

ABMA Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Introduction

This policy is primarily aimed at our customers (centres) and learners who are delivering/registered on or have taken an ABMA Ltd (hereafter 'ABMA') programmes. It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration (RASC) requests in a consistent manner.

This policy outlines:

- our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to our qualifications,
- how learners qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, and
- what special considerations will be given to learners.

If centres require further guidance on what constitutes as reasonable adjustment or special consideration, then a copy of the ABMA Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Manual can be issued to centres.

Centre responsibility

It is important that your staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and your learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

You should keep records of adjustments and special considerations that your centre has requested from ABMA. These records should normally be kept for **3 years** following the assessment to which they apply.

It is recommended that centres nominate members of staff to take responsibility for demonstrating the implementation and recording of adjustments and special considerations to assessments for monitoring by ABMA or the Regulatory Bodies.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from external agencies or changes in legislation.

If you would like to feed back any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Appeals Policy.

Policy overview

We comply with all current and relevant legislation in relation to the development and delivery of our programmes and, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. We seek to uphold human rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and special educational needs of our learners and to provide equal reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered on our programmes.

As a recognised centre, we expect you to have a fair access to assessment policy in operation, which reflects the following principles and guidelines.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. We ensure that our programmes and assessments do not bar learners from taking our programmes by offering a variety of assessment methods.

We recognise that reasonable adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of assessment where:

- learners have a permanent disability or specific learning needs,
- learners have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs, and/or
- learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

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 programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment **will not** be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that the assessment opportunities are equal for all learners, so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained:

- through reasonable adjustments, or
- through special considerations.

Process for requesting reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations

RASC applications must be submitted by the head of centre using the ABMA Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Form (available on our website). If a learner(s) wishes to apply for reasonable adjustments or special considerations, the head of centre can raise the request on the learner(s)'s behalf.¹

When submitting an application, the centre should supply relevant supporting information. For example:

- learner's name, registration number and contact details,
- The type of reasonable adjustment or special consideration required,
- nature of, and rationale for, the request, and
- supporting information/evidence (e.g. medical evidence or any other appropriate information).

Only in exceptional circumstances can learners make requests directly to us by phoning our Quality Department (QD) or emailing us at quality@abma.uk.com.

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted no later than 10 weeks before the assessment (except for British/Irish Sign Language and audio format which must be applied for no later than 15 weeks before the assessment).

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than 1 week after the assessment.

¹ Learners and/or their parents/carers are not entitled to apply directly to ABMA. Representations must be made to the head of centre where the learner was registered. The head of centre's decision as to whether to proceed with the application is subject to the centre's internal RASC arrangements.

All applications for reasonable adjustments and special consideration for external assessments must be made to ABMA by the stipulated deadlines and must be approved by ABMA prior to implementation.

Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the centre co-coordinator,
- medical evidence comes to light about a learner's condition, which demonstrates that the learner must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment, or
- for on-screen assessments where results are immediately available.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

How ABMA will deal with requests

We will aim to respond to all requests within 5 working days of receipt. If we are unable to respond within this timeframe, we will provide you with an estimated response date.

ABMA will retain all applications of reasonable adjustments and special considerations for a minimum of 3 years. All records and data received by ABMA will be treated in accordance with our Data and Privacy Policy.

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. They are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, 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 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,
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for on-screen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments, and/or
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers.

ABMA and centres are required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

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

- 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 which 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, and/or
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the programme 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:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre 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, or

- preparation 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.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his/her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his/her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres should note that:

- where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a license to practice, it may not be possible to apply special consideration, and
- in some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Quality Department at:

ABMA
7 Queens Square
Lyndhurst Road
Ascot
Berkshire
SL5 9FE
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 8733 7000
E-mail: quality@abma.uk.com
Web: www.abma.uk.com

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Term	Definition
Access to Assessment	The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.
Appeal	A process through which an Awarding Organisation (AO) or centre may be challenged on the outcome of a decision.
Assessment	The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the Assessment Criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment method	The means by which an individual's competence is judged.
Assessor	The person who assesses a learner's work.
Assistive technology	Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.
Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to an AO for the assessment arrangements leading to a qualification or units.
Competence	The ability to perform to the required standard.
External Quality Assurer (EQA)	Person who checks that a centre's assessment and quality assurance procedures comply with the requirements of the AO and the Regulatory Bodies.
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment.
Reasonable adjustment	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. Arrangements are approved in advance of an examination or assessment.
Standards	The combination of knowledge, understanding and skills required to perform a job or task to the level of competence required in the workplace.
Special consideration	Procedures implemented at the time of an examination to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a learner who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the examination.
Voice activated software	A computer programme which responds to spoken instructions.