

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Contents

Contents.....	2
Version History	3
1. Purpose	5
2. Scope	5
3. Regulatory Authorities	5
4. Audience	6
5. Definition[s].....	6
6. Reasonable Adjustments Policy Statement.....	8
7. Types of Reasonable Adjustment.....	11
7.1 Amendments to Assessment Conditions.....	11
7.2 Modified Assessment Materials	12
7.3 Use of Aids and Assistive Technology	14
7.4 Use of Practical Assistants and Support Workers	16
7.5 Changes to Assessment Room/ Alternative Venues.....	19
7.6 Exemptions for SLC component of Functional Skills English	20
8. Summary of Allowed Reasonable Adjustments	21
9. Responsibility of Providers	23
9.1 Overarching Responsibilities.....	23
9.2 Assessments NOT taken under Controlled Assessment Conditions.....	24
9.3 Assessments Taken under Controlled Conditions	25
9.4 Retention of Evidence	28
10. Special Considerations Policy Statement	29
10.1 Scope	29
10.2 Application	31
10.3 Decision	31
10.4 Decisions for Access to HE Diplomas	32
11. Malpractice	34
12. Appeals	34
13. Monitoring and Review	35
14. Related Documents	36
15. Regulatory Requirements.....	37

Version History

Version	Date	Change(s) made	Section(s)	Publication source(s)
16.0	06/21	"Centre" replaced with "Provider" throughout	All	Secure Portal
16.0	06/21	Arrangements for End-point assessments added throughout	All	
16.0	06/21	Definitions added for Extenuating Circumstances, Controlled Conditions, Reader and Scribe	5	
16.0	06/21	References to the scope of reasonable adjustments and special considerations incorporating mitigations required as a result of COVID-19 – specifically regarding adaptations and Teacher Assessed Grades added.	All	
16.0	06/21	Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments section added	7	
16.0	06/21	Functional Skills and Essential Digital Skills Qualifications reasonable adjustments permissions table reformatted for improved clarity	9.3	
16.0	06/21	Arrangements for applications for Access to HE Diploma awards by extenuation added	10	
17.0	06/22	Reference to Covid-19 mitigations removed.	Whole document	
17.0	06/22	Qualifications Wales added to scope.	2, 3	
18.0	01/23	Minor grammatical changes to improve clarity.	Whole document	
18.0	01/23	Types of reasonable adjustments clarified.	7	
18.0	01/23	Updated to include Qualifications Wales.	14, 15	
18.0	01/23	Principles for making reasonable adjustments incorporated.	7	
18.0	01/23	Summary of allowed reasonable adjustments updated.	8	
18.0	01/23	Procedures for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations removed from this document. See Section 14 for provider guidance documents which outline the procedures.	Part B and Part C	
18.0	01/23	Special Considerations Policy Statement updated to improve	18	

		clarity.		
19.0	06/24	Clarification on exemptions from SLC component	7.6 & 8	
19.0	06/24	Updated guidance on background colours of reading texts for on-screen assessments	8.2, 9	
19.0	06/24	Reference to legacy Functional Skills Qualifications removed	16	

1. Purpose

Open Awards is committed to ensuring access to fair assessment for all learners and apprentices, as well as protecting the integrity of the award of qualifications and units.

There may be circumstances whereby arrangements need to be made to take account of particular learner/ apprentices' requirements in order to ensure that this is achieved without giving any unfair advantage over other learners/apprentices.

The Policy sets out the principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessment. It outlines Open Awards' reasonable steps to ensure it avoids disadvantage (directly or indirectly) in line with the requirements of The Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010.

This document replaces all previous policies covering reasonable adjustments and special considerations from the operative date.

2. Scope

This document is applicable for the following Open Awards products:

Ofqual regulated qualifications and units	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Qualifications Wales qualifications and units	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Access to HE Diplomas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
End-point assessments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality Endorsed Courses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Badge of Excellence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3. Regulatory Authorities

The relevant regulatory authorities are Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA). As an approved End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), Open Awards also commits to meet the requirements of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the provisions of this document are consistent with the requirements of the regulatory authorities. Where the requirements of a regulatory authority change, or where inadvertently these procedures conflict with those of the regulatory authority, the latter shall apply. Where the requirements of the regulatory authority are amended and require changes to this document, such changes will be made as soon as practicable and Open Awards will inform providers accordingly.

