attention may be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the learner's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, on the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper). Verbal prompting should not normally be used. The method used by the prompter to bring back the learner's attention should be agreed before the assessment between the learner and the prompter and should be acceptable to the centre. It should be noted that some learners with emotional and behavioural sensitivity/vulnerability and/or mental health conditions may not be comfortable with a 'light tap' prompt. A form of verbal prompting should be considered and agreed for these learners.

In the case of an epileptic learner where the problem is one of temporary absencing, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.

The centre should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.

The centre should give the prompter clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.

The centre should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.

A separate invigilator should be present when a prompter is used to ensure that the guidance regarding prompters is followed. The invigilator should be fully informed of the strategies used to regain the learner's attention.

The prompter is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During an assessment a prompter:

- should draw the learner's attention back to the task in hand; should use the method of prompting agreed with the learner; should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions;
- should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done. For Entry Level qualifications it may be appropriate for the prompter to direct the learner to where they were last;
- should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the assessment, but should remain vigilant
- should immediately refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Practical assistant

A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the

instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks with which the practical assistant may assist are, turning the pages of the question paper or, guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant is an appropriate arrangement. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those qualifications where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant.

The practical assistant should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment but should not normally be the learner's own teacher/tutor/assessor except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the Smart Awards should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.

A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out his/her instructions accurately.

The centre should prepare clear written instructions for the practical assistant on the assistance they are able to give the learner. A copy of these instructions should also be given to the invigilator and learner. The centre should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.

The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be the skill being assessed, the use of a practical assistant will not be permitted.

A learner using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated separately from other learners. In these cases a separate invigilator should be present to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed. During practical assessments, the assessor should be present in addition to the practical assistant.

During a practical assessment, a practical assistant:

- should follow the instructions prepared by the centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner;
- should ensure the safety of the learner and those around him / her; should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions; should not advise the learner which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done;
- should carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so would cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret the learner's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment;
- should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment (there may be parts of the assessment which the learner can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills);

- should immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor.

Transcriber

This arrangement may be used by a learner in the following circumstances:

- Where the learner's handwriting is illegible, but he or she is unable to use a computer or dictate responses - it may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competence being assessed;
- Where the learner's responses are produced in Braille or in BSL.
- The transcriber will produce a transcript to assist the examiner/assessor in the assessment of a learner's work. The examiner/assessor will assess the learner's work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner's response(s). (For responses produced in Braille or BSL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript).

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a transcript will be an effective arrangement.

The centre should give the transcriber clear instructions regarding what they are required to do after the assessment.

The transcript should be produced by a member of the centre's staff who is familiar with the learner's handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in Braille), or who has the required skills in BSL (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in BSL).

The transcript(s) should be securely attached to the back of the learner's work and be included with the other work from the centre for dispatch to the assessor in the normal way. The production of the transcript should not delay the dispatch of scripts to the assessor.

The centre should not inform the assessor of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

The transcriber:

- should produce the transcript in a separate copy of the question paper/answer booklet or on lined or unlined white paper as appropriate.
- may handwrite or word process the transcript. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink should be used. Pencil must never be used.
- should, for examinations, produce the transcript immediately after the examination under secure conditions.
- should not involve the learner in the production of the transcript. should normally transcribe complete answers. In cases where only occasional words need to be transcribed, these may be written on a photocopy of the learner's script. On no account should the learner's original script be marked or annotated in any way.
- should normally be a word-for-word transcription, i.e. an exact copy of what the learner has written. The transcriber may not insert or omit words or alter their order. In English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) or modern foreign language examinations any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the learner and must not be corrected. In other qualifications, the transcriber may correct

the spelling of non-technical words.

- should indicate any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- should not transcribe diagrammatical material. Assessment of such material will be based on the learner's own work.

ANNEX 2 - PERMISSION TABLE

The following key indicates where the decisions on reasonable adjustments can usually be made. However, Centre, 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.

KEY:			
C - Reasonable Adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre			
SA Apply to Smart Awards for permission			
Reasonable Adjustment Type	Assessment Model		
	Internally set and internally assessed – Example NVQs	Externally set and internally assessed – Example SA Qualifications	Externally set and externally assessed
Modified Assessment Materials ²			
Assessment material in enlarged format	C	C	SA
Assessment material in Braille	C	SA	SA
Assessment material in BSL	C	SA	SA
Assessment material on coloured paper	C	SA	SA
Assessment material in audio format	C	SA	SA
Language-modified assessment material	C	SA	SA
Assessment Conditions			
Extra time up to 25 %	C	SA	SA
Extra time more than 25%	C	SA	SA
Supervised rest breaks	C	SA	SA
Rooms and Venues			
Changes in organisation of the assessment room	C	C	C
Separate accommodation within the Centre	C	C	C
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	C	SA	SA
Use of aids, assistive technology and ICT			
Use of coloured overlays and tinted spectacles	C	C	C
Use of assistive technology low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	C	SA	SA
Responses using electronic recording devices	C	SA	SA
Use of ICT to present responses	C	SA	SA
Use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation	C	SA	SA
Use of Facilitator			
Reader	C	SA	SA
Scribe	C	SA	SA
Sign Language Interpreter (BSL and SSE)	C	SA	SA
Prompter	C	SA	SA
Practical Assistant	C	SA	SA

Transcriber	C	SA	SA
Other	C	SA	SA

ANNEX 3 – 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 Smart Awards 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/English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language.
Carrier language	The language used by the Smart Awards 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 Smart Awards 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 Smart Awards.
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment.
Learning 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, 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.
External verifier	Person who checks that a centre's assessment and quality assurance procedures comply with the requirements of Smart Awards and the regulators.
Voice activated software	A computer programme which responds to spoken instructions.