



openawards

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Version history

Version	Date	Section(s)	Change(s) made
16.0	06/21	All	"Centre" replaced with "Provider" throughout
16.0	06/21	All	Arrangements for End-point assessments added throughout
16.0	06/21	5	Definitions added for Extenuating Circumstances, Controlled Conditions, Reader and Scribe
16.0	06/21	All	References to the scope of reasonable adjustments and special considerations incorporating mitigations required as a result of COVID-19 – specifically regarding adaptations and Teacher Assessed Grades added.
16.0	06/21	7	Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments section added
16.0	06/21	9.3	Functional Skills and Essential Digital Skills Qualifications reasonable adjustments permissions table reformatted for improved clarity
16.0	06/21	10	Arrangements for applications for Access to HE Diploma awards by extenuation added

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1. Purpose

Open Awards is committed to ensuring access to fair assessment for all learners and apprentices, as well as protecting the integrity of the award of qualifications and units.

There may be circumstances whereby arrangements need to be made to take account of particular learner/ apprentices' requirements in order to ensure that this is achieved without giving any unfair advantage over other learners/apprentices.

The Policy sets out the principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessment. It outlines Open Awards' reasonable steps to ensure it avoids disadvantage (directly or indirectly) in line with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010.

This document replaces all previous policies covering reasonable adjustments and special considerations from the operative date.

This document includes references to the scope of reasonable adjustments and special considerations incorporating mitigations required as a result of COVID-19 – specifically regarding adaptations and Teacher Assessed Grades. Statements are clearly identified using the same format as this paragraph. Highlighted statements will be removed once the mitigations are no longer required.

2. Scope

This document is applicable for the following Open Awards products:

Ofqual regulated qualifications and units	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Access to HE Diplomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
End-point assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality Endorsed Courses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Badge of Excellence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Regulatory Authorities

The relevant regulatory authorities are Ofqual and the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA). As an approved End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), Open Awards also commits to meet the requirements of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the requirements of the regulatory authorities. Where the requirements of a regulatory authority change, or where inadvertently these procedures conflict with those of the regulatory authority, the latter shall apply. Where the requirements of the regulatory authority are amended and require

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changes to this document, such changes will be made as soon as practicable and Open Awards will inform providers accordingly.

4. Audience

This document is for use by the following:

- Approved providers delivering Open Awards approved qualifications and units.
- Learners registered on Open Awards qualifications and units at an approved provider.
- Private learners/ apprentices registered on Open Awards qualifications and units.
- Apprentices registered with Open Awards for End-point assessment.
- Employers of apprentices registered with Open Awards for End-point assessment.
- Open Awards staff and Trustees.

5. Definition[s]

Reasonable Adjustment	<p>Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that would place an individual at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who does not, during an assessment. Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable the learner/ apprentice to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the assessment outcomes but may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing the usual assessment arrangements, e.g. allowing extra time to complete the assessment activity• Adapting assessment materials, e.g. providing materials in Braille• Providing assistance during an assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader• Changing the assessment method e.g. from a written assessment to a spoken assessment• Using assisted technology such as screen reader or voice activated software. <p>Reasonable adjustments must be approved and set in place before the assessment takes place. The work produced by the individual will be assessed in the same way as all other learners/ apprentices.</p>
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<p>Special Consideration</p>	<p>Special Considerations are access arrangements taken when the assessment performance of an individual is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control.</p> <p>Special consideration can be a pre-assessment or post-assessment adjustment that compensates individuals who are suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the assessment.</p> <p>Pre-assessment adjustments will only be allowed where it is not possible to reschedule assessments without disadvantaging the individual.</p> <p>An individual may be eligible for special consideration if their performance in an assessment has been, or is likely to have been, affected by exceptional circumstances during their assessment. e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an illness or injury, or • some other event outside of the learner/ apprentice’s control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner/ apprentice’s ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment. <p>Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.</p> <p>The assessment plan for an apprenticeship standard defines permissible special considerations and the circumstances surrounding the apprentice’s End-point assessment that fall within this definition.</p>
<p>Extenuating Circumstances (QAA definition for Access to HE Diplomas)</p>	<p>Extenuating circumstances (ECs) are significant personal difficulties beyond a learner’s control that may impact on a learner’s ability to complete the Access to HE Diploma. The circumstances or the impact of existing circumstances on the learner is normally unforeseen when the learner starts the course.</p>
<p>Controlled Conditions</p>	<p>Arrangements required to assess learning outcomes where the supervision of learner/ apprentice assessment is required through an independent invigilator with no vested interest in the outcome of the assessment. Whilst assessments may cover a range of assessment methods such as practical tasks, written questions, multiple choice/ short answer and knowledge assessment tasks, the conditions in which assessments take place must meet specific, controlled requirements.</p> <p>Controlled conditions are designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure all learners/ apprentices have an equal opportunity

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	<p>to demonstrate their abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment • prevent possible learner/ apprentice malpractice • prevent possible administrative failures.
Reader	<p>An independent person with no vested interest in the outcome of the assessment who, on request, will read for a learner/ apprentice who has been allowed a reader as a reasonable adjustment. The reader may be used for all or part of the assessment and all or any part of the learner/ apprentice’s answers.</p> <p>The reader must only read assessment questions and answers in English. They must not also act as the invigilator, cannot intentionally or unintentionally lead the learner/ apprentice, nor provide definitions of words.</p>
Scribe	<p>An independent person with no vested interest in the outcome of the assessment who, on request, will write on behalf a learner/ apprentice who has been allowed a scribe as a reasonable adjustment. The scribe may be used for all or part of the assessment and all or any part of the learner/ apprentice’s answers.</p> <p>The scribe must not in any way attempt to modify either the content of the answers given by the learner/ apprentice or to alter the specific qualification requirements.</p>

6. Reasonable Adjustments Policy Statement

Open Awards is committed to ensuring the rights of individual learners/ apprentices to access qualifications, units and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs and to enable them to demonstrate their achievements. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that the integrity of our qualifications, units and assessment is maintained at all times.

