



# **Guide to Reasonable Adjustments in Regulated Qualifications**

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## History of changes

This document is the latest version and incorporates the changes summarised below.

Version number	Description	Date
1	Annual review – minor clarifications made	March 2013
2	i. Removed references to functional skills ii. Amendments made to terminology	August 2016

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# Guide to Reasonable Adjustments in Regulated<sup>1</sup> Qualifications

## Introduction

This guide outlines the reasonable adjustment procedure to be followed by centres in relation to the internal and external assessment of regulated vocational and occupational qualifications.

## Applicability of reasonable adjustments in vocational and occupational qualifications

Learners are individuals with a diverse range of needs — including assessment needs. For learners who are disabled under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, a **reasonable adjustment** might be required to compensate for a substantial disadvantage, but there may be other adjustments that need to be made in order to meet their individual needs. Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Learners should be involved when any adjustment decisions are made. Reasonable adjustments must reflect the normal working practice of an individual working within the vocational or occupational area of the qualification.

There is no duty on SQA to make any adjustment to the competences being tested in an assessment. For example, it may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments where:

- ◆ an assessment requires the demonstration of a practical competence
- ◆ the assessment criteria have to be fully met
- ◆ units or qualifications confer a licence to practise

The following adaptations may be considered in order to facilitate access, as long as they do not impact on the competence standards being tested:

- ◆ adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes
- ◆ adaptation to equipment
- ◆ changing usual assessment arrangements
- ◆ adapting assessment materials
- ◆ providing assistance during assessment

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<sup>1</sup> By “Regulated” we mean qualifications regulated under the SQA Accreditation Principles or the 'General Conditions of Recognition' of Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA.

- ◆ changing or adapting the assessment method
- ◆ using assistive technology
- ◆ extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- ◆ use of a different assessment location
- ◆ use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, CCTV
- ◆ use of assistive software
- ◆ assessment material in an enlarged format or Braille
- ◆ reader
- ◆ scribe
- ◆ practical assistant
- ◆ prompter
- ◆ transcript
- ◆ assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- ◆ language modified assessment material
- ◆ British Sign Language (BSL)
- ◆ Use of ICT/responses using electronic devices

Not all of the above adjustments will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. Learners may not need, nor be allowed the same adjustment for all assessments.

## **Providing advice to potential candidates / learners**

It is vital that centres recruit with integrity. Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualifications and that the qualifications will meet their needs. Centres should also assess each potential learner and make justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification. Such an assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the assessment.

Where the recruitment process identifies that a learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all parts of the assessment for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner may still decide to proceed with studying a particular qualification and not be entered for all or part of the assessment.

Centres are advised to ensure that learners are aware of:

- ◆ the range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all of the required assessments

**and**

- ◆ any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes

## Applying for a reasonable adjustment

### Internal assessments

This section outlines the reasonable adjustment procedure to be followed by centres in relation to the internal assessment of regulated vocational and occupational qualifications.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes, nor must they give one learner an assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

Centres only need to contact SQA to request a reasonable adjustment in an internal assessment if the arrangement changes the published assessment requirements in any significant way. For example, centres should contact SQA to request the use of a scribe in a Unit assessment which directly assesses written communication.

If a centre has any doubt as to whether a particular reasonable adjustment significantly changes the assessment requirements, they should contact SQA or discuss the matter with their External Verifier for the unit(s) concerned. This should be done as soon as possible, and before the learner undertakes the assessment.

All reasonable adjustments made in relation to internal assessments must be recorded using the JCQ form *Application for Reasonable Adjustments Internally Assessed Units Vocational Qualifications (VQ/IA)* and held on file within the centre, for verification purposes. The *Form VQ/IA* is available electronically at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

### External assessments

This section outlines the reasonable adjustment procedure to be followed by centres in relation to external assessments of regulated vocational and occupational qualifications.

Centres must submit a request to SQA for any reasonable adjustment in an external assessment. Additionally, centres should contact SQA as soon as possible if they have any doubt as to whether a particular reasonable adjustment would be acceptable in an external assessment. Centres who wish to apply for a reasonable adjustment in any external assessment of vocational or occupational qualifications should make an application to SQA at least six weeks before the date of the series in which the examination is to be taken.

All reasonable adjustments made in relation to external assessments must be recorded using the JCQ form *Application for Reasonable Adjustments External Assessments Vocational Qualifications (VQ/EA)*. The *Form VQ/EA* is available electronically at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

Completed application forms should be sent to:

Operations — HN and VQ  
SQA  
The Optima Building  
58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow  
G2 8DQ

## **Further reference**

This guide is based on 'Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications' — with effect from 01 September 2012 to 31 August 2013, published by the Joint Council for Qualifications. It can be accessed at [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk). The above publication contains more information on reasonable adjustments.