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NQual is committed to providing fair and reasonable adjustments for learners to help reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learners at a disadvantage during assessment or learning journey

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect learners who are registered with NQUAL for qualifications and Assessment and applies to all aspects of the delivery including support materials, resources, as well as formal assessments, to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged during the assessment or learning process. This policy sets out and explains a range of mechanisms that we may offer to our learners that require support in completing their learning journey.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of NQual and its representatives, to make learners, employers and centres who are involved in any design, delivery, management, assessment, and quality assurance aware of and familiar with, the contents of this policy.

Policy Overview

The Equality Act 2010 requires Assessment Organisations (AOs) and Centres to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a learner who is disabled (as defined in the Act) is not placed at a disadvantage in comparison to learners who are not disabled.

Qualifications and Assessments should encompass a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. NQual ensure that the assessment format is not a barrier for learners completing qualifications and assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special condition arrangements are made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessments easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained, which are through:

- Reasonable Adjustments – agreed before the assessment takes place; or
- Special Considerations – applied post assessment.

Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learners at a disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what is being assessed.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learners access to the assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

Assessment Organisations and Centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Definition of Special Considerations

Reasons for special consideration could be temporary illness, injury, or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learners an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

Special consideration may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learners. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the learner but will always be a minor adjustment as doing more may jeopardise the standard.

Where an assessment requires a competence, criterion, or standard to be met fully, or in the case of a standard that confers a Licence to Practice, it may not be possible to apply special consideration. It may be more appropriate to offer the learners an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date or to extend the registration period so that the learners have more time to complete the assessment activity.

All learners, regardless of their special consideration, must still meet our minimum requirement to achieve their qualifications.

Learners cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. Learners, Providers or Employers must declare their disability or learning needs prior to the assessment period. Partners must declare any requirements at enrolment. This is a minimum of three months prior to expected Gateway and will then be considered by the quality team. Where these requirements cannot be fulfilled, the partner will be notified within 10 working days. Any required adjustments will be again checked at Gateway by the Independent Assessor (IA) with the completion of the Gateway Declaration. All necessary reasonable adjustment arrangements must have been implemented prior to the learners completing any assessments.

How to Submit a Reasonable Adjustment Request

Centres delivering NQual qualifications should have their own reasonable adjustments policy, and log any reasonable adjustments made and evidence available for External Quality Assurance activities if required.

In regard to Assessment, training providers and employers can request reasonable adjustments via ACE360 and this should be done a minimum of 3 months prior to the expected Gateway.

EPA Request for Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

If the learners require arrangements for reasonable adjustments, they should provide NQual with evidence of their learning needs or medical condition. This will be reviewed by a member of NQual's quality team who will check that the reasonable adjustment is current and relevant to the learner.

How to Submit a Special Consideration Request

To request a special consideration, the learners, provider, or employer should complete the appropriate request form by emailing quality@nqual.co.uk.

Processes and Timescales Regarding Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable Adjustment Request – Timescales

Once a request for a reasonable adjustment is received, the quality team will complete a review of the request and evidence provided, following the IFATE Reasonable Adjustment Matrix. The quality team will aim to review your request within 10 working days of it being received. If this is not possible, it will be acknowledged in writing within 1 working day of receipt with notification provided of what action will be taken. The quality team aims to conclude reasonable adjustment requests within 10 working days upon receipt of a fully completed request. The quality team will inform learners and employers if these timescales cannot be adhered to for any reason.

Request for a Special Consideration

A request for a Special Consideration should be made within 10 working days of the last component date.

Once a request for a special consideration is received, we will complete a review of the request and evidence provided. The quality team will aim to review your request within 10 working days of it being received. If this is not possible, it will be acknowledged in writing within 1 working day of receipt with notification provided of what action will be taken.

The quality team aims to conclude special consideration requests within 10 working days of receipt of a fully completed request.

The quality team will inform you if these timescales cannot be adhered to for any reason.

If partners or learners remain dissatisfied following the outcome of the request that you have submitted, you may submit a complaint or appeal in line with the NQual Appeals or Complaint's Policy.

Mandatory Disclosure and Confidentiality

Confidentiality

We may need to access confidential information. We will ensure that such information is kept secure and only used for the investigation and in line with relevant data protection legislation. We will not normally disclose the information to third parties unless required to do so, e.g. to our regulators and/or the Police or other relevant and/or statutory bodies.

Termination for Convenience

Our actions under this policy and any sanctions imposed will be proportionate. Where possible, we will always try to work with partners in resolving issues. However, nothing within this policy precludes us from invoking our right under the agreement for the provision of services relating to assessment to terminate our relationship with partners.

*For the purpose of this policy, the quality team is in reference to Subject Quality Assurers (QAs) followed by an additional review if further guidance is needed.

IFATE Reasonable Adjustment Matrix

1. No known disability
2. Cognitive processing needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, a need for executive function, visual processing speed, visual perception, literacy, numeracy, verbal reasoning, verbal memory, and nonverbal memory
3. Social/ communication needs such as autistic spectrum condition
4. Long standing illnesses such as cancer, epilepsy, Crohn's, IBS, Chronic Fatigue
5. Mental health conditions
6. A physical need such as crutches or wheelchair user, arthritis, paraplegia, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy
7. Hearing need
8. Visual need

Reasonable Adjustment	Assessment Method					
	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
Extra Time Allowance	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,3,4,5	2,3,4,5,7	2,3,5,6,7
Scribe			2,6,8			
Reader			2,8			
Personal Support Worker Inattendance	2,5,6,8	2,5,6,8	2,5,8	2,5,8	2,5,6,8	2,5,8
Timed Rest Breaks	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,7,8
Bathroom Breaks	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6	4,6
Voice Explanation	2,8	2,8				

Reasonable Adjustment	Assessment Method					
	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
BSL Interpreter & Extra Time	7	7	7	7	7	7
Assistive Technology – Voice Recognition			2,4,6			
Assistive Technology – Screen Reader			8			
Assistive Technology – Text to Speech			2,4			
Flexibility With Location				3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6
Flexibility of Time of Assessment	4	4	4	4	4	4
Flexibility Within the Method of Assessment		6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6	3,4,5,6
Pre-Recorded Evidence / Delivered by Video Link				2,3,4,5	2,3,4,5	
Permission to Write Notes						2,4,5
Permission to Bring Notes				2,4,5		2,4,5
Info Presented in Required Format – Size, Font Style, Colour			2,8			
Individual Testing			3,4,5			
Supervised Assessment Taken at Home			3,4,5,6			

Reasonable Adjustment	Assessment Method					
	Observation	Practical Skills Test	Test	Project	Presentation	Professional Discussion
Written Questions to Back up Verbal					2,4,5,6	2,4,5,6
Rewording of Questions / Clarification if Needed					2,3,7	2,3,7
Time Allowance For Processing Verbal Questions					2,4,5,7	2,4,5,7
Information is Presented in Small Chunks					2,4,7	2,4,7

All policies relate to qualifications and assessments provided by NQual Ltd.

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum.