

DHA Fair Access to Assessment Policy



Introduction

DHA must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. Guidance issued by City & Guilds and ILM have been used to ensure compliance with these awarding bodies.

We have a duty to ensure that the rights of individual learners to access qualifications, units and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld. Disability and equal opportunity legislation and the regulatory criteria give support and guidance to creating an inclusive assessment process.

Reasonable Adjustments

These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

Special consideration will be given to learners that experience temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of an assessment. This should allow them to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of for the units that are subject to special consideration.

The guidance sets out:

- The principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessment;
- The procedures which should be followed when making adjustments to assessment requirements.

Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- 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 a learner with autism;
- 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.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the units and qualification. The work produced by the learner will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners.

What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence should be taken into consideration.

Types of Assessment and Reasonable Adjustments

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 units and/or qualification.
- The type of assessment.
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

Assessments which are Not Taken Under Examination Conditions

These types of assessment form the basis of the majority of DHA assessments. With these types of assessments the centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment.

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, the centre 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.

The centre may 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.

The centre may 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.

We adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements. If necessary we will contact awarding bodies to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:

- Meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used;

- Be as rigorous as assessment methods used with other learners;
- Be assessable;
- Be able to be moderated or verified.

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 audio cassette 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 the centre's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or sign language is available to translate the material for the internal verifier and Quality Reviewer if this is required.

Assessments which are taken under examination conditions

The method of assessment is more rigidly determined for assessments taken under exam conditions. Specific guidance is given by the awarding bodies for exam conditions and in some instances there is a requirement to make a formal application for reasonable adjustments.

The learner 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 will be defined as being disabled under the Equalities 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 centre should assist the learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.

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

Identifying learners' needs

The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learner's needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of Equalities legislation.

- Identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment;
- Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed;
- Identify the appropriate adjustment;
- Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with the awarding body guidelines.

