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IAM Centre Guidance Series

Equal Access, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

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Equal access and reasonable adjustments

When developing qualifications and designing assessments, the IAM makes every effort to consider the needs of all candidates, including those with disabilities or specific difficulties.

Despite careful design it is possible that some candidates require reasonable adjustments to assessment methods or arrangements in order to ensure that they can access the assessment.

Candidates may apply for special consideration at the time of the assessment because they have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or other adverse circumstances.

Definition of reasonable adjustment

“A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places that candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.”¹

Principles

The IAM makes reasonable adjustments required by legislation, including equal opportunity legislation and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), and the amendments to the Act and in compliance with regulatory requirements set out by the regulatory authorities in “The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004” and “Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (2008)”. Reasonable adjustments give equality of access to qualifications and assessment and ensure that all candidates are given an equal opportunity to demonstrate attainment.

The IAM will consider each application on its merit, on a case – by - case basis. Awarding Bodies and centres are only required by law to do what is ‘reasonable’ in terms of giving access. This will depend on individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Reasonable adjustments must be approved and set in place prior to the assessment commencing.

A learner does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Equally every learner who is disabled will not necessarily be entitled to, or need, an adjustment to assessment.

A candidate with a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments.

¹ FAB: The application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations in vocational qualifications, par 3.1

Adjustments may not be considered reasonable if they:

- affect negatively the reliability, validity comparability of the assessment
- invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the specification for the qualification
- affect negatively the practical conduct of the assessment
- give an unfair advantage to the candidate compared to candidates undertaking the same or similar assessment without adjustments
- involve unjustifiable costs.

Reasonable adjustments can be made by:

- making changes to assessment conditions
- providing assistance during assessments
- allowing the use of mechanical and electronic aids
- modifying the presentation of assessment materials
- allowing alternative ways of presenting responses
- employing access facilitators.

Examples of reasonable adjustments as defined by the list above include:

- allowing extra time
- supervised rest breaks
- changing the organisation of the assessment location
- use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids- includes coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and amplification equipment
- use of assistive technology, such as speech software and voice activated software
- assessment materials in enlarged, Braille or audio format
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- readers/scribes
- practical assistants/ transcribers/ prompters
- use of ICT/ electronic devices for responses

Different types of assessment make different demands on learners and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of adjustment that may be put in place. The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- the specific assessment requirements of the qualification
- the type of assessment
- the particular needs and circumstances of the individual candidate

Within standard assessment arrangements the reasonable adjustments can be considered under the following headings:

- reasonable adjustments permitted by the IAM (A)
- reasonable adjustments permitted by the centre (B)

Reasonable Adjustments	Assessments which are not taken under examination conditions	Assessments which are taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	B	
Extra time in excess of 25%	A	A
Supervised rest breaks		B
Change in the organisation of assessment room		B
Separate accommodation within the centre		B
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and amplification equipment	B	B
Use of assistive technology	A	A
Assessment material in enlarged format	B	A
Assessment material in Braille	B	A
Assessment material in BSL	B	A
Assessment material in audio format	B	A
Responses on audio cassette	B	A
Responses in Braille	B	A
Reader	B	A
Scribe	B	A
Practical assistant	B	A
Prompter	B	A
Transcriber		A
Use of ICT	B	A

The assessment outcome produced by the candidate at all times must:

- meet the requirements of the qualification specification
- be presented in a way that can be assessed, moderated or verified in the same way as work from other learners.

Centres must ensure that:

- they have effective internal procedures for identifying learner needs at the point of recruitment and that these procedures comply with the relevant legislation
- they have the necessary resources or can source the resource to support adjustments to assessments
- as far as possible, buildings used for assessment are accessible to all candidates

- they follow the IAM procedures for implementing adjustments to assessments
- any adjustment does not compensate for the learners lack of knowledge and skills
- candidates only use adjustments previously agreed with the IAM.

Reasonable adjustments to external assessments and examinations

Who can apply?

- Heads of centre on behalf of candidates. Candidates who are registered by centres **should not** apply to the IAM directly.
- Independent candidates.

How to apply?

