

Access Arrangements Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the arrangements that can be put in place to support learners with particular needs, including learners who may be disadvantaged by disability, temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances. It also outlines the process to be followed when requesting a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration.

The Equality Act 2010 requires centres and/or awarding organisations (as applicable) to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled learner would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage when undertaking an assessment, compared to learners who are not disabled.

Provision of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations enables learners to receive recognition of their achievement while maintaining the validity, reliability and comparability of assessment outcomes. These arrangements are not concessions, do not make assessments easier, and must not give learners an unfair advantage.

This policy supports 1st4sport's duties under equality legislation and regulatory requirements by ensuring that access arrangements are applied fairly, consistently and transparently, without compromising assessment integrity, creating unfair advantage, or increasing the risk of malpractice. Learners and centres may challenge decisions through the published appeals process, and all arrangements must support valid, reliable and comparable assessment outcomes in line with regulator expectations.

Under no circumstances must the cost of a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration be passed on to, or otherwise met by, the learner (or their parent or carer, where applicable).

Reasonable Adjustments to Assessments

A Reasonable Adjustment is an approved adjustment made to an assessment to enable a learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding against the requirements of the qualification specification, where they would otherwise be disadvantaged.

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Reasonable Adjustments are planned in advance of assessment activity and must be in place before a learner undertakes an assessment. The use of an approved Reasonable Adjustment is not taken into account when marking learner evidence.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments may include:

- Allowing additional time to complete an assessment.
- Providing assessment materials in alternative formats, such as Braille or large print.
- Providing approved assistance during assessment, for example the use of a reader or sign language interpreter.
- Reorganising the assessment environment to reduce disadvantage, such as removing visual or auditory distractions.
- Using assistive technology, such as screen-reading or voice-activated software.
- Providing assessment papers on coloured paper or allowing coloured overlays or screen backgrounds.

Reasonable Adjustments must not compromise the integrity of the assessment or alter the competence standards being assessed. All adjustments are subject to approval and must be supported by suitable evidence.

Reasonable Adjustments should be identified and requested at the start of a learner's programme. Late disclosure may limit the ability of the centre or 1st4sport to implement an adjustment in time for assessment.

Special Considerations

Special Consideration refers to post-assessment arrangements made for learners who have experienced a temporary illness, injury or adverse event outside of their control that has negatively affected their ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their usual level of attainment.

Special Consideration must be requested no later than 20 working days after the learner's registration expiry date. Requests submitted after this timeframe will be reviewed but may not be accommodated. For apprenticeship assessments the request should be requested no later than 20 working days after their final assessment has taken place.

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Examples of circumstances where Special Consideration may apply include:

- Temporary illness or injury affecting assessment performance or attendance.
- Absence from an assessment due to bereavement or other significant personal circumstances.
- Missed assessment opportunities due to severe weather, transport disruption or similar events.
- Centre-related issues that limited reasonable opportunities for assessment within the registration period.

Types of Special Consideration

Types of Special Consideration that may be approved include:

- An extension to the learner's registration period, where justified by evidence.
- An alternative assessment opportunity at a later date.
- Approved assistance to enable assessment completion following injury, where permitted.
- Transfer of assessment fees to a rescheduled assessment opportunity.

Special Consideration does not lower assessment standards and will only be applied where there is clear evidence that the learner was disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control.

Process for Requesting an Arrangement

Learners must submit requests for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration, along with appropriate evidence, to their recognised centre.

The recognised centre is responsible for reviewing the learners' request, checking that appropriate evidence has been provided, and confirming that the proposed arrangement is necessary, proportionate and does not compromise the assessment requirements. Where the centre supports the request, it must submit the details through the Access Arrangements log on the compliance tab of the centre portal for qualifications or on the reasonable adjustment tab on the apprentice's profile on proficient for apprenticeship assessments; requests must be submitted by the centre and will not be accepted directly from learners.

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1st4sport will review the request and supporting evidence, confirm whether the proposed arrangement is permitted, and communicate the decision to the centre. Where approved, either 1st4sport or the recognised centre will implement the agreed arrangement, depending on the nature of the request; where declined, the centre will be informed of the reason and the learner's right to challenge the decision through the published appeals process.

Centres must retain accurate and confidential records of all access arrangement requests, supporting evidence, decisions, approvals and implementation actions in line with their data protection and quality assurance responsibilities. Records may be reviewed by 1st4sport as part of centre monitoring, external quality assurance, investigations, appeals or regulatory assurance activity.

Any suspected misuse of access arrangements, inaccurate evidence, failure to implement an approved arrangement, or use of an arrangement that gives a learner an unfair advantage may be considered under the relevant malpractice and maladministration procedures and sanctions may apply.

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