4. Audience

This document is for use by the following:

- Approved providers delivering Open Awards approved qualifications and units.
- Learners registered on Open Awards qualifications and units at an approved provider.
- Private learners registered on Open Awards qualifications and units.
- Apprentices registered with Open Awards for End-point assessment.
- Employers of apprentices registered with Open Awards for End-point assessment.
- Open Awards staff and Trustees.

5. Definition[s]

Reasonable Adjustment	<p>Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that would place an individual at a substantial disadvantage compared to someone who does not, during an assessment.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable the learner/ apprentice to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the assessment outcomes but may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing the usual assessment arrangements, e.g. allowing extra time to complete the assessment activity• Adapting assessment materials, e.g., providing materials in Braille• Providing assistance during an assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader• Changing the assessment method e.g., from a written assessment to a spoken assessment• Using assisted technology such as screen reader or voice activated software. <p>Reasonable adjustments must be approved and set in place before the assessment takes place. The work produced by the individual will be assessed in the same way as all other learners/ apprentices. Types of reasonable adjustments can be found in Section 7.</p>
Special Consideration	<p>Special Considerations are access arrangements taken when the assessment performance of an individual is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control.</p>

	<p>Special consideration can be a pre-assessment or post-assessment adjustment that compensates individuals who are suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the assessment.</p> <p>Pre-assessment adjustments will only be allowed where it is not possible to reschedule assessments without disadvantaging the individual.</p> <p>An individual may be eligible for special consideration if their performance in an assessment has been, or is likely to have been, affected by exceptional circumstances during their assessment. e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an illness or injury, or • some other event outside of the learner/ apprentice's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner/ apprentice's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment. <p>Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.</p> <p>The assessment plan for an apprenticeship standard defines permissible special considerations and the circumstances surrounding the apprentice's End-point assessment that fall within this definition.</p>
Extenuating Circumstances (QAA definition for Access to HE Diplomas)	<p>Extenuating circumstances (ECs) are significant personal difficulties beyond a learner's control that may impact on a learner's ability to complete the Access to HE Diploma. The circumstances or the impact of existing circumstances on the learner is normally unforeseen when the learner starts the course.</p>
Controlled Conditions	<p>Arrangements required to assess learning outcomes where the supervision of learner/ apprentice assessment is required through an independent invigilator with no vested interest in the outcome of the assessment. Whilst assessments may cover a range of assessment methods such as practical tasks, written questions, multiple choice/ short answer and knowledge assessment tasks, the conditions in which assessments take place must meet specific, controlled requirements.</p> <p>Controlled conditions are designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure all learners/ apprentices have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities • ensure the security of the assessment before, during and after the assessment • prevent possible learner/ apprentice malpractice • prevent possible administrative failures.

6. Reasonable Adjustments Policy Statement

Open Awards is committed to ensuring the rights of individual learners/ apprentices to access qualifications, units and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs and to enable them to demonstrate their achievements. At the same time, we are committed to ensuring that the integrity of our qualifications, units and assessment is maintained at all times.

A learner/ apprentice 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/ apprentices will be defined as being disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the Equality Act 2010.

Applications for reasonable adjustments can only be made for learners registered with Open Awards. We cannot accept speculative applications.

An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who do not have the same difficulty. Where the difficulty is minor, the provider should assist the individual by offering help with study and assessment skills.

A learner/ apprentice does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Equality Act 2010) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Every learner/ apprentice who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner/ apprentice may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for assistance.

Open Awards encourages providers to adopt, at all times, inclusive assessment processes that adhere to disability and equal opportunity legislation and other regulatory criteria without compromising standards of assessment or giving any unfair advantage over other learners/ apprentices. We ensure that our providers consider a variety of suitable assessment methods as good practice, taking into consideration its learners/ apprentices.

In cases where a qualification is inaccessible due to a learner's inability to demonstrate competence in all units of the qualification, credit will be awarded for all units (or component where applicable) for which competence has been demonstrated. This does not apply to End-point assessments.