- Applications must be made in writing on **form R1** posted in the centre downloads section of the IAM web site and state clearly the grounds for the application.
- A separate form should be completed for each learner.
- Supporting evidence, if necessary and appropriate, must be attached to the application. This may include:
 - assessment made by centre staff or external experts with relevant competence and responsibility in the specific area
 - information from previous centres
 - history of relevant support within the centre
 - written documentation produced by independent authoritative external specialists, for example medical, psychological or professional reports and/or assessment, including the name, title and professional credentials of the specialist who wrote the documentation. This document should set out the nature of the difficulty and the extent to which the candidate is affected by the difficulty; including the effects of any medication the candidate may be taking.
- Heads of centres and independent candidates must submit signed and dated applications **at least 30 working days** before the date of the start of the examination series.
- To apply for modified enlarged papers, Braille papers or papers adapted for the purpose of using a recording, heads of centre and independent candidates must submit applications **at least three calendar months** before the date of the series in which the assessment is planned to be taken.
- Applications must be sent to the qualifications manager at the IAM Head Office: 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London, SE11 5EE.
- Adjustments are assessed and authorised by the Chair of QAAB and the Director of Education. Decisions are informed by reasonable adjustments recorded over the previous five years.
- The IAM Head Office communicates the decision to the Centre / independent candidate.
- The decision is recorded in the relevant log.

Advice to future candidates

Centres must ensure that candidates select the qualifications that are appropriate for their particular circumstances and meet their needs. Centres must:

- explain to the candidates the assessment requirements for the selected qualification
- advise candidates if they can complete the assessment in full and achieve the qualification successfully
- identify what adjustment the candidate with disabilities or difficulties may need and discuss this with the candidate.

Special considerations

Definition of special considerations

“Special considerations are procedures implemented at the time of an assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a candidate who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances.”²

Principles

The IAM agrees special considerations in compliance with regulatory requirements set out by the regulatory authorities in the “Statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004”.

The IAM will consider each application on an individual case-by-case basis and the outcome of the consideration will depend on the difficulty that the candidate has faced. The only exception to this is where a group of learners has been affected by the same circumstance (eg fire alarm). In these circumstances the centre must provide the IAM with a list of learners affected. There are **no** circumstances whereby a centre can apply its own special consideration. All applications for special consideration must be made to the IAM. Special consideration may be given to a candidate following a scheduled assessment if:

- they were prepared for and present for the assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary personal illness, injury or other adverse circumstances during or near the time of the assessment
- they missed part of the assessment due to circumstances outside their control
- the alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate

The IAM may not grant special consideration if this would:

- give the candidate an unfair advantage
- cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievement
- invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the specification for the qualification

² FAB: The application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations in vocational qualifications, par 4.2)

- affect negatively the reliability, validity and comparability of the assessment
- the centre or the independent candidate cannot provide evidence that the candidate faced special difficulties
- the candidate missed any part of the assessment as a result of personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
- preparation for the assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, not during or immediately related to the assessment itself.

The following are examples which might be eligible for special consideration:

- terminal illness of the learner/ parent of the learner
- recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family
- recent traumatic experience such as the death of a close friend
- flare-up of severe congenital conditions
- severe car accident
- recent physical assault trauma
- recent domestic crisis

Special consideration, if granted, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the candidate's result.

Who can apply?

- Heads of centre on behalf of candidates. Candidates who are registered by centres **should not** apply to the IAM directly.
- Independent candidates.

How to apply?

- For candidates who study at a centre any application must be made in writing using the form **R2** posted in the centre downloads section of the IAM web site and state clearly the grounds for the application.
- For independent candidates any application must be made in writing using the form **R3** posted in the independent students section of the IAM web site and state clearly the grounds for the application.
- Supporting documentation such as, for example, medical certificates or statements from the invigilator must be attached to the application.
- Heads of centres and independent candidates must submit applications **within 48 hours** from the scheduled assessment.
- Applications must be sent to the qualifications manager at the IAM Head Office: 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London, SE11 5EE.
- Adjustments are assessed and authorised by the Chair of QAAB and the Director of Education. Decisions are informed by special considerations recorded over the previous five years.
- The IAM Head Office communicates the decision to the Centre / independent candidate.
- The decision is recorded in the relevant log.

The IAM will review the circumstances surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equality, validity and reliability for the assessment for the candidate.

Record keeping within the centre for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Centres should nominate a member of staff to take responsibility for demonstrating the implementation and recording of adjustments. Centres must keep:

- a copy of the application forms for reasonable adjustments to external assessments and for special considerations, together with the related supporting documentation, as a minimum until results are finalised and the period for appeal has expired
- records of their decisions to permit reasonable adjustments to internal assessments, and the related supporting documentation, as a minimum until results are finalised and the period for appeal has expired

Malpractice in the application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Centres should note that failure to comply with the guidance within this policy document has the potential to constitute malpractice, which would impact on the learner's result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- putting in place arrangements without the IAM approval
- exceeding the allowance agreed with the IAM
- agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by the evidence
- failing to maintain appropriate records
- failing to report delegated adjustments to the IAM, where this is required by the IAM

Right to appeal

Where a centre does not agree with an IAM decision made in respect of this policy, it has right of appeal.

Any appeal must be submitted to qualifications manager within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the IAM decision.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the IAM will acknowledge receipt and will make a final decision within 1 calendar month.

Acknowledgements

This guidance was informed by the following documents:

1. The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, QCA, 2004.
2. Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework, Ofqual, 2008.
3. Good practice guide: The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications, FAB 2008.

Application for Reasonable Adjustment (Form R1)

This form must be completed by the Head of Centre, on behalf of their candidates, or by independent students wishing to apply for reasonable adjustments. It should be submitted to the IAM at least 30 working days before the date of the start of the examination series. In the case of those candidates who may require modified enlarged papers including Braille papers this application should be submitted at least three months before the start of the examination series.

Centre name:
Centre address:
Head of centre name:

Candidate name:
Candidate number:
Qualification title:
Unit title(s):
Date(s) of the examination(s):

Reason for the adjustment. The centre should give details of the effect of the disability on the candidate's performance in the assessment.	
Adjustment required. It is the centre's responsibility to recommend the adjustment needed by the candidate.	
Evidence to support the application. This may include written documentation produced by independent authoritative external specialists, for example medical, psychological or professional reports. Information about a candidate's disability should only be sent to the IAM with the candidate's written consent.	

I declare that the above information is accurate and conforms to the guidance of the IAM.

Signature:

Date:

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For IAM use only:
Application outcome:
Name and signature of QAAB member or IAM staff member:
Date:

Please return your completed form to:

**The Examinations Department, IAM, 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London,
SE11 5EE**

Application for special consideration (Form R2)

This form must be completed by the Head of Centre and submitted to IAM within 48 hours from the candidates last scheduled examination.

Centre name:
Centre address:
Head of centre name:

Candidate name:
Candidate number:
Qualification title:
Unit title(s):
Date(s) of the examination(s):

Summary of adverse circumstances affecting the candidate's performance in the examination:
Summary of other units of the qualification already achieved, including outcomes:
Names and candidate numbers of other candidates of comparable standard:
Estimated result for the candidate:
Evidence to support the application:

I declare that the above information is accurate and conforms to the guidance of the IAM.

Signature:

Date:

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For IAM use only:

Application outcome:

Name and signature of QAAB member or IAM staff member:

Date:

Please return your completed form to:

**The Examinations Department, IAM, 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London,
SE11 5EE**

Application for special consideration from Independent Candidates (Form R3)

This form must be completed and submitted to the IAM within 48 hours from your last scheduled examination.

Centre name:
Centre address:

Candidate name:
Candidate number:
Qualification title:
Unit title(s):
Date(s) of the examination(s):

Summary of adverse circumstances affecting the candidate's performance in the examination:
Summary of other units of the qualification already achieved, including outcomes:
Evidence to support the application:

I declare that the information is accurate and conforms to the guidance of the IAM.

Signature:

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Date:

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For IAM use only:

Application outcome:

Name and signature of QAAB member or IAM staff member:

Date:

Please return your completed form to:

**The Examinations Department, IAM, 6 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London,
SE11 5EE**