



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT & SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Smart Awards is committed to ensuring fair, inclusive, and accessible assessment opportunities for all learners and apprentices. This policy sets out the arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations across Qualifications (Awarding), Apprenticeship Assessment and End-Point Assessment (EPA).

1.2 It ensures compliance with the Equality Act 2010, Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition and the Qualifications Scotland Accreditation Principles. Smart Awards is dedicated to ensuring that assessment practices are equitable, valid, and reliable, while maintaining the integrity of qualifications apprenticeship assessments and EPA outcomes.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define how Smart Awards supports access to assessment for learners and apprentices with particular needs.
- Ensure consistent, fair, and transparent application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
- Comply with UK equalities legislation and regulatory requirements.
- Provide practical guidance to centres, employers, and training providers to ensure compliance and good practice.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Reasonable Adjustment:

A modification or support measure put in place before assessment to reduce or remove disadvantage caused by a disability, difficulty, or long-term condition. Examples include:

- Additional time or rest breaks.
- Modified materials (e.g., large print, coloured paper, Braille).
- Assistive technology or adapted equipment.
- Use of a reader, scribe, or interpreter.
- Adjusted seating or separate accommodation.

3.2 Special Consideration:

A post-assessment adjustment or allowance applied when a learner or apprentice experiences temporary illness, injury, or other unforeseen event that negatively affects their performance. Examples include:

- Bereavement before assessment.
- Sudden illness during assessment.
- Technical disruption during an online assessment.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Smart Awards ensures that all learners and apprentices have equal opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and competence. Adjustments and considerations will:

- Maintain the integrity and validity of assessment outcomes.
- Be fair, consistent, and proportionate.
- Be based on individual need and reliable evidence.
- Comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 and regulatory conditions.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Smart Awards	• Maintain this policy and ensure consistent implementation across qualifications and EPA. • Approve and monitor all Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration requests. • Provide clear guidance and training to centres and assessors. • Review the effectiveness of adjustments and their alignment with legislation and regulation.
Responsible Officer	• The Responsible Officer holds ultimate accountability for ensuring compliance with Ofqual and SQA regulatory requirements. They provide assurance to the Board that Smart Awards has effective systems to manage Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.
Centres (Qualifications)	• Identify learner needs early (preferably at registration) and record adjustments using SAMS. • Maintain evidence and records of any adjustments applied. • Implement approved adjustments consistently and securely. • Ensure that assessment venues are accessible to all learners.
Employers/ Training Providers (EPA)	• Identify apprentices requiring additional support and submit requests for adjustments to Smart Awards at least 10 days before EPA. • Provide suitable evidence and ensure the apprentice's normal working arrangements are considered. • Implement agreed adjustments prior to the assessment.

6. PRINCIPLES

6.1 All Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations must:

- Be based on the individual needs of the learner or apprentice.
- Be evidence-based and justifiable.
- Reflect the learner's normal way of working.

- Not alter or compromise assessment criteria or competence standards.
- Not provide an unfair advantage or disadvantage.
- Be recorded, monitored, and auditable.
- Take account of anticipatory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to plan inclusively.

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 Procedures for Qualifications (Awarding)

- Centres must apply for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations via Smart Awards Quality Manager.
- Applications must include supporting evidence (e.g., medical or educational reports).
- Smart Awards will review and respond within 5 working days.
- Adjustments must be approved before assessment, and Special Considerations applied within 14 days after the assessment.

Process Flow (Qualifications):

- **Step 1**
 - Centre Manager submits Reasonable Adjustment Form to Smart Awards Quality Team
- **Step 2**
 - Quality Manager Reviews Reasonable Adjustment Form and Evidence
- **Step 3**
 - Quality Manager Approves or Declines Request
- **Step 4**
 - Quality Manager communicates the outcome to the Centre
- **Step 5**
 - Centre Manager implements the Reasonable Adjustments

7.2 Procedures for End-Point Assessment (EPA)

- Employers or training providers submit requests for adjustments 10 working days before EPA.
- Requests must be accompanied by valid supporting evidence.
- Smart Awards will review and confirm a decision within 21 working days.
- Special Consideration requests must be submitted within 14 days after EPA.

Process Flow (EPA):

- **Step 1**
 - Training Provider submits Reasonable Adjustment Form to Smart Awards EPA Team or via ACE360

- **Step 2**
 - Head of Apprenticeships Reviews Reasonable Adjustment Form and Evidence
- **Step 3**
 - Head of Apprenticeships Approves or Declines Request
- **Step 4**
 - Head of Apprenticeships communicates the outcome to the Centre
- **Step 5**
 - End-Point Assessor implements the Reasonable Adjustments

8. EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Acceptable evidence includes:

- Medical or psychological reports.
- Statements from teachers, SEN specialists, or occupational health professionals.
- Records of previous adjustments or support plans.
- Verified documentation of disability or long-term condition.

8.2 Evidence must clearly describe how the condition affects the individual's performance and justifies the requested adjustment.

9. TYPES OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

9.1 Examples include (depending on assessment type):

- Extra time (typically up to 25%) or rest breaks for fatigue or concentration issues.
- Assistive technology, such as screen readers, voice-to-text software, or adapted keyboards.
- Modified materials, including large print, coloured paper, or Braille.
- Readers, scribes, or interpreters where reading, writing, or speaking is not the competence being assessed.
- Separate or alternative accommodation for learners needing reduced stimuli.
- Adjustments to timing or sequencing of assessments where appropriate.

9.2 Adjustments must not compromise the standard or purpose of assessment.

10. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 Special Considerations apply when temporary illness, injury, or adverse circumstances affect performance.

10.2 Examples include:

- Illness or accident at the time of assessment.

- Bereavement of an immediate family member.
- Major technical failure or disruption.
- Emergency evacuation or interruption.

10.3 Outcomes may include:

- Minor mark adjustment (typically up to 5%).
- Rescheduling or deferral of assessment.
- No change if evidence is insufficient.

11. HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1 Health and safety must never be compromised. A risk assessment must be carried out if any disability or condition poses potential safety implications. Reasonable Adjustments must not increase risks to the learner, assessor, or others.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

12.1 Smart Awards will:

- Monitor the application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations through internal audit and EQA processes.
- Analyse data trends annually to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Report outcomes to the Responsible Officer and Board.
- Use monitoring results to improve guidance and support.

13. MALPRACTICE

13.1 Non-compliance may constitute malpractice, including:

- Applying unapproved adjustments.
- Failing to record or evidence adjustments.
- Providing excessive or inappropriate support.

Smart Awards may withhold results and investigate under the Malpractice Policy.

14. APPEALS

14.1 Learners, apprentices, centres, or employers may appeal a decision regarding Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations following the Smart Awards Appeals Policy. Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receiving the decision.

15. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

15.1 This policy will be reviewed annually in response to feedback, legislation, and regulatory guidance from Ofqual, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation, or other authorities.

16. OFQUAL GENERAL CONDITIONS

16.1 D2.1 – The awarding organisation must ensure that it complies with the requirements of Equalities Law in relation to each qualification which it makes available.

16.2 D2.2 – The awarding organisation must monitor qualifications it makes available for any feature that could disadvantage a group of learners who share a protected characteristic.

16.3 D2.3 – Where any such feature is identified, the awarding organisation must remove any unjustifiable disadvantage or maintain a record of any justifiable one, including reasons.

16.4 G6.1 – Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and understanding to the required standard.

16.5 G6.2 – The awarding organisation must have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to its qualifications.

16.6 G6.3 – The awarding organisation must publish details of its arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments, including how learners qualify and what adjustments will be made.

16.7 G7.1 – Special Consideration is to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced illness, injury, or another event outside their control that has a material effect on their assessment performance.

16.8 G7.2 – The awarding organisation must have in place clear arrangements for giving Special Consideration.

16.9 G7.3 – The awarding organisation must publish details of how learners qualify for Special Consideration and what form it will take.