Despite all best efforts, it is possible that a learner with the ability to undertake assessment under normal circumstances may not be able to perform to the same level due to adaptations put in place to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

In requesting adaptations to delivery and assessment, providers must identify possible adverse effects on specific learners. They must consider all possible mitigations to avoid disadvantaging the learner, including adapting agreed adaptations – care should be given to ensure validity of assessments and results.

Where an identified disadvantage is unavoidable, the provider should follow reasonable adjustment provisions outlined in this document.

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A learner/ apprentice 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/ apprentices will be defined as being disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the Equality Act 2010.

An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, the provider should assist the individual by offering help with study and assessment skills.

A learner/ apprentice does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Equality Act 2010) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Every learner/ apprentice who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner/ apprentice may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for assistance.

Open Awards encourages providers to adopt, at all times, inclusive assessment processes that adhere to disability and equal opportunity legislation and other regulatory criteria without compromising standards of assessment or giving any unfair advantage over other learners/ apprentices. We ensure that our providers consider a variety of suitable assessment methods as good practice, taking into consideration its learners/ apprentices.

In cases where a qualification is inaccessible due to a learner's inability to demonstrate competence in all units of the qualification, credit will be awarded for all units for which competence has been demonstrated. This does not apply to End-point assessments.

Open Awards treats all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests and agreements in confidence.

Different types of assessment make different demands on learners/ apprentices and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of suitable reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.

The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- the specific assessment demands of the qualification/unit
- the type of assessment
- the particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner/ apprentice.

Providers should complete the appropriate form, following the procedures and timescales indicated on the form.

Reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the provider	RA1
Reasonable adjustments requiring Open Awards permission	RA2

Arrangements for different types of assessments are detailed in Section 9.

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7. Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments

7.1 General Principles

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner/ apprentice's need for reasonable adjustments to assessment.

Adjustments to assessments:

- Must not invalidate assessment requirements of the qualification/ standard.
- Must not give the learner/ apprentice an unfair advantage.
- Must reflect the learner/ apprentice's normal way of working.
- Must be based on the individual needs of the learner/ apprentice.

Open Awards has a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner/ apprentice to show what they know and can do without adversely affecting their ability to meet the requirements of the assessment. When deciding whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, the following must be considered:

- Adjustments to assessment cannot compensate for lack of knowledge and/ or skills. The learner/ apprentice must be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
- Any adjustment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards must not be altered and performance will be assessed against set standards. It may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner/ apprentice has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner/ apprentice an unfair advantage or disadvantage the learner/ apprentice. The achievement of an individual who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner/ apprentice. Achievement of vocational qualifications and apprenticeship End-point assessments must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual needs of the learner/ apprentice. A provider must not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments as different qualifications and assessment methods can make different demands on the learner/ apprentice. The individual should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the learner/ apprentice's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed. The learner/ apprentice should be familiar in the use of the adjustment before commencing the assessment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.
- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by a member of staff with appropriate authority.

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7.2 Supporting Evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence that is valid, sufficient and reliable. In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner/ apprentice with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, the provider must be clear about the extent to which they are affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where the provider can verify supporting evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner/ apprentice with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the provider does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for identified learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the provider will need to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner/ apprentice's performance in the assessment. The provider should decide which evidence will best assist understanding of the individual's circumstances:

- Evidence of assessment of the learner/ apprentice's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the provider by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area; staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. Evidence may include a risk assessment regarding the learner/ apprentice's ability to complete assessment activity safely. If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner/ apprentice. This evidence should include an indication of how the provider plans to meet the learner/ apprentice's needs and should show that the individual can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous providers may also be included
- History of provision within the provider. This should include information about the support received by the learner/ apprentice during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which their needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes
- Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner/ apprentice is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that they may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the individual is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

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An individual with a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner/ apprentice and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

The provider must maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments which have been made.

8. Responsibility of providers

8.1 Overarching responsibilities

All Open Awards providers have a duty to ensure the rights of individual learners/ apprentices to access qualifications, units and assessments in the most appropriate way for their individual needs to be upheld. They should ensure that buildings and resources used for assessment are accessible to all learners/ apprentices, as far as is practicable.

The provider must ensure that it creates, at all times, an inclusive assessment process that adheres to disability and equal opportunity legislation and other regulatory criteria whilst ensure that standards of assessment are maintained. The provider must communicate their arrangements to all staff and learners/ apprentices and adopt a culture whereby learners/ apprentices feel able to disclose their requirement for reasonable adjustment.

Under no circumstance should the health and safety of a learner/ apprentice be compromised for an 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 them and/ or others, a suitably qualified person at the provider must carry out a risk assessment related to the individual's particular circumstances. In such cases, reasonable adjustments applications to Open Awards must be supported by the risk assessment.

A provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Open Awards qualifications and units are fully aware of the contents of the Open Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy.

All staff that provide advice to current and potential learners/ apprentices must have had training to make them aware of the impact of learning difficulty, disability or other concerns in relation to reasonable adjustment issues.

The provider should involve the learner/ apprentice in making any decisions about the application for reasonable adjustment. The provider should apply for reasonable adjustments or special considerations on behalf of the learner/ apprentice and applications must be supported by an individual with appropriate responsibility at the provider.

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The provider must operate effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner/apprentice can query any decision taken by the provider not to consider a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.

When considering reasonable adjustments, the provider should first check whether permission needs to be obtained from Open Awards (please refer to Section 9). If the provider is unsure whether permission is required for a specific learner, they should contact Open Awards for advice. Please note that all reasonable adjustments for End-point assessments are subject to approval from Open Awards and will be determined by the requirements of the assessment plan for the standard.

The provider must keep reasonable adjustments or special considerations records, for at least three (3) years from the end of the year to which they relate and make the evidence available to Open Awards for external quality assurance purposes on request. This applies equally to providers with Authorised Internal Verifiers. Further detail on evidence requirements can be found in Section 9 and record keeping requirements in Section 8.2.)

If the provider exceeds the level of adjustment set out in these guidelines or agreed with Open Awards on a case by case basis, it may lead to malpractice investigations.

For Ofqual regulated qualifications in 2020-21

In requesting adaptations to delivery and assessment to mitigate against the impact of COVID-19, providers must identify possible adverse effects on specific learners. They must consider all possible mitigations to avoid disadvantaging the learner, including adapting agreed adaptations – care should be given to ensure validity of assessments and results.

Where an identified disadvantage is unavoidable, the provider should follow reasonable adjustment provisions outlined in this document.

Where a learner has not completed all assessments due to impacts of COVID-19), special considerations requests will be considered by Open Awards. This is subject to the learner having been taught all content of the course AND having met minimum evidential thresholds for assessment:

- For courses up to 12 credits, 75% of the content must have been assessed
- For courses between 13 and 36 credits, 50% of the content must have been assessed
- For courses greater than 36 credits, 25% of the content must have been assessed.

For Access to HE Diplomas in 2020-21

Where a learner cannot submit all of the evidence for assessment required for the award of unit(s) that make up the Diploma due to COVID-19, the learner **may** still be awarded unit(s) that make up the Diploma, through extenuation. The tutor/provider will draw upon either further adaptations to assessments or alternate lines of evidence to determine whether the unit can be awarded.

The Final Awards Board Committee will:

- consider whether the application and associated evidence provided suggest, on balance of probability, that the student's achievement has been compromised by circumstances beyond their control
- review available evidence to ascertain whether it provides sufficient evidence for the award of the unit(s) (i.e. achievement of associated learning outcomes)
- review available evidence (established/alternate) to ascertain whether it provides sufficient evidence for the grading of the unit (graded units only).

8.2 Record keeping and monitoring

Providers must keep records for audit purposes for all cases where they have allowed learners to have reasonable adjustments. All cases should be recorded on an **RA1 Log of Reasonable Adjustments**. A new log should be created for each academic year.

All reasonable adjustments for End-point assessments are subject to approval from Open Awards. The RA1 Log does not apply for End-point assessments.

For each case on the RA1 Log, the following documents must be retained and made available to Open Awards for external quality assurance purposes:

- Evidence of learner need (including risk assessments where appropriate)
- Assessment evidence produced by the learner
- Modified assessment materials
- Internal quality assurance records of the assessment decision
- Evidence that the outcomes of the adjusted assessment have been subject to rigorous internal quality assurance and included in any standardisation activities undertaken for the unit

These records, and the RA1 Log, are classed as assessment records and should be kept for at least three (3) years from the end of the year to which they relate.

Open Awards will include the work of learners on the RA1 log within external quality assurance samples to confirm that the adjustments to assessments have been made in accordance with the guidelines in this document, and that:

- there is evidence of need on file
- the modification to the task has not conferred any unfair advantage on the learner
- the modifications and assessment decisions have been subjected to rigorous internal verification processes, including internal standardisation
- the award of credit and or qualifications to the learner is secure.

Where the provider has applied to Open Awards for approval to make reasonable adjustments, they should retain:

- a completed copy of Form RA2
- all supporting evidence sent to Open Awards
- all relevant documentation received from Open Awards.

These records are classed as assessment records and should be kept for at least three (3) years from the end of the year to which they relate.

9. Reasonable Adjustments by Types of Assessment

The following section outlines the most commonly requested reasonable adjustments. This list is not exhaustive and providers are advised to seek approval from Open Awards for other arrangements that may be required, or where they do not feel they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is either needed or should be applied.

For clarity, there are four (4) specific types of assessments for which providers can request reasonable adjustments.

1. Assessments that are internally set and NOT taken under controlled conditions (see 9.1)
2. Assessments that are taken under controlled assessment conditions (see 9.2)
3. Reformed Functional Skills and Essential Digital Skills controlled assessments (see 9.3)
4. Apprenticeship End-point assessments (see 9.4).

Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Open Awards considers each proposed adjustment on a case by case basis and reserves the right to refuse reasonable adjustment requests if it is judged that standards may be compromised.

9.1 Assessments **NOT** taken under Controlled Assessment Conditions

The assessment requirements for the majority of vocational qualifications offered by Open Awards fall into this group. In these types of assessments, the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. The qualifications allow the provider to have greater flexibility, to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and to choose assessment strategies, activities and methods that will best allow the learner to evidence their knowledge, skills and understanding.

These may include for example:

- Coursework
- Set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time
- Assessment activities which are normally set and administered by the provider
- Assessments where the learner collects evidence to demonstrate competence.

To enable access where there is evidence of need, the provider may allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic or other aid in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids:

- are generally commercially available
- reflect the learner's normal way of working
- enable the learner to meet the specified criteria
- do not give the learner an unfair advantage

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- present assessment materials in a way that reflects the learner’s normal way of working and enables them to meet the specified assessment criteria
- allow the learner to present evidence in any format that enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria.

Open Awards encourages providers to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving assessment requirements. Providers should contact Open Awards to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcomes produced by learners/ apprentices must at all times:

- meet assessment requirements regardless of the process or method used
- be accessible
- be able to be moderated or verified.

Where assessments are set by the provider and NOT taken under controlled assessment conditions, the reasonable adjustments listed below can be approved and implemented by the provider without needing approval by Open Awards.

Please note, providers must contact Open Awards for agreement to allow extra time in excess of 25%.

Reasonable Adjustment	Approved by
Assessment Conditions	
Extra time up to 25%	Provider
Supervised rest breaks	Provider
Modified Assessment Materials	
Responses in Braille	Provider
Assessment material in enlarged format or Braille	Provider
Language modified assessment material	Provider
Assessment material in BSL	Provider
Assessment material on coloured paper	Provider
Assessment material in audio format	Provider
Use of ICT to present responses	Provider ¹
Use of aids and assistive technology	
Use of assistive software	Provider ²
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles	Provider
Use of assistive low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	Provider
Use of dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries	Provider ³
Rooms and venues	
Change in the organisation of the assessment room	Provider
Separate accommodation within the provider	Provider
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Provider

¹ Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT.

² Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT.

³ Use of dictionaries must not compromise the validity of assessment outcomes.

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Practical assistants	
Reader	Provider
Scribe	Provider
Prompter	Provider
Sign Language Interpreter - BSL and SSE	Provider
Practical Assistant	Provider
Transcriber	Provider

All reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the provider must be recorded on **Open Awards RA1 Log of Reasonable Adjustments**. Supporting information relating to each decision must be retained by the provider for review by Open Awards through external quality assurance activities.

Providers should also refer to Section 8.2.

9.2 Assessments taken under Controlled Conditions (*except Functional Skills (see 9.3) and End-point assessments (see 9.4)*)

In situations where the learner is given set assessment materials and must complete the task in a fixed amount of time, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

Reasonable adjustments relating to the assessment room and/ or venue arrangements can be made at the discretion of the provider and must be recorded on Open Awards RA1 Log of Reasonable Adjustments. Supporting information relating to each decision must be retained by the provider for review by Open Awards through external quality assurance activities.

Where the permissions table below shows that the provider must seek permission from Open Awards (or for cases not included within the table), the provider must apply on behalf of the learners by completing Open Awards Form RA2 and uploading via the Secure Portal.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

OA.RA2.ProviderName.learnerName.Qualification.Level

OA.RA2.OpenawardsSchool.JohnSmith.SFLEDiploma.EntryLevel1

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests.

The form must be submitted as soon as possible after the need has been identified and, in any event, **at least 20 working days** before the assessment is due to take place. RA2 forms submitted within 20 working days of the scheduled assessment date will not be accepted and the provider must reschedule the assessment to allow sufficient time for the reasonable adjustment request to be processed.

For short courses lasting less than 20 working days, providers are advised to complete Form RA2 as soon as the learner is registered or the reasonable adjustment requirement is identified.

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Open Awards will respond to any requests **within 10 working days** to provide special versions of externally set and externally marked assessment materials (including examinations) Other examples would include 18-point bold or A3 enlargement of A4 papers.

Requests for Braille translations must be submitted **at least 30 working days** prior to the learner undertaking the assessment.

Reasonable Adjustment	To be approved by
Assessment Conditions	
Extra time up to 25%	Open Awards
Extra time in excess of 25%	Open Awards
Supervised rest breaks	Open Awards
Modified Assessment Materials	
Responses in Braille	Open Awards
Assessment material in enlarged format or Braille	Open Awards
Language modified assessment material	Open Awards
Assessment material in BSL	Open Awards
Assessment material on coloured paper	Open Awards
Assessment material in audio format	Open Awards
Use of aids and assistive technology	
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles	Open Awards
Use of assistive low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	Open Awards
Use of dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries	Open Awards ⁴
Use of ICT to present responses	Open Awards ⁵
Responses using electronic devices	Open Awards ⁶
Rooms and venues	
Change in the organisation of the assessment room	Provider
Separate accommodation within the provider	Provider
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Provider
Practical assistants	
Reader	Open Awards
Scribe	Open Awards
Prompter	Open Awards
Sign Language Interpreter – BSL and SSE	Open Awards
Practical Assistant	Open Awards
Transcriber	Open Awards

⁴ Use of dictionaries/bilingual dictionaries must not compromise the validity of assessment outcomes.

⁵ Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT.

⁶ Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT. Assistive technology may be only be used where it is the learner's normal way of reading, writing or speaking.

9.3 Functional Skills and Essential Digital Skills Qualifications

Reasonable adjustments relating to the assessment room and /or venue arrangements (i.e. changing the organisation of the assessment room, arranging separate accommodation within the provider or taking the assessment at an alternative venue) can be made at the discretion of the provider and must be recorded on RA1 Provider Log of Reasonable Adjustments. Supporting information relating to each decision must be retained by the provider for review by Open Awards through external quality assurance activities.

Open Awards allows speaking, listening and communicating (SLC) assessments to take place face to face or remotely via video conferencing technology. All participants in the group (including the invigilator/ assessor) must access the assessment in the same way – either all in the same room, or all remote.

For all other requests, providers must complete an Open Awards Form RA2 for each request and upload via the Secure Portal, along with appropriate supporting information.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

OA.RA2.providerName.learnerName.dateofexam

OA.RA2.OpenAwardsSchool.JohnSmith.04.05.2020

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests

The form must be submitted as soon as the need has been identified and, in any event, **at least 20 working days** before the assessment is due to take place. For any specific arrangements not listed, please contact Open Awards for more information.

Reasonable adjustments which may be permissible for each Functional Skills qualification and/ or component are outlined in the following table. Arrangements for Essential Digital Skills assessments undertaken under controlled conditions mirror those for Functional Skills ICT.

Where an adjustment is not allowed, the provider must identify alternative ways of assessing the learner. Where the adjustment is permissible, providers must submit an RA2 form as outlined above. Reasonable adjustments will not be allowed until approved by Open Awards for each learner and assessment. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that requests are submitted in a timely manner.

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Reasonable Adjustment	English Reading	English Writing	English SLC	Maths ⁷	ICT/Digital
Assessment Conditions					
Extra time up to 25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Extra time in excess of 25%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supervised rest breaks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Modified Assessment Materials					
Responses in Braille	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment material in enlarged format or Braille	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Language modified assessment material	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment material in BSL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment material on coloured paper	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessment material in audio format	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of aids and assistive technology					
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of assistive low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries	✓ ⁸	✗	✓ ⁹	✓ ¹⁰	N/A
Use of ICT to present responses	✓	✓ ¹¹	✗	✓	✓
Responses using electronic devices	✓ ¹²		✓ ¹³	✓	✓
Practical assistants					
Reader	✗ ¹⁴	✓ ¹⁵	✓ ¹⁶	✓	✓
Scribe	✓	✗ ¹⁷	✓	✓	✓
Prompter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sign Language Interpreter – BSL and SSE	✗	✓	✓ ¹⁸	✓	✓
Practical Assistant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transcriber	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

⁷ In Maths, learners may access all forms of equipment, software and practical assistance, such as a reader or a scribe that reflect their normal way of working. Learners may have access to models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales. Such adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes or give the learner an assessment advantage over others undertaking the same or similar assessments.

⁸ Use of dictionaries/ bilingual dictionaries allowed for all learners in Reading – RA2 not required.

⁹ Whilst bilingual dictionaries are allowed for SLC assessments, it is unlikely that this will be necessary. No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English.

¹⁰ Use of dictionaries/ bilingual dictionaries allowed for all learners in maths – RA2 not required.

¹¹ Predictive text/spelling and grammar check are not permitted in the Writing assessment.

¹² A computer reader may be used in Reading providing it is the learner's normal way of reading.

¹³ Augmentative speech equipment is allowed providing it is the learner's normal way of working.

¹⁴ A human reader cannot be used in Reading as it does not meet the requirement for independence.

¹⁵ A human reader is allowed to read the instructions to writing in tasks only.

¹⁶ A human reader is allowed to read the SLC instructions only.

¹⁷ A human scribe cannot be used in Writing as it does not meet the requirement for independence.

¹⁸ Sign Language (i.e. BSL, SSE) can be used, provided this is made accessible to all participants.

Reading within Functional Skills English qualifications is defined as the independent understanding of written language in specific contexts. “Text” is defined as materials that include the use of words that are written, printed, on-screen or presented using Braille.

Writing is defined as the independent construction of written language to communicate in specific contexts. ‘Text’ is defined as materials that include the use of words written, printed, on-screen or presented using Braille and which are presented in a way that is accessible for the intended audience.

SLC is non-written communication, normally conducted face-to-face and can also include ‘virtual’ communication methods such as spoken web-based technologies. The terms ‘speaking, listening and communicating’ are intended to be interpreted in a broad, inclusive way and are not intended to create any unnecessary barriers to learners with speech or hearing impairment.

Exemptions

As a last resort, an exemption from any Functional Skills English component can be requested for a disabled learner who cannot use assistive technology, if the learner cannot access any part of the assessment.

9.4 End-point assessments

The following permissions table outlines reasonable adjustment arrangements for End-point assessments and is dependent on whether or not the assessment is to be taken under controlled conditions.

In situations where the apprentice is given set assessment materials and must complete the task in a fixed amount of time, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

All reasonable adjustments for End-point assessments are subject to approval from Open Awards. The provider must apply on behalf of the apprentice by completing Open Awards Form RA2 and uploading via the Secure Portal along with supporting evidence of need.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

OA.RA2.providerName.apprenticeName.StandardCode

OA.RA2.OpenawardsSchool.JohnSmith.ST0000

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests.

The form must be submitted as soon as possible after the need has been identified and, in any event, **at least 20 working days** before the assessment is due to take place. RA2 forms submitted within 20 working days of the scheduled assessment date will not be accepted and the provider must reschedule the assessment to allow sufficient time for the reasonable adjustment request to be processed.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Requests for Braille translations must be submitted **at least 30 working days** prior to the apprentice undertaking the assessment.

Reasonable Adjustment	To be approved by
Assessment Conditions	
Extra time up to 25%	Open Awards
Extra time in excess of 25%	Open Awards
Supervised rest breaks	Open Awards
Modified Assessment Materials	
Responses in Braille	Open Awards
Assessment material in enlarged format or Braille	Open Awards
Language modified assessment material	Open Awards
Assessment material in BSL	Open Awards
Assessment material on coloured paper	Open Awards
Assessment material in audio format	Open Awards
Use of aids and assistive technology	
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles	Open Awards
Use of assistive low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	Open Awards
Use of dictionaries/ bilingual translation dictionaries	Open Awards ¹⁹
Use of ICT to present responses	Open Awards ²⁰
Responses using electronic devices	Open Awards ²¹
Rooms and venues	
Change in the organisation of the assessment room	Open Awards
Separate accommodation within the provider	Open Awards
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Open Awards
Practical assistants	
Reader	Open Awards
Scribe	Open Awards
Prompter	Open Awards
Sign Language Interpreter – BSL and SSE	Open Awards
Practical Assistant	Open Awards
Transcriber	Open Awards

¹⁹ Use of dictionaries/bilingual dictionaries must not compromise the validity of assessment outcomes.

²⁰ Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT.

²¹ Except where the qualification assessment guidance prohibits the use of ICT. Assistive technology may be only be used where it is the learner's normal way of reading, writing or speaking.

10. Special Considerations Policy Statement

A learner/ apprentice who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner/ apprentice e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.
- Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner/ apprentice.
- There is a 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/ apprentice could have performed more successfully in the assessment.
- The assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard defines permissible special considerations and the circumstances surrounding the apprentice's End-point assessment fall within this definition.

A learner/ apprentice will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- The provider does not supply any evidence that the learner/ apprentice 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.
- Preparations for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.
- The assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence or license to practice. This will affect all End-point assessments except where permissible special considerations are defined in the assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard.

Where an assessment has been missed or is in the form of an on-demand assessment (including online assessments) the provider should offer the learner/ apprentice an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

Open Awards will ensure that any special considerations claimed:

- Do not confer an unfair advantage over other learner/ apprentices
- do not mislead users about level and extent of attainment
- do not compromise the integrity or credibility of the unit(s), for the learner/ apprentice concerned or for other learner/ apprentices
- are clearly tracked for audit purposes, with all supporting documentation where appropriate.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Mitigating/ adverse circumstance(s) that could result in the need for special considerations to be made may include:

- Temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment
- bereavement at the time of the assessment
- domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment
- serious disturbance during the assessment
- unanticipated provider closure at the scheduled assessment time
- lack of availability of suitably skilled assessor/ invigilator at the time and location of the assessment
- learner/ apprentices being unable to travel to the assessment location in the time of a national crisis

- Learners being unable to access the location of the assessment due to the impacts of COVID-19, and alternative assessment dates or modes of assessments are not practicable.

- prolonged failure of technology needed to complete the assessment
- other accidental events, such as being given the wrong assessment
- failure by the provider or Open Awards to implement previously agreed reasonable adjustment arrangements.

