

Issue Date	7th June 2021
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Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

CN4C Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction

Reasonable Adjustments should be requested if a learner is disabled or has a difficulty and would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who does not, during an assessment or examination, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. CN4C will endeavour to take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantaging individuals. Reasonable Adjustments should be approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place.

Reasonable Adjustments are approved depending on a range of factors submitted. The adjustment/s required will be dependent on a number of aspects and may well be unique to the individual involved. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves excessive/unreasonable cost or timeframes or that could affect the security or integrity of the assessment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration. The assessment produced by the individual will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed individuals.

Reasonable Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity.
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille.
- Providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader.
- Re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner.
- Changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.
- Using assistive technology, such as screen reading, or voice activated software.

Special considerations are adjustments made to an individual's temporary requirements either before or at the time of an assessment such as temporary injury, indisposition or illness prior to the assessment, or unforeseen circumstances during an assessment.

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

2. Links to other policies.

Access to Fair Assessment Policy.

Equality and Diversity Policy.

3. Definitions

- A Reasonable Adjustment is an action taken to ensure that equal access and access arrangements are carried out where applicable. Under the Equality Act 2010, education and training providers and an Awarding Organisation have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people so they are not at a substantial disadvantage when carrying out an assessment.
- Special Considerations are access arrangements taken when an individual's examination performance is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control. Special consideration can be a pre-examination or post-examination adjustment that compensates individuals who are suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the examination.

4. CN4C Responsibilities

To meet responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, CN4C will, as far as is practicable:

- To meet responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, CN4C will, where practical:
- Provide access to fair assessment. There is more detail on this in the Access to Fair Assessment Policy.
- Ensure all staff who interact with learners have had training to make them aware of the impact of learning difficult, disability or other concerns in relation to Reasonable Adjustment issues.
- Involve the learner in making any decisions about the application for Reasonable Adjustment.
- Apply for Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration on behalf of the learner, where necessary. The application will be carried out by a member of staff involved with the course.
- Keep records of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for Internal Quality Assurer and External Quality Assurer audit purposes. If CN4C exceeds the level of adjustment set out in these guidelines it may lead to malpractice investigations.

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

- Have effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner can query any decision taken by CN4C not to allow a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration.
- Ensure that buildings used for assessment are accessible to all learners.

This list is not an exhaustive list and CN4C will take all possible practical steps to apply Reasonable Adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.

5. Health and Safety

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised in the name of 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 him/herself and for others, a suitably qualified person in CN4C will carry out a risk assessment related to the learner's particular circumstances. The risk assessment must identify the risks associated with the particular activity but must also take account of any Reasonable Adjustments put in place for the learner which may remove or reduce the risk. The risk assessment may reveal that it is not possible for the learner to fulfil all the requirements of the assessment. In this case it may be appropriate to substitute another task. Assumptions must not be made about a disability or difficulty posing a health and safety risk, but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

6. Types of Assessment and Reasonable Adjustment

Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner 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 for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- The specific assessment requirements of the qualification.
- The type of assessment.
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

7. Assessments that are not taken under Examination Conditions

These types of assessment form the basis of the majority of CN4C assessment activity. With these types of assessments, CN4C has greater flexibility to be

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment. These types of assessments may include: coursework, set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time, assessment activities devised by the assessors, assessments where the learner has to collect evidence in order to demonstrate competence. The assessment requirements for the majority of vocational qualifications fall into this group. In these types of assessments, the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid.

To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, CN4C may:

- Allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic, or other aids 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.
 - Present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified assessment criteria, for example, materials do not have to be in written format, unless specified by the assessment requirements.
 - Allow the learner to present their answers or evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria, for example, answers or evidence do not have to be in written format unless specified by the assessment criteria. CN4C adopts a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements.
- The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:
 - Meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used.
 - Be assessable.
 - Be able to be moderated or verified.

In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition/disability means a learner's completion of assessment takes additional time, it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification. It will not be possible to allow time extensions for all qualifications. Where Reasonable Adjustments are put in place for the types of assessments listed above CN4C must establish whether or not permission needs to be obtained from the Awarding Organisations or its representative beforehand. CN4C will adhere to the Awarding Organisations requirements for record keeping

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

and supporting evidence. Assessments that are undertaken for Functional Skills Qualifications at Entry level can be carried out in non-examination conditions, the assessment time however, must be adhered to and the assessment must be kept securely until such time that the assessment time has been achieved and the assessment completed before being submitted for IQA and EQA purposes. All entry documents will be retained securely for three years.

8. Assessments that are taken under Examination Conditions

Where the method of assessment is more rigidly determined, such as for assessments taken under specified conditions, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

9. Assessments for Externally Verified Qualifications

Vocational qualification learners are often required to compile a portfolio of evidence which can consist of a mixture of work products, observation reports, witness statements, knowledge tests, etc. Making appropriate access arrangements in qualifications of this type can be more straightforward than in qualifications where the mode of assessment is more firmly fixed. The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when the learner is first accepted onto a programme. Where there is an identified need, the learner may present their evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audiocassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto video, it is CN4Cs responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or Sign Language is available to translate the material for the Internal and External Verifier if this is required. Where the learner uses alternative means of providing evidence, the method must have equal rigour to those used for other learners. The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended or omitted. The assessor in Competency qualifications may ask the assessment question in a way which pertains particularly to the learner's workplace, employer, or circumstance. As long as the integrity of the assessment criteria is not compromised. The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids which are available in the workplace, or which are commercially available in order to demonstrate competence. For example, these may include specially adapted equipment or assistive technology. CN4C is required to provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs to

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

produce evidence of developing the portfolio. All adjustments should be consistent with the learner's normal way of working and must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others. While Assessors, Internal and External Verifiers normally prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence that is varied, CN4C should be prepared to accept a more restricted variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. It is sensible, however, for the Assessor/IQA to discuss this matter with the Internal and/or External Verifier at an early stage. Where Reasonable Adjustments are put in place for assessments that are externally verified, CN4C will check whether permission needs to be obtained from NOCN or its representative. CN4C will ensure that they adhere to the Awarding Organisations requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

10. Models of Assessment

Internally set and internally assessed

Typically, this may be referred to as portfolio-based assessment where assessment is planned and delivered internally by CN4C staff to meet the needs and interests of their learners whilst ensuring they cover the unit learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Assessment planning should ensure that each assessment activity is accessible to the group and differentiation planned for any individual who may have differing needs to the rest of the cohort. An example of this: A written question and answer worksheet could be produced to assess a knowledge-based learning outcome. However, this could be used as a verbal question prompt sheet with the assessor scribing or recording the verbal responses from a learner who has low levels of literacy/English skills or is a reluctant writer.

Externally set and internally assessed

Externally set assessments are those that are created and provided the Awarding Organisation for assessment purposes. They are marked internally by assessors based within the CN4C and then internally verified to ensure consistency and reliability of assessment across all learners. These will then be sampled by the External Verifier to confirm achievement and reliability of assessment. Typical examples of this type of assessment are:

- Entry level functional skills assessments for English, ICT and Mathematics
- Functional Skills English, Speaking, Listening and Communication component at level one and level two.
- Any qualification that has a 'benchmark' assessment activity that CN4C may be planning to use.

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

Externally set and externally assessed

Externally set assessments are those that are created and provided by the Awarding Organisation for assessment purposes. These are sent to the Awarding Organisation to be marked externally. Examples of this model of assessment are Functional Skills ICT, Mathematics, English Reading and English Writing at level one and level two. These can be either paper based or on-line assessment activities.

11. 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 with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, CN4C will be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty. Where CN4C can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, CN4C does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties. Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, CN4C will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. CN4C should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation:

- Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs made within CN4C 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. Information from previous organisations attended by the learner may also be included.
- History of provision within CN4C. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme must 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. A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustments. It is CN4Cs responsibility to ensure that all applications for Reasonable Adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

the application is sufficient, reliable, and valid. CN4C will maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the Reasonable Adjustments that have been made.

12. Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for Reasonable Adjustments to assessment. Adjustments to assessments:

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

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, CN4C will bear in mind the following:

- Adjustments to assessment must not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills. The learner must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards must not be altered and all learners' performance will be assessed against set standards. It may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage the learner. The qualification of a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. As vocational qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such qualifications 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. CN4C will not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. The learner should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the learner's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment.

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.
- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by the Head of Learning or a member of staff with delegated authority such as a teacher or tutor qualified in assessing special educational needs.

Those requesting Reasonable Adjustments should check the Awarding Organisations Permissions table for guidance.

13. Applying for a Reasonable Adjustment

A planned action is required to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty in the assessment situation. This will reflect a learner's 'usual' way of working.

- Identify the required adjustment.
- Agree this need with the Internal Verifier.
- Review The Awarding Organisation's Reasonable Adjustment policy and procedure and any other guidance provided.
- Check the Awarding Organisation's Permissions Table.

14. Applying for a Special Consideration

This is a 'temporary' condition that will disadvantage the learner in an assessment situation (for example temporary illness, injury, or adverse circumstance).

- Identify the required adjustment.
- Read the appropriate Reasonable Adjustment information sheet for the Awarding Organisation.
- Check the Awarding Organisation's Permissions Table.
- Check the Eligibility for Special Consideration statement.
- Complete the Awarding Organisation's Special Considerations Application.
- Have it signed by Head of Learning or designated person.
- Up-date the invigilator on how this adjustment will take place.
- Collect supporting evidence.
- Send by email to the Awarding Organisation within 2 working days of the date of the examination or externally set assessment.

15. Eligibility Criteria for a Special Consideration

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for Special Consideration if:

Issue Date	7th June 2021
Review Date:	August 2025
Lead Officer	Strategy, Learning and Development Manager

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner 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.
- 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 could have performed more successfully in the assessment.
- A learner will not be eligible for Special Consideration if:
- CN4C does not supply any evidence that the learner 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.

16. Malpractice

Failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to assessments set out in this policy has the potential to constitute malpractice and may the Awarding Organisation to withhold the learner's result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all the following:

- Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from the Awarding Organisation, where this is required.
- Exceeding the allowances agreed with the Awarding Organisation.
- Agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by evidence.
- Failing to maintain records of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for audit.
- Failing to report delegated adjustments to the Awarding Organisation, where this is required.