16.10 G8.1 – The awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that evidence generated in an assessment is produced by the learner under the required conditions (except where Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations apply).

16.11 G9 – Delivering the Assessment

16.12 G9.2 – The awarding organisation must ensure that every assessment it delivers is fit for purpose and permits Reasonable Adjustments while minimising the need for them.

16.13 H5.4 – Where a rule is set for calculating the final mark from component assessments, it must be applied consistently, except where Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations require alteration.

16.14 I1.1 – The awarding organisation must establish and comply with an appeals process covering the results of assessments and decisions relating to Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

17 QUALIFICATIONS SCOTLAND ACCREDITATION PRINCIPLES

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

17.2 Principle 13 – The awarding body and its providers must ensure that systems and processes are in place for effective quality assurance of accredited qualifications, including Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations.

17.3 Principle 14 – The awarding body and its providers must ensure that qualifications, their delivery, and assessment are fair, inclusive, and accessible to all learners.

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF APPROVAL ROUTES

Adjustment Type	Qualifications (Centre Decision)	EPA (Smart Awards Approval)
Extra time up to 25%	✓	✓
Extra time over 25%	X (Smart Awards approval)	✓
Use of reader, scribe, or interpreter	✓ (if not assessing reading/writing)	✓
Modified materials (coloured, large print, Braille)	✓	✓
Rest breaks under supervision	✓	✓
Assistive technology (e.g., screen reader, voice-to-text)	✓	✓
Alternative venue or separate room	✓ (centre discretion)	✓ (pre-approved)
Language modification or BSL	X (Smart Awards approval)	✓
Practical assistant or prompter	✓ (with risk assessment)	✓
Special Consideration requests	Submit via SAMS within 14 days	Submit within 14 days of EPA

[Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

[Reasonable adjustment matrix](#)

APPENDIX 2 – OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR CENTRES AND EPA

1. Identifying Learner and Apprentice Needs

- Centres and employers must identify access needs early, ideally during induction or registration.
- Early disclosure allows adequate planning for appropriate adjustments.
- Adjustments must reflect the learner's or apprentice's *normal way of working*.

2. Evidence Collection and Record Keeping

- All evidence supporting a request must be valid, sufficient, and current.
- Records must include the adjustment requested, evidence provided, decision rationale, and implementation record.
- Evidence examples: medical certificate, educational psychologist report, occupational health statement, or prior assessment adjustments.

3. Roles of Facilitators and Assistive Support

- **Readers:** Read only what is written; must not interpret or explain content.
- **Scribes:** Record exactly what the learner dictates; may not correct spelling unless instructed.
- **BSL Interpreters:** Translate questions without altering meaning; suitable only where reading/writing is not assessed.
- **Prompters:** May draw attention back to task but cannot provide content assistance.
- **Practical Assistants:** Carry out physical tasks under direction; may not perform assessed skills.
- **Transcribers:** Produce exact written versions of dictated or signed responses.
- **Assistive Technology:** Includes screen readers, voice-to-text software, or adaptive keyboards.

4. Health and Safety and Risk Assessment

- A risk assessment must be completed where adjustments could affect safety (e.g., physical tasks or equipment use).
- Health and safety must always take precedence; reasonable alternatives should be offered if a risk cannot be mitigated.

5. Internally and Externally Set Assessments

- For *internally set* assessments, centres have discretion to apply adjustments that do not change learning outcomes.
- For *externally set* or EPA assessments, Smart Awards must approve all non-standard adjustments.

6. Special Considerations Examples

- Illness or injury at assessment.
- Bereavement or trauma affecting concentration.
- Disruption (fire alarm, technical failure).
- Severe weather or transport disruption preventing attendance.

7. Monitoring and Audit Requirements

- Centres and EPA providers must maintain adjustment logs for each assessment series.

- Records are subject to audit by Smart Awards and may be requested by EQAs or regulators.
- Non-compliance or inconsistent application may result in sanctions.

8. Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

- Smart Awards reviews data annually to identify trends and potential barriers.
- Feedback informs qualification design, assessor training, and future accessibility planning.