Special consideration may apply where a learner has not been able to complete all assessments (for example, because of previous or future lockdowns as a result of COVID-19).

The provider must prove that they have considered all possible mitigations to avoid disadvantaging the learner, including adapting agreed adaptations and that no solution was available to avoid disadvantage as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

Learners will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in, the assessment is affected by:

- long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves also during the assessment
- bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached or there are ongoing implications such as inquests or court cases. For End-point assessment, only special considerations permitted by the standard assessment plan will be allowed.
- domestic inconvenience such as moving house, lack of facilities or taking holidays at the time of the assessment
- minor disturbances during the assessment, e.g. a mobile phone ringing or a badly-behaved learner/ apprentice.

- a learner having missed teaching and learning as a consequence of public health guidance. Providers should first consider adaptations to delivery and assessment and be unable to find appropriate solutions before making special consideration requests.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



The provider must inform Open Awards of any requests for special consideration **within 48 hours** of becoming aware of the mitigating/ adverse circumstances having occurred.

Where applying for special considerations for one learner/ apprentice, the provider should complete SC1 Request for Special Consideration for an Individual learner and upload via the Secure Portal.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

SC1-[ProviderName]-[OpenAwardslearnerID]

SC1-OpenawardsSchool-10199999

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests

Should the provider need to submit a special consideration request that covers more than one learner/ apprentice, the provider must complete SC2 Request for Special Consideration for a Group of Learners and upload via the Secure Portal.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

SC2-[ProviderName]-[CourseRunID]

SC2-OpenawardsSchool-156383

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests

Forms must be returned to Open Awards together with any supporting evidence or documentation as soon as possible after the assessment (and **no more than 7 working days** of the end of the assessment period) or when the issue first occurred.

Open Awards will consider each case on its individual merits and inform the provider of the outcome **within 15 working days** of receipt of the completed form and all supporting evidence or documentation required to judge the request.

For special consideration relating to assessment of Functional Skills Open Awards will aim to respond to the provider **within 8 working days** of receipt of the completed forms and all supporting evidence or documentation required to judge the request.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner/ apprentice'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/ apprentice's results.

Where the provider has applied to Open Awards for approval for special considerations, they should retain:

- a completed copy of Form SC1 or SC2
- all supporting evidence sent to Open Awards
- all relevant documentation received from Open Awards.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Access to HE providers may applying for an Access to HE Diploma award by extenuation for a learner whose ability to complete was impacted by significant personal difficulties beyond their control. Circumstances or the impact of existing circumstances on the learner is normally unforeseen when they start the course.

Applications for Access to HE Diploma awards by extenuation must be must be submitted to Open Awards by an authorised manager of the provider and made as soon as possible and **no later than 5 working days after the end date of the course**. Extenuation application forms must be uploaded to the Secure Portal for consideration by Open Awards Quality Team. Forms must be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence.

The provider must follow the naming convention:

EC1-[ProviderName]-[LearnerID]

EC1-OpenawardsSchool-10199999

Failure to do this will cause delay in Open Awards processing requests

11. Malpractice

A provider's failure to comply with the guidance regarding reasonable adjustments or special considerations could constitute malpractice and may lead Open Awards to withhold the learner/ apprentice's result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from Open Awards, where this is required.
- Exceeding the allowances agreed with Open Awards (as appropriate).
- Agreeing adjustments at provider level that are not supported by evidence
- Failing to maintain records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations for audit.
- Failing to report adjustments made at provider level to Open Awards upon reasonable request.

12. Appeals

Appeals against the outcome of an application for reasonable adjustments or special consideration can only be submitted by a provider and/or (in the case of End-point assessment) employers. Providers may only submit appeals with the explicit written consent of the learner/ apprentice(s).

For more information, please refer to the Open Awards Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures available on our website.

13. Monitoring and review

Open Awards will review this policy biennially as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner/ apprentice feedback, changes in its practices, advice from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous reasonable adjustments and/ or special considerations.

Open Awards will monitor all requests for reasonable adjustments made by its providers. Where requests for a reasonable adjustment occur repeatedly and overtime, it may indicate that a unit needs to be reviewed in order to ensure the inclusiveness of its design. Therefore, monitoring of all requests will be undertaken and considered through the unit review and validity audit process.

In addition, this policy may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with reasonable adjustments and/ or special considerations remain effective.

Open Awards will monitor and report on the use of reasonable adjustments and special considerations to the Regulators as required.

14. Related documents

This document is linked to the following Open Awards documents:

- RA1 – Provider Log of Reasonable Adjustments
 - RA2 – Reasonable Adjustment Form
 - SC1 – Special Consideration Form (Individual)
 - SC2 – Special Consideration Form (Group)
 - Provider Recognition Agreement
 - Provider Handbook
 - EPA Handbook (specific to each apprenticeship standard)
 - Access to HE provider Handbook
 - Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures
 - Complaints Policy
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Sanctions Policy
 - Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments
 - Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments Remotely
- Open Awards Guide to Awarding in 2020-21

15. Regulatory Requirements

The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy is designed to fulfil the requirements of our regulators. In particular:

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

- E4 Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered
- G2 Language of the assessment
- G3 Use of language and stimulus materials
- G6 Arrangements for reasonable adjustments
- G7 Arrangements for special consideration
- G8 Completion of the assessment under the required conditions
- G9 Delivering the assessment
- H1 Marking the assessment
- H2 Moderation where an assessment is marked by a provider
- H5 Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence
- I1 Appeals process

Ofqual guidance for 2020-21

Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework

Ofqual's additional rules and guidance for specific qualifications

Reformed Functional Skills Qualifications

[Functional Skills English conditions and requirements](#)

[Functional Skills English guidance](#)

[Functional Skills mathematics conditions and requirements](#)

[Functional Skills mathematics guidance](#)

Legacy Functional Skills Qualifications

[Criteria for Functional Skills qualifications](#)

[Specifications in relation to the reasonable adjustment of general qualifications](#)

[Controlled assessment regulations for Functional Skills](#)

[Functional Skills criteria for English](#)

[Functional Skills criteria for ICT](#)

[Functional Skills criteria for mathematics](#)

Essential Digital Skills Qualifications

[Ofqual Handbook: Essential Digital Skills Qualifications](#)

QAA AVA Licensing Criteria

Standardisation and moderation

92, 93, 96, 99

Moderator reporting

110

Additional QAA guidance for 2020-21

Arrangements for the Award and Assessment of the Access to HE Diploma 2020-21

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education
End-point Assessment Reasonable Adjustments Guidance

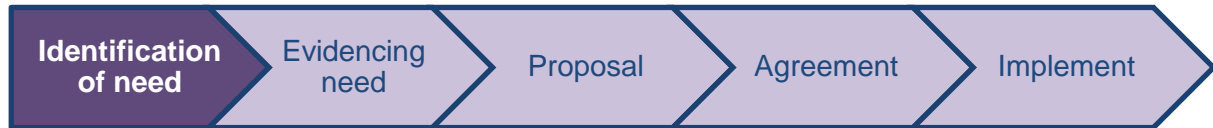
Education and Skills Funding Agency
Conditions for being on the Register of End-point Assessment Organisations.

<i>Originator:</i>	<i>Head of Quality and Standards</i>
<i>Date of latest review:</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Date of last approval:</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>Approved by:</i>	<i>Open Awards Management Team</i>
<i>Review interval:</i>	<i>Biennial</i>
<i>Next review due by:</i>	<i>June 2023</i>

Part B: Procedures for Reasonable Adjustments

Stages of the process

Stage 1: Identifying need



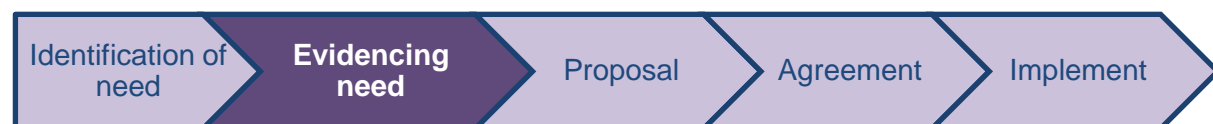
Providers should ensure that learners/ apprentices receive accurate information about the qualification/ units to make sure their needs will be met.

Prior to registration, providers should undertake an initial assessment of potential learners/ apprentices to make appropriate professional judgments about their potential to successfully complete the assessments and achieve at the appropriate level.

As part of this process, providers may identify that a learner/ apprentice will require support or reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to be assessed fairly and this should be discussed with the learner/ apprentice.

In certain instances, the need for reasonable adjustments may not be identified at the outset. In order to ensure fair assessment, providers should endeavour to identify the need for reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity.

Stage 2: Evidencing need



In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment does not give the learner/ apprentice an unfair advantage over others, the provider must be clear about the extent to which the learner/ apprentice is affected by the disability or difficulty.

The provider must ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner/ apprentice and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

Suitable evidence may include:

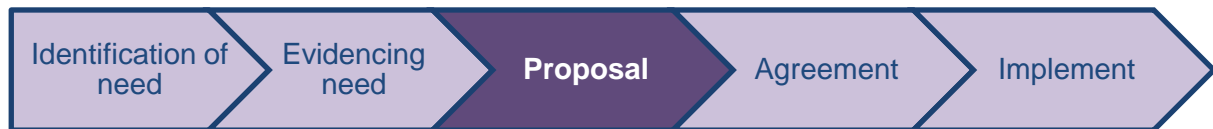
- The provider's assessments of the learner/ apprentice's needs
- History of provision within the provider
- Medical Certificate
- Psychological or other professional assessment/report.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



The provider should decide which evidence will best assist understanding of the learner/ apprentice's circumstances.

Stage 3: Proposal for reasonable adjustment



The provider must ensure that they record all considerations for reasonable adjustments on the appropriate Open Awards paperwork.

Depending on the details of the reasonable adjustment and method of assessment (as outlined in section 9 of the policy), some proposals can be permitted at the discretion of the provider, whilst other proposals require the provider to apply to permission from Open Awards.

Where reasonable adjustments are permitted at the discretion of the provider

The provider must complete Form RA1, ensuring that in making any adjustments they have read and understood the guidance provided by Open Awards.

The form must be completed and signed by the assessor and approved by the internal verifier.

Where reasonable adjustment permission must be sought from Open Awards

Strict regulations apply to the implementation of externally set and externally marked assessments taken under controlled conditions. If reasonable adjustments are required for any learners/ apprentices taking a qualification assessed in this manner you must obtain approval from Open Awards.

The provider must complete Form RA2 as soon as possible after the need has been identified, and in any event **at least 20 working days** before the assessment is due to be taken. For short courses lasting less than 20 working days, providers are advised to complete Form RA2 as soon as possible.

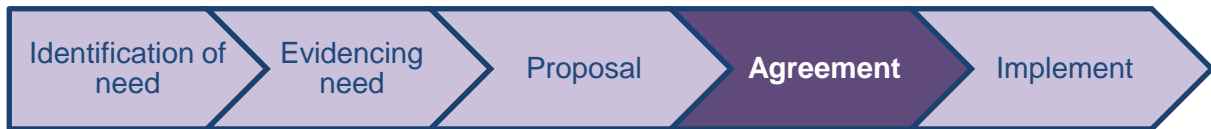
Supporting evidence **must be** provided – this may include one or more of the following:

- The provider's assessments of the learner/ apprentice's needs
- History of provision within the provider
- Medical certificate
- Psychological or other professional assessment/report.

The form and supporting evidence must be uploaded via the Secure Portal for consideration by Open Awards Quality Team.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures

Stage 4: Agreement



Where reasonable adjustments are permitted at the discretion of the provider

Form RA1 must be completed and signed by the assessor and approved by the internal verifier.

The provider must keep a record the details of all reasonable adjustments made and make this available for inspection by Open Awards staff during external verification together with all of the following:

- The modified assessment details/task
- The evidence of need
- The assessment evidence that has been generated by the learner/ apprentice
- The internal verification records of the assessment decision
- Evidence that the evidence has been included in any internal standardisation events.

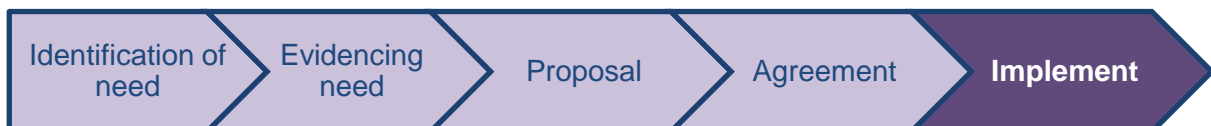
Failure to retain appropriate records may be considered to be malpractice and result in sanctions being placed on the provider.

Reasonable adjustments must be put in place before the learner/ apprentice starts the assessment.

Where reasonable adjustment permission must be sought from Open Awards

The Quality Team will consider your application (Form RA2 and supporting documentation) and give you a decision **within 10 working days**. We will inform you if we will be unable to reach a decision in this timescale.

Stage 5: Implementation



Providers must ensure that the reasonable adjustments are strictly implemented in accordance with the agreed proposal.

Records must be kept for audit purposes for all cases whether they have allowed learners/ apprentices to have reasonable adjustments. These are classed as assessment records and should be kept for **at least three (3) years** from the end of the year to which they relate.

Part C: Procedures for Special Considerations

Stages of the process

Stage 1: Review eligibility



Where a learner/ apprentice has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of their control which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment, the provider can apply for special consideration using Open Awards Form SC1.

In certain circumstances, a group of learners/ apprentices may have been affected by an event outside their control which has had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. In such cases, the provider can apply for special consideration for the group of learners/ apprentices using Open Awards Form SC2.

The provider must review the Special Considerations Policy Statement to consider whether the circumstances are covered by the Open Awards policy.

For Access to HE learners, providers must ensure that they have followed their procedures for dealing with cases of extenuating circumstances. In most cases, extenuating circumstances that affect achievement on individual units (for example, in relation to requests for extended deadlines) are handled at course level, and appropriate action and decisions taken according to the provider's approved procedures. Course teams must document cases of extenuating circumstances and the action taken and report these to the Final Awards Board.

Where extenuating circumstances have affected an Access to HE learner's performance in more than one area or in any other way that falls outside the provider's normal processes, the provider must apply for special consideration for the learner using Open Awards Form EC1-AHE, along with supporting evidence. Cases must be fully documented, include appropriate evidence and include a recommendation on whether each individual request should be supported and to what degree. Cases will be considered at the Final Awards Board.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Stage 2: Alert Open Awards



The provider must inform Open Awards of any requests for special consideration **within 48 hours** of becoming aware of the mitigating/adverse circumstances occurring. providers must contact quality@openawards.org.uk or 0151 494 2072.

The provider may not be aware of all the relevant details within 48 hours, nor have been able to collate supporting evidence, but needs to alert Open Awards at this stage. This alert will ensure that Open Awards staff are made aware that Special Consideration Form(s) are due and allow the appropriate allocation of resources needed to review evidence quickly to avoid learners/ apprentices being disadvantaged by unnecessary delays in processing forms.

Stage 3: Applying for Special Consideration



Requests for special consideration must be completed by the assessor/ invigilator and countersigned by the provider's internal quality assurer. The form must be uploaded to the Secure Portal together with any supporting evidence or documentation **within five (5) working days** of the end of the assessment period.

Supporting paperwork submitted with the form should provide evidence of the mitigating circumstances that occurred before/ during the assessment for which you are applying for special considerations. Where applying for special considerations for a group of learners/ apprentices (Form SC2), the evidence should include reference to all affected learners/ apprentices. Please note that if a provider lists any learners/ apprentices on SC2 forms that were not directly affected, this will be considered to be maladministration/ malpractice and Open Awards will apply its maladministration and malpractice policy and sanctions policy accordingly.

Open Awards will not be able to consider special considerations applications until all necessary evidence has been made available.

If the special considerations form and supporting paperwork does not provide sufficient evidence to allow a final decision to be made, additional information will be requested. Failure to provide sufficient additional evidence within **five (5) working days** will result in applications being declined.

Where special considerations are applied for as a result of technical issues with XAMS (Open Awards controlled assessment platform), Open Awards' investigation will incorporate any issues relating to XAMS.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures



Where possible, the provider should provide screenshots or video record evidence demonstrating the issues faced by learners/ apprentices. Open Awards will attempt to replicate errors as part of the investigation and system improvements will be made where appropriate to avoid future occurrences.

Stage 4: Decision



Open Awards will consider each case on its individual merits and inform the provider of its decision **within five (5) working days** of the form and supporting evidence needed to inform the decision-making process being uploaded to the Secure Portal.

There are three potential decisions made against applications:

- Approved. The decision will outline the action Open Awards will take in upholding the application, such as increasing results by x%.
- Rejected. The evidence presented did not demonstrate that the learner/ apprentice was disadvantaged or the claim was ineligible.
- Pending. We may request further information in order to come to a final decision.

providers may withdraw pending applications if they decide they do not have sufficient evidence to satisfy Open Awards requirements.

Special consideration applications are normally reviewed by the Quality and Standards Advisor (QASA) allocated to the provider. If the QASA is minded to reject the application, this decision needs to be ratified by Open Awards Quality Manager or Head of Quality and Standards before being made final.

Special considerations for Access to HE learners unable to complete the Diploma due to extenuating circumstances are considered at the Final Awards Board where extenuating circumstances have affected performance in more than one area or in any other way that falls outside the provider's normal processes. Cases of extenuating circumstances brought to the Final Awards Board must have been considered by the provider's course team and external moderator prior to the meeting.

Cases must be fully documented, and include evidence which is presented in a standardised manner and with a recommendation to the awards board on whether each individual claim for extenuating circumstances should be supported and to what degree.

Providers have the right to appeal final decisions by using the provisions detailed in Open Awards Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures.