



# Equality and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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## 1 Introduction and Policy Statement

EduQual performs and maintains comprehensive quality assurance processes and procedures. These procedures are designed to safeguard EduQual's integrity as a business and as an Awarding Organisation, and are also designed to ensure the validity of EduQual-accredited qualifications and EduQual-accredited assessment methodology. In particular, EduQual maintains up-to-date policies for staff and centres in order to meet any requirements stipulated by the regulatory authorities.

This Equality and Reasonable Adjustments Policy is designed to outline the ways in which EduQual adheres to the Equality Act 2010 (and all subsequent amendments to that Act) as well as to provide guidance for those learners that require additional support. **This Equality and Reasonable Adjustments Policy includes access arrangements amongst its list of reasonable adjustments, and also covers special consideration.**

## 2 EduQual's Commitment to Equality

EduQual is committed to ensuring that all learners have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and any related products and services that we create/provide. EduQual is also committed to supporting each learner throughout the duration of their registration period and conducting learner assessments in a fair way that epitomises our integrity as an awarding organisation. Finally, EduQual also liaises with centres responsible for delivering our qualifications in order to ensure that those centres are fulfilling their own commitment to EduQual standards and principles, and to the principles and tenets of the Equality Act.

### 2.1 The EduQual Commitment in practice

Our commitment to upholding the principles and tenets of the Equality Act in maintaining our own integrity as an awarding organisation means that:

- 1) We do not tolerate direct or combined discrimination against our learners, centre staff, or EduQual staff and associates on the basis of what the Equality Act considers to be a protected characteristic (age, disability, sex (male or female), sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief).
- 2) We allow all of our learners to attain/achieve the level of recognition that they deserve, and ensure that their attainments/achievements can in all ways be fairly compared to the attainments/achievements of their peers.
- 3) We will take all reasonable steps to prevent disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a provision, criterion or practice.
- 4) We will take all reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage to a disabled person caused by a physical feature.
- 5) We will take all reasonable steps to avoid a disadvantage to a disabled person by providing, or allowing for, an auxiliary aid.
- 6) We allow all of our learners to take part in assessments/tests in a fair way that does not discriminate or provide undue advantage to any learner.

**Specifically, EduQual will:**

- 1) Ensure that equality is practised and maintained through the development of our qualifications and other products and related services.
- 2) Not reject or otherwise dismiss any request pertaining to access of our qualifications except where accepting such a request would compromise the integrity of an assessment, or have a deleterious effect on the maintenance of our own standards and principles (including those other principles to which we adhere as required by the Equality Act).
- 3) Periodically but regularly review the status of our EduQual-accredited centres and their policies in order to determine that they are fulfilling their own obligations to the Equality Act. In order to maintain their status as EduQual-accredited centres, centres must for example possess and adhere to an appropriate equality policy of their own that does not in any way deviate from the tenets and principles of the Equality Act. Further, our centres must create and maintain a fair and inclusive appeals policy in line with EduQual's own Appeals Policy.
- 4) Recruit learners with integrity.
- 5) Periodically evaluate all policies, including this Equality Policy, in line with any amendments and updates of the Equality Act.

Because of EduQual's commitment to the principles of equality, we maintain procedures for the provision of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special consideration. These procedures are first defined, then detailed, below.

### 3 Definitions

The Joint Council for Qualifications Community Interest Company (JCQ<sup>CIC</sup>) and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) have agreed the following definitions in relation to Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments, and Special Consideration and EduQual is mindful of the guidance provided by these definitions.

#### 3.1 Access Arrangements defined

Access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs or disabilities (including temporary injuries) to access an assessment and to show their knowledge and skills without changing the demands of that assessment (i.e. without compromising the assessment's integrity). Access arrangements are agreed prior to an assessment taking place.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual disabled learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

### 3.2 Reasonable Adjustments defined

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make **reasonable adjustments** where a learner, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. For example: an awarding body might supply a Braille assessment paper as a reasonable adjustment for a visually impaired person who could read Braille.

A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements.

Whether an adjustment will be considered 'reasonable' or not will depend on a number of factors which include (but are not limited to):

- The needs of the learner
- The effectiveness of the adjustment
- The cost of the adjustment
- The likely impact of the adjustment upon the learner and other learners.

An adjustment will not be approved if it involves unreasonable costs to the awarding body, unrealistic timeframes, or if it affects the security and/or integrity of the assessment. Such an adjustment would not be termed 'reasonable'.

In the majority of cases it will not be reasonable for adjustments to be made to assessment objectives within a qualification. Doing so would likely undermine the effectiveness of the qualification in providing a reliable indication of the knowledge, skills, and understanding of the learner. There is no duty to make adjustments which the qualifications regulators have specified should not be made.

There is no duty on the part of awarding bodies to make adjustments to competence standards within vocational qualifications.

### 3.3 Special Consideration defined

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to a learner's mark or grade which reflects the detrimental effect of temporary illness, temporary injury or other indisposition at the time of the assessment to the mark, grade or level of attainment of that assessment. In such circumstances, special consideration is warranted.

## 4 EduQual Key Principles: Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

EduQual maintains its own principles and standards that underpin any decisions that are undertaken in regard to reasonable adjustments (including access arrangements) and special consideration.

### 4.1 Recruit with integrity

EduQual requires its centres to recruit with integrity for all EduQual programmes. This means that centres must ensure that (for example):

- Learners have been given the correct information and advice on their selected programme
- There is a match between the identified needs of learners to the right programme offered at the most appropriate level
- Learners understand the range of options available and of components within a programme that might be difficult for them to achieve
- Learners understand the way in which progression routes are affected by failure to achieve one or more components of the intended programme
- Learners understand the assessment methodology
- Learners understand the level of support available to them when accessing opportunities for assessment

### 4.2 Equal access to assessment opportunities

Reasonable adjustments and special consideration may be made to allow equal access to assessment opportunities. These adjustments and considerations may not however:

- Affect the validity and reliability of the assessment and its final learning outcomes
- Be made where the context of the adjustment/consideration is unreasonable in terms of cost or timeframe
- Compromise the health and wellbeing of the learner concerned
- Create an unavoidable threat to the security and integrity of the qualification concerned.

### 4.3 Misuse/Abuse of policy

EduQual will take whatever action is required to protect its reputation and integrity where the policy for reasonable adjustment and special consideration is misused/abused at EduQual-accredited centres. Such action could include withdrawal of approval for one or more EduQual qualifications, invalidation/recall of certificates, and/or withdrawal of approval from the centre itself. **Please also refer to EduQual's 'Malpractice and Maladministration: Guidance for Centres Policy'.**

**All applications for reasonable adjustment must be made through, and authorised by, the Head of the Centre concerned.**

## 5 Making Reasonable Adjustments (including Access Arrangements)

### 5.1 Internally-assessed work

Reasonable adjustments for EduQual learners will normally be approved by the centre where the work concerned is to be internally assessed and verified. EduQual, (the Quality Assurance Manager through External Examiners/Verifiers), may provide advice on request from appropriate staff at the centre.

In the above circumstance, details relating to the reasonable adjustment in relation to internal assessments **must** be recorded and held on file within the centre for inspection purposes.

**Note: EduQual requires that such files are held for a period of one year past the date on which the qualification is achieved/the learner has left the programme. Records should be made accessible to appropriate EduQual staff and associates (normally External Examiners/Verifiers, and/or EduQual's Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) or the regulatory authorities upon request.**

### 5.2 Externally-assessed work

Where a reasonable adjustment is required for an externally-set test or controlled assessment, the centre must notify EduQual within 2 months of the learner registration period. This must be **at least 6 weeks** before the date of any first, specific assessment activity held within a programme.

Such applications must be made on EduQual's **Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form** which is presented at the end of this document.

### 5.3 Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

**These examples are provided as guidance only, and the list is not intended to be exhaustive:**

**Extra Time:** For assignments or for controlled assessments. Where granted, such allowances will not normally exceed an additional period beyond 25% of the original allotted time span.

**Reader:** An appropriate person can be appointed for those with severe visual impairment.

**Scribe/Amanuensis:** For those unable to record their answers in written form.

**Location:** A different location for the assessment may be used for learners for whom such a measure is appropriate.

**Sign Language:** Use of Communication Support Workers (CSWs) conversant in British Sign Language.

**Visual Aids:** Use of overlays or software designed to assist responses.

**IT support:** Such as the supply of word-processing software and/or the use of computer facilities.

**Other assistants:** Such as transcribers or prompters.

## 6 Special Consideration

Special consideration can be appropriate where a learner for an EduQual qualification is unable to attend a test or controlled assessment due to unforeseen illness, accident, bereavement or equivalent constraint at or around the time when the assessment event takes place.

Under such circumstances, a request for special consideration can be made to EduQual.

**Arrangements will be made that will not incur extra or additional cost.**

### 6.1 Making an application for Special Consideration

Applications for special consideration should be submitted to EduQual using the **Request for Special Consideration Form** supplied at the end of this document.

**In addition, centres must submit:**

- Evidence to support the application (e.g. a statement from an appropriate member of centre staff)
- A statement from the invigilator or person supervising the controlled assessment (if relevant)
- Any other pertinent information

**The Head of Centre must authorise all applications for special consideration.** In addition:

- Applications for special consideration **must be submitted within 7 days of the assessment taking place**
- Applications for special consideration **may not be made where results have already been issued.**

During the processing of any application for special consideration, EduQual will only liaise with the centre making the application on behalf of its learner.

## 7 Request for Reasonable Adjustment/Special Consideration Forms

Provided at the end of this document are two forms: the **Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form** and the **Request for Special Consideration Form**.

Centres may adjust and amend these forms in accordance with their own needs and in the context in which they operate, provided that all necessary information is provided and verified by the Head of Centre. All relevant medical certification, testimony and/or centre/employer certification should be provided where appropriate. Medical certification must be relevant and detailed enough to confirm that any assessment would be affected by the stated medical condition(s).

**In the case of special consideration, please note that centres must complete and return the Request for Special Consideration Form within 7 days of the learner taking the controlled test/assessment.**