Open Awards treats all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests and agreements in confidence.

Different types of assessment make different demands on learners/ apprentices and will influence whether reasonable adjustments will be needed and the kind of suitable reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.

The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- the specific assessment demands of the qualification/unit
- the type of assessment
- the particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner/ apprentice.

Adjustments to assessments:

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

Open Awards has a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner/ apprentice to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without adversely affecting their ability to meet assessment requirements. When deciding on the appropriateness of proposed adjustments, you should consider:

- Adjustments to assessment cannot compensate for lack of knowledge and/ or skills. The learner/ apprentice must be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
- Any adjustment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards must not be altered, and performance will be assessed against set standards. It may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner/ apprentice has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner/ apprentice an unfair advantage or disadvantage the learner/ apprentice. The achievement of an individual who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner/ apprentice. Achievement of vocational qualifications and apprenticeship End-point assessments 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/ apprentice. A provider must not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments as different qualifications and assessment methods can make different demands on the learner/ apprentice. The individual should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the learner/ apprentice's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed. The learner/ apprentice should be familiar in the use of the adjustment before commencing the assessment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.

- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by a member of staff with appropriate authority.

Please note that some reasonable adjustments are not allowed for certain types of assessment. Arrangements for different types of assessments are detailed in Section 7 and Section 8.

7. Types of Reasonable Adjustment

7.1 Amendments to Assessment Conditions

<p>Up to 25% additional time</p>	<p>Where a learner's normal way of working clearly demonstrates the need for 25% extra time, this can be allocated to a learner according to their current needs based on one of the following forms of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current Education, Health and Care Plan confirming the learner's disability • Medical certificate • Psychological or other professional assessment/ report • provider-based evidence by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty.
<p>More than 25% additional time</p>	<p>For most learners who require extra time due to cognition and learning needs, 25% will be sufficient. If more than this is needed, there must be a strong justification as to why more than 25% extra time is required, including a substantial body of evidence that must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirm that the learner has very persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information, and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 • include evidence of the learner's current difficulties and how they very substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom • indicate the maximum amount of extra time required, e.g. 40% • provide evidence of how the amount of extra time required has been determined • show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the amount of extra time required • indicate whether the learner will be working independently with Braille or modified enlarged papers • indicate whether the learner will be using a computer reader/reader and/or a scribe and/or a word processor • confirm that without the application of extra time in excess of 25% the learner would be at a very substantial disadvantage when compared with other, non-disabled learners undertaking the assessment • confirm that extra time of more than 25% is the learner's normal way of working within the provider as a direct consequence of their disability.

<p>Supervised rest breaks</p>	<p>A supervised rest break may be allowed where it can be evidenced that this is the learner's normal way of working within the provider.</p> <p>The learner must have an impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties (i.e., the learner is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act); and for which there is a genuine need for the arrangement.</p> <p>During the supervised rest break the learner must not have access to the assessment paper. If the learner needs to leave the assessment room, they must be accompanied by an invigilator.</p> <p>For online assessments invigilated remotely, an additional room sweep is required.</p> <p>The supervised rest break is not included in any extra time allowance.</p>
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7.2 Modified Assessment Materials

<p>Assessment material in enlarged format</p>	<p>Modified papers may be requested for learners for whom other adjustments are unsuitable. The modification of papers involves additional resources so providers must submit requests at least 20 working days before the date of the assessment(s).</p> <p>The modified paper formats will enable a learner with a substantial and long-term vision impairment to access their paper assessments.</p> <p>Modified enlarged papers are intended for learners who cannot read a standard examination paper.</p> <p>The layout and presentation of the standard paper is modified to remove elements of visual complexity without changing the demands of the assessment. Pictures and diagrams may be re-drawn to make them more visually accessible.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustment applications must clearly state the paper size and font required.</p> <p>For onscreen assessments using the XAMS assessment platform, learners are able to enlarge text by amending the settings without the need for a Reasonable Adjustment request. Providers are</p>
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	<p>responsible for ensuring that learners are suitably trained on XAMS to do this in advance of the scheduled assessment.</p> <p>Please note, any instance of a provider modifying or printing enlarged versions of assessments without prior approval by Open Awards will be deemed to be maladministration.</p>
Assessment material in Braille	<p>Requests for assessments to be produced in Braille must be submitted at least 30 working days prior to the learner undertaking an assessment. Braille papers can only be produced when applications are made by the deadline.</p> <p>Applications do not need to be supported by evidence of the learner's visual impairment.</p> <p>The standard paper will be modified prior to Braille by a teacher specialised in vision impairments with the layout and presentation of the standard paper modified accordingly.</p> <p>The modified paper is then sent to a Braille agency for the content to be transcribed into Grade 2 contracted Unified English Braille (UEB).</p> <p>Tactile diagrams and graphs will be provided where appropriate with the Braille paper.</p>
Assessment material on coloured paper	<p>Assessment materials on coloured paper are intended for learners who cannot read black text on a white background. The application must clearly state the colour required.</p> <p>For onscreen assessments using XAMS, learners are able to change the colour of the assessment screen by amending the settings without the need for a Reasonable Adjustment request. Providers are responsible for ensuring that learners are suitably trained to do this in advance of the scheduled assessment.</p> <p>Amendments to screen colour do not change the white background of reading texts. If the learner is unable to view documents with a white background, they will need to sit paper-based assessments instead of online versions. This applies to Functional Skills Reading assessments at Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2.</p>
Assessment material in audio format	<p>Requests for assessment materials to be produced in audio format must be made at least 30 working days before the learner's planned assessment.</p>

	Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format as long as reading is not a competency being assessed or if the material has visual material that is crucial to the completion of the assessment, such as illustrations, tables or diagrams.
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7.3 Use of Aids and Assistive Technology

Use of dictionaries/ bilingual- translation dictionaries	<p>The use of any type of dictionaries may be allowed in vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements.</p> <p>Providers must consult with the qualification specification and guidance documents produced by Open Awards to confirm whether the use of a dictionary is permitted or not.</p> <p>If permitted, the provider must ensure that they check dictionaries prior to each use by a learner to ensure that they do not contain notes that would provide the learner with an unfair advantage in completion of their assessment.</p> <p>Where permission is provided to use electronic dictionaries, the provider must ensure that the equipment does not contain functionality which would provide the learner with an unfair advantage. If such functionality is present, it must be disabled prior to its use by a learner. If it cannot be disabled, it must not be used.</p>
Use of a computer reader	<p>For a learner with a disability or a learning difficulty, a computer reader may allow them to demonstrate their attainment more effectively and independently than would be possible with a human reader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A computer reader must be appropriate to the learner's needs. • There must be sufficient time and training to ensure the learner is able to use a computer reader effectively. • Computer software which accurately reads out text, (including synthetic speech software stored on a memory stick) but does not decode or interpret the paper, may be used as a computer reader. • It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the computer used does not contain any software that the learner can access, and which might assist him/her with the examination. Failure to do so may constitute malpractice.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A computer reader will be allowed in assessments testing reading (e.g., Functional Skills English - Reading assessments) providing it is the learner's normal way of reading. • Providers cannot record the voice of a member of staff to play back in the assessment. This is not a computer reader.
Use of aids and assistive technology (other than computer reader)	<p>Dependent on the type of assessment, providers may request the use of aids to assist learners in accessing an assessment. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coloured overlays • low vision aids • tinted spectacles • CCTV and OCR scanners. <p>Where approved, the provider is responsible for providing the aids to the learner and in training their staff on their use. The provider must ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of the aid and that any electronics are in good working order.</p>
Use of audio recording to present responses	<p>Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to use electronic recording format (MP3 or equivalent) to present responses. The use of recording devices is only permitted where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material or for writing assessments.</p> <p>Assessments that are remotely invigilated must be video recorded to allow assurances that controlled conditions have been maintained at all times. In exceptional circumstances where a learner's identity cannot be shared (for legal or safeguarding reasons), assessments may be audio recorded instead if agreed in advance by Open Awards.</p> <p>For Functional Skills English (Speaking, Listening and Communicating) assessments, each learner in the discussion must introduce themselves in turn to allow external quality assurers to identify who is speaking throughout the assessment.</p> <p>Where the learner's responses are audio-only recorded due to a reasonable adjustment, the provider must provide an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses for assessment/ marking and for external quality assurance purposes. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of responses.</p>

7.4 Use of Practical Assistants and Support Workers

Use of a reader	<p>A reader is a responsible adult who reads the instructions of the question paper and the questions to the learner. This may involve reading the whole paper to the learner or the learner may request only some words to be read.</p> <p>A reader cannot read questions or text in assessments which are testing reading ability (for example, Functional Skills English (Reading) assessments).</p> <p>The provider is responsible for ensuring that the learner and reader cannot be overheard by, or distract, other learners.</p> <p>A reader must adhere to Open Awards requirements for the role which are outlined in 'Provider Guidance - Rules for the use of Readers, Scribes, Prompters and Practical Assistants' available via the Secure Portal.</p>
Use of a scribe	<p>A scribe is a responsible adult who writes the learner's responses to assessment questions.</p> <p>The use of a scribe must reflect the learner's normal way of working within the provider in the light of their substantial and long-term impairment.</p> <p>A scribe cannot be used where the learner's ability to write is being assessed (e.g., Functional Skills English (Writing) assessments).</p> <p>A scribe must only be used where a learner is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor without the use of a spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility.</p> <p>A scribe is a responsible adult who writes or types a learner's dictated answers to the questions.</p> <p>The learner must be present when the scribe writes or types their dictated answers.</p> <p>A scribe must adhere to Open Awards requirements for the role which are outlined in 'Provider Guidance - Rules for the use of Readers, Scribes, Prompters and Practical Assistants' available via the Secure Portal.</p>

<p>Use of a prompter</p>	<p>A prompter may be permitted where a learner has a substantial and long-term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating. For example, the learner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has little or no sense of time (e.g., learners with ADHD or ASD) • persistently loses concentration; or • is affected by an obsessive-compulsive disorder which leads them to keep revising a question rather than moving onto other questions. <p>In such instances a learner may be assisted by a prompter who can keep the learner focused on the need to answer a question and then move on to answering the next question.</p> <p>A prompter is a responsible adult who may sit beside the learner in order to keep him or her focused on the need to answer a question and then move on to answering the next question.</p> <p>A prompter is not a practical assistant, a reader or a scribe but the same person may act as such, provided approval has been given in advance for any of these arrangements.</p> <p>The prompter must not normally be the learner's own subject teacher and must not be a relative, friend or peer of the learner. A private tutor cannot act as a prompter for the learner.</p>
<p>Use of a sign language interpreter</p>	<p>A sign language interpreter allowed for a learner whose normal way of working within the provider is to use sign language.</p> <p>The role of the interpreter is to present the questions in a different language without:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing the meaning • providing any additional information, or • providing an explanation as to what the question requires of the learner. <p>The interpreter must work 'live' in the presence of the learner during the assessment in order to allow for the learner's regional variations in BSL/SSE signs.</p> <p>The interpreter must be familiar with the subject being examined and the learner's normal way of working They must always work at the learner's pace.</p>

	<p>The provider must video the signing of the interpreter to demonstrate accuracy.</p>
<p>Allowing responses in Braille</p>	<p>Manual brailers will require transcription into print. Braille scripts must be transcribed by the provider.</p> <p>The Braille transcript must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produced by a member of the provider's staff, which may include the learner's subject teacher, who is fully competent in the Braille code for the subject concerned; • an exact copy of the learner's Braille script which is made after the examination has taken place and without the participation of the learner. The transcriber must not insert or omit any words, nor alter their order. Spellings and technical terms must not be corrected.
<p>Use of a practical assistant</p>	<p>A practical assistant is a person who carries out practical tasks at the instruction of a learner during an assessment. For example, turning a page of the question paper or guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need. A practical assistant is not permitted where the completion of a task is a competency being assessed, such as during a practical assignment.</p> <p>The provider must, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant will be an effective adjustment. In all cases, the provider is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant and ensuring that they can work effectively with the learner, ensure the safety of the learner and be able to carry out their instructions accurately.</p> <p>The learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the practical assistant and this should reflect the learner's usual way of working.</p> <p>The practical assistant should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.</p> <p>A separate Invigilator must be present where a practical assistant is used to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed.</p> <p>A practical assistant must adhere to Open Awards requirements for the role which are outlined in 'Provider Guidance - Rules for</p>

	the use of Readers, Scribes, Prompters and Practical Assistants' available via the Secure Portal.
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7.5 Changes to Assessment Room/ Alternative Venues

Changes to assessment room layout	<p>Providers may request changes to the usual organisation of an assessment room when considering a learner's individual needs to ensure equal access to assessment. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learner with a visual impairment may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting. • A learner with a hearing impairment may benefit from sitting near the front of the assessment room. • A learner with a learning disability, such as one on the autism spectrum, may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the assessment room. • A learner with a physical disability may benefit from using chairs with armrests or adjustable heights. <p>Open Awards must review all such proposals to ensure that controlled conditions will be maintained.</p>
Separate accommodation and alternative venues	<p>Learners for whom readers, scribes, prompters or interpreters are required may need to be accommodated separately from other learners taking an assessment at the same time to avoid distraction. This will normally be at the same venue, although alternative venues may be required. Providers are responsible for ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the confidentiality of assessment materials is maintained at all times • that all rooms meet the Open Awards requirements for maintaining controlled conditions as outlined in the Open Awards Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments <p>Open Awards must review all such proposals to ensure that controlled conditions will be maintained.</p>

7.6 Exemptions for SLC component of Functional Skills English

SLC exemptions	<p>Providers may request an exemption from the SLC component of an English Functional Skills Qualification. Open Awards will consider an exemption from the SLC if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learner cannot access any part of the SLC;• Exempting the student is the only way to avoid them facing substantial disadvantage in attaining the qualification. <p>All other reasonable adjustment options must be exhausted for Open Awards to consider this request.</p> <p>If an exemption from a component is used, qualification certificates will indicate that the student did not complete all assessments, because those assessments were not accessible to them.</p>
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8. Summary of Allowed Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments for qualifications with assessments undertaken under controlled conditions (e.g., Functional Skills, End-point Assessment, Essential Digital Skills) must be approved by Open Awards. Applications must also be submitted for all requests for more than 25% additional time. Unless otherwise stated, all reasonable adjustment applications for controlled assessments must be submitted at least **20 working days** before the date of the assessment(s). The following table summarises this and outlines any special cases.

Reasonable Adjustment	Not Controlled	Controlled	Notes
Assessment Conditions			
Extra time up to 25%	Provider	Must apply	-
More than 25% extra	Must apply	Must apply	
Supervised rest breaks	Provider	Must apply	
Modified Assessment Materials			
Enlarged format	Provider	Must apply	-
Braille	Provider	Must apply	Applications must be submitted 30 working days before the date of the assessment(s).
Audio format	Provider	Must apply	
Coloured paper	Provider	Must apply	Not required for assessments using XAMS platform, except where reading texts are used.
Sign Language	Provider	Must apply	Restrictions in place for Functional Skills English (SLC)
Use of aids and assistive technology			
Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries	Provider	Must apply	Check qualification guide.
Use of a computer reader	Provider	Must apply	-
Aids/ assistive technology	Provider	Must apply	Not required for assessments using XAMS platform.
Audio recording to present responses	Provider	Must apply	Restrictions in place for Functional Skills English (SLC)

Reasonable Adjustment	Not Controlled	Controlled	Notes
Practical assistants			
Reader	Provider	Must apply	Not allowed for Functional Skills English (Reading).
Scribe	Provider	Must apply	Not allowed for Functional Skills English (Writing).
Prompter	Provider	Must apply	-
Sign language interpreter	Provider	Must apply	Restrictions in place for Functional Skills English (SLC)
Practical assistant	Provider	Must apply	-
Changes to assessment room / alternative venues			
Changes to assessment room layout and venues	Provider	Must apply	-
Exemptions from SLC component			
SLC exemptions	Provider	Must Apply	

9. Responsibility of Providers

9.1 Overarching Responsibilities

All Open Awards providers have a duty to ensure the rights of individual learners/ apprentices to access qualifications, units and assessments in the most appropriate way for their individual needs to be upheld. They should ensure that buildings and resources used for assessment are accessible to all learners/ apprentices, as far as is practicable.

The provider must ensure that it creates, at all times, an inclusive assessment process that adheres to disability and equal opportunity legislation and other regulatory criteria whilst ensure that standards of assessment are maintained. The provider must communicate their arrangements to all staff and learners/ apprentices and adopt a culture whereby learners/ apprentices feel able to disclose their requirement for reasonable adjustment.

Under no circumstance should the health and safety of a learner/ apprentice be compromised for an 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 them and/ or others, a suitably qualified person at the provider must carry out a risk assessment related to the individual's particular circumstances. In such cases, reasonable adjustments applications to Open Awards must be supported by the risk assessment.

A provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Open Awards qualifications and units are fully aware of the contents of the Open Awards Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy.

All staff that provide advice to current and potential learners/ apprentices must have had training to make them aware of the impact of learning difficulty, disability or other concerns in relation to reasonable adjustment issues.

Providers should ensure that learners/ apprentices receive accurate information about the qualification/ units to make sure their needs will be met.

Prior to registration, providers should undertake an initial assessment of potential learners/ apprentices to make appropriate professional judgments about their potential to successfully complete the assessments and achieve at the appropriate level.

As part of this process, providers may identify that a learner/ apprentice will require support or reasonable adjustments to be made to enable them to be assessed fairly and this should be discussed with the learner/ apprentice.

In certain instances, the need for reasonable adjustments may not be identified at the outset. In order to ensure fair assessment, providers should endeavour to identify the need for reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity.

The provider should involve the learner/ apprentice in making any decisions about the application for reasonable adjustment. The provider should apply for reasonable adjustments or special considerations on behalf of the learner/ apprentice and applications must be supported by an individual with appropriate responsibility at the provider.

The provider must operate effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner/ apprentice can query any decision taken by the provider not to consider a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.

When considering reasonable adjustments, the provider should first check whether permission needs to be obtained from Open Awards (please refer to Section 8). If the provider is unsure whether permission is required for a specific learner, they should contact Open Awards for advice. Please note that **ALL** reasonable adjustments for End-point assessments are subject to approval from Open Awards and will be determined by the requirements of the assessment plan for the standard.

If the provider exceeds the level of adjustment set out in these guidelines or agreed with Open Awards on a case-by-case basis, it may lead to malpractice investigations.

9.2 Assessments NOT taken under Controlled Assessment Conditions

The assessment requirements for the majority of vocational qualifications offered by Open Awards fall into this group. In these types of assessments, the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. The qualifications allow the provider to have greater flexibility, to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and to choose assessment strategies, activities and methods that will best allow the learner to evidence their knowledge, skills and understanding.

These may include for example:

- Coursework
- Set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time
- Assessment activities which are normally set and administered by the provider
- Assessments where the learner collects evidence to demonstrate competence.

Open Awards encourages providers to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving assessment requirements. Providers should contact Open Awards to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcomes produced by learners/ apprentices must at all times:

- meet assessment requirements regardless of the process or method used
- be accessible
- be able to be moderated or verified.

Where providers are allowed to make reasonable adjustment decisions (see section 8), all cases must be recorded on an **RA1 Log of Reasonable Adjustments** which must be retained for a minimum of three (3) years from the end of the academic year to which they relate. A new log should be created for each academic year.

For each case on the RA1 Log, the following documents are classed as assessment records and must be retained for at least three (3) years from the end of the year to which they relate and made available to Open Awards for external quality assurance purposes:

- Evidence of learner need (including risk assessments where appropriate)
- Assessment evidence produced by the learner
- Modified assessment materials
- Internal quality assurance records of the assessment decision
- Evidence that the outcomes of the adjusted assessment have been subject to rigorous internal quality assurance and included in any standardisation activities undertaken for the unit.

Learners for whom the provider has approved reasonable adjustments will be included in external quality assurance sampling to confirm that the adjustments to assessments have been made in accordance with the guidelines in this document, and that:

- there is evidence of need on file
- the modification to the task has not conferred any unfair advantage on the learner
- the modifications and assessment decisions have been subjected to rigorous internal quality assurance processes, including internal standardisation
- the award of credit and or qualifications to the learner is secure.

9.3 Assessments Taken under Controlled Conditions

In situations where the learner is given set assessment materials and must complete the task in a fixed amount of time, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

Applications for Reasonable Adjustments must be submitted via the Open Awards portal as soon as possible after the need has been identified and, in any event, **at least 20 working days** before the assessment is due to take place. Applications submitted later will not be accepted and the provider must reschedule the

assessment to allow sufficient time for the reasonable adjustment request to be processed.

Requests for assessment materials to be produced in Braille or in audio format must be submitted **at least 30 working days** prior to the learner undertaking the assessment.

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/ apprentice with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, the provider must be clear about the extent to which they are affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where the provider can verify supporting evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner/ apprentice with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the provider does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment does not give the learner/ apprentice an unfair advantage over others, the provider must be clear about the extent to which the learner/ apprentice is affected by the disability or difficulty.

The provider must ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner/ apprentice and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for identified learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the provider will need to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner/ apprentice's performance in the assessment. The provider should decide which evidence will best assist understanding of the individual's circumstances.

An individual with a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner/ apprentice and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

Suitable evidence may include:

Education and Health Care Plan

This should be dated within the last twelve months and clearly indicate the need for a reasonable adjustment to be applied to support the learner/ apprentice during an assessment. Where this is not clearly stated, the provider must make share additional documentation outlining the implications of the learner's disability.

Medical certificate

This should be current and clearly indicate the need for a reasonable adjustment to be applied to support the learner during an assessment. Where this is not clearly stated, the provider must make share provide additional documentation outlining the implications of the learner's disability.

Psychological or other professional assessment/ report

Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments.

These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner/ apprentice is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that they may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the individual is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

Provider-based evidence by an assessor confirming a learning difficulty

This should include information about the support received by the learner/ apprentice during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which their needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.

It should include an assessment of the learner/ apprentice's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the provider 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.

Evidence may include a risk assessment regarding the learner/ apprentice's ability to complete assessment activity safely. If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner/ apprentice. This evidence should include an indication of how the provider plans to meet the learner/ apprentice's needs and should show that

the individual can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous providers or employers may also be included.

9.4 Retention of Evidence

Where the provider has applied to Open Awards for approval to make reasonable adjustments, all evidence will be retained by Open Awards for at least three (3) years from the end of the year to which they relate. We do not require the provider to keep separate records although they may need to do so for funding purposes.

10. Special Considerations Policy Statement

10.1 Scope

Where a learner/ apprentice has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of their control which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment, the provider can apply for special consideration.

In certain circumstances, a group of learners/ apprentices may have been affected by an event outside their control which has had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. In such cases, the provider can apply for special consideration for the group of learners/ apprentices.

A learner/ apprentice who is fully prepared for a scheduled assessment MAY BE ELIGIBLE for special consideration if:	A learner/ apprentice WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE for special consideration if:
<i>Please note, these examples are not considered to be a full list of all possibilities.</i>	
<p>Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner/ apprentice e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • temporary illness or accident/injury • recent bereavement • domestic crisis • serious disturbance during assessment. <p>Alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed reasonable adjustments not put in place or not effective. <p>An assessment (or part thereof) has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner/ apprentice e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged failure of technology • unanticipated provider closure at the scheduled assessment time • lack of availability of suitably skilled assessor/ invigilator at the time and location of the assessment 	<p>The learner is not fully prepared for a scheduled assessment.</p> <p>The learner is affected by long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves unexpectedly during the assessment.</p> <p>The provider does not supply any evidence that the learner/ apprentice has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition. A bereavement being used as a reason for a special consideration request occurred more than six months before the assessment unless an anniversary has been reached or there are ongoing implications such as inquests or court cases.</p> <p>For End-point assessment, only special considerations permitted by the standard assessment plan will be allowed.</p> <p>Domestic inconvenience such as moving house, lack