

1. Principles

Learners may be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their ability to access an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. The nature of any reasonable adjustment depends on the learners' particular requirements.

Adjustments to the assessment process will typically be made where:

- a) A learner has a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under equalities legislation, learners are deemed to have such impairment if they can show that the condition:

- Is more than minor or trivial
- Has an effect that has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months
- Affects everyday things

Supporting evidence will be required in all cases. Evidence could include medical reports from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, other specialists and agencies.

Providing the adjustment required is the same for each assessment, learners do not need to resubmit evidence with subsequent applications for reasonable adjustment.

- b) A learner has a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment

Learners are deemed to have a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment if the condition is under one year's duration and is likely to improve. Examples of temporary disability could include broken limbs or injury to hands which could impair learners' ability to write. Supporting evidence will be required in all cases.

If a learner applies for an adjustment due to a temporary physical, sensory or mental disability, evidence must be re-submitted with a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form for each assessment.

2. Types of Reasonable Adjustments

Determining whether reasonable adjustments are required and the type of reasonable adjustment which may be put in place, will depend on:

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

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Extra time
- Supervised rest breaks
- Changes to the assessment site/ room
- Separate room within the assessment site

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- Taking assessment at an alternative site
- Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids
- Use of assistive technology
- Use of bilingual translators/ dictionaries
- Assessment material in enlarged format or audio format
- Language modified assessment material
- Reader/ E-reader/ Computer reader
- Provision of a written explanation of any stimulus material that consist of a picture, chart or other image

3. Procedure for Applying for a Reasonable Adjustment

All learners must submit a request for reasonable adjustment on or before the enrolment for unit or qualification.

4. Process for Approving Requests

A learner support officer should initially review requests for reasonable adjustments. Where the request is for an extension of time, and this is supported by adequate, then an extension of 25% should be granted.

Requests for provision of written descriptors of image-based stimulus material should also be granted by the learner support officer where evidence is provided.

Other requests should be referred to the head of department for a decision.

When making a decision the head of department should review the request and consider:

- Can the request be accommodated without unreasonable cost and effort?
- Would the request give the learner an unfair advantage over others?
- Is the request proportionate to the impairment of the learner?
- Is there adequate evidence to support the impairment?

A decision on reasonable adjustments should be provided to the learner within five working days.

Where a request is declined, written reasons for the refusal will be given. Once a reasonable adjustment has been agreed and implemented, no further adjustment will be made to the assessment or marking process.

5. Special Consideration

Special consideration may be given to learners in instances that could not have been predicted, or were outside the learner's control, which may have impacted on their performance.

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Special consideration should be applied for no later than five days after the assessment, and supporting evidence must be provided, e.g. letter from GP, hospital discharge notice, etc.

A learner should not be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied to SIRM 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
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the programme, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, etc.

The following are examples of circumstances which might be eligible for special consideration (this list is not exhaustive):

- terminal illness of the learner
- terminal illness of learner's immediate family
- recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family
- serious and disruptive domestic crises leading to acute anxiety
- incapacitating illness of the learner
- severe car accident
- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative
- flare-up of severe congenital conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack
- recent physical assault/ trauma

Procedure for Applying for Special Consideration

Learners should advise SIRM in writing within five days of the end of the assessment of the circumstances which caused the request for special consideration.

To ensure effective processing of the application the learner should submit:

- Request For Special Consideration form
- Evidence to support the application

The Head of Programme must authorise all applications for special consideration.

Process for Approving Requests

The Head of Programme should take the full circumstances of the request into account prior to the release of results to the learner.

Requests should be dealt with sympathetically, taking into account:

- The full circumstances

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- The most appropriate option to compensate for the incident, taking into account the duration of the incident and when this occurred during the assessment period
- The fairness of any special consideration on the learner and other learners
- The evidence to support the incident

A decision on reasonable adjustments should be provided to the learner within five working days. Where a request is declined, written reasons for the refusal should be given.

6. Review and appeal

Wherever possible, SIRM will deal sympathetically with requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration. In cases where a request is turned down the learner should have the right to request a review of the decision.

- **Review**

Learners may request a review of the decision made following the above process. The review should be conducted by the Head of Programme, who should re-examine the initial decision. Requests for a review of a reasonable adjustment decision should be made as quickly as possible following the initial decision, and should be reviewed equally swiftly to allow the outcome to be notified before the assessment takes place.

- **Appeal**

If the learner does not agree with the outcome of the review, they should have the right to take the process of an appeal. Details of this process should be made available to learners in the approved SIRM's appeals policy.