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2026 - 2027

CPCAB Reasonable Adjustment Guidance for Centres



1. Introduction

Awarding Organisations have a duty to ensure that the integrity of their qualifications and assessment is maintained at all times. At CPCAB, we balance this with our duty to ensure that the rights of individual candidates to access qualifications and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld. We do so by providing guidance and support to our recognised centres on adjustments suitable for CPCAB qualifications. The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Training centres are required to make reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements which may place disabled candidates and candidates with additional learning needs at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to other candidates.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to CPCAB's recognised centres on the definitions of these reasonable adjustments, and to support centres to understand their responsibilities in identifying and implementing adjustments to internal assessment for CPCAB qualifications. This document is not a substitute for the legal information set out in the Equality Act, and centres must ensure that they are well informed and able to uphold the word and spirit of the act in their own settings.

2. Definition

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a **substantial disadvantage** in the classroom/learning environment, in their learning or in assessment. Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual and are implemented by a centre to enable the candidate to demonstrate skills and knowledge required for the attainment of a qualification.

Reasonable adjustments are **not** an adjustment or reduction in the academic or competence standard being applied when conducting an assessment. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability, validity, or security of the assessment outcomes.

3. Types of Assessment and Reasonable Adjustments

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

The adjustments that are appropriate will depend upon:

- the specific assessment requirements of the qualification;
- the type of assessment;
- the particular needs and circumstances of the individual candidate;
- what is reasonable within the centre context, e.g. the cost and any impact on other candidates.

Within the learning environment and with the internal assessment of course work the centre has flexibility to be responsive to an individual candidate's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the candidate to demonstrate attainment.

Reasonable adjustments may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements, such as providing an extended period of time for candidates to complete work or sending materials to a candidate in advance;
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in a physical format rather than electronic resources;
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader;
- re-organising the learning or assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for a candidate with processing difficulties;
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading, or voice activated software;
- allowing the candidate to use mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids reflect the candidate's normal way of working, enable them to meet the specified criteria and does not give them an unfair advantage.
- allowing the candidate to present their answers or evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria.

The outcome produced by the candidate must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used;
- be able to be assessed, moderated or verified.

Where the candidate uses alternative means of providing evidence, the method must have equal rigour to those used for other candidates. The candidate must fulfil the demands of the qualification, regardless of the method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.

An adjustment is not considered 'reasonable' where it:

- involves unreasonable costs;
- involves unreasonable timeframes;
- disadvantages other candidates;
- provides an advantage to the candidate which exceeds the point of reducing the negative effect of the disability or difficulty; or
- affects the reliability, security or validity of the assessment.

4. Responsibilities of Centres

The centre should identify as early as possible, preferably before enrolling or registering a candidate for a qualification, any difficulties the candidate may have in completing any internal

assessment or engaging fully in the learning environment. Candidates may have diverse needs and it is important that centres provide an opportunity at the beginning of the course to discuss these. To assist with this the centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise, or guide potential candidates have had training to make them aware of access related issues.

The assessment requirements of the qualification should be made clear to the candidate prior to enrolment, as should any concerns whether they may not be able to meet all the assessment requirements due to access limitations.

Whilst some candidates may be aware of the adjustments they need in the classroom or with regards to assessment, there may be situations, particularly for those candidates returning to study after a long period, where their needs are not known at the time and emerge during the course. This may be discovered when assessing candidate work, through observation of candidates in the classroom or through tutorials.

A centre should, as far as is practicable:

- have an 'access to assessment/reasonable adjustments' policy and communicate this to all staff and candidates;
- select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible to the candidate. The centre should consider the nature of the skills that are being assessed and the implications for assessment considering the candidate's individual/unique needs;
- involve the candidate in making any decisions about appropriate adjustments to assessment;
- ensure that they can resource the selected adjustment to assessment. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange any assistance for the candidate such as a reader, scribe, British Sign Language (BSL)/interpreter, etc;
- keep records of any reasonable adjustments implemented for audit purposes;
- keep reasonable adjustments under review to ensure the needs of the candidate continue to be met;
- respond promptly should the needs of a candidate change mid-course, for example in the event of a temporary injury or impairment, or a diagnosis of a disability or manifestation of an impairment relating to an existing disability arising after the start of the course;
- ensure that they have an effective internal assessment appeals procedure so that the candidate can query any decision taken by the centre not to allow an adjustment.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The approval of reasonable adjustments which don't alter or change the qualification minimum requirements, as set out in the Specification, is a centre decision and the centre can implement these reasonable adjustments without seeking prior permission from CPCAB. If the proposed adjustments do alter the qualification minimum requirements, then the centre should approach CPCAB for advice. We recommend centres should keep accurate records of the approval and management of reasonable adjustments. These should be made available to CPCAB upon request during External Verification visits.

5. Candidate Eligibility

A candidate may be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their performance during an assessment or engagement in the learning environment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. An adjustment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to others. Any reasonable adjustment should therefore be based on what the candidate needs to take part in the assessment or learning experience.

The evidence of need will vary depending on the disability or difficulty and the adjustment(s) being applied for. Centres are not obliged by CPCAB to require a formal disability assessment or medical letter in order to apply a reasonable adjustment, though where available this may provide useful information to guide the application of an adjustment.

Candidates may present evidence of need in other forms such as:

- A statement from a previous education provider of past reasonable adjustment arrangements;
- evidence from current teaching staff that the candidate has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching, learning and assessment.

The list below, which is not exhaustive, gives some examples of candidate needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments:

- Communication and interaction needs;
- Cognition and learning needs;
- Sensory and/or physical needs;
- Behavioural, emotional and social needs;
- Candidates for whom English is an additional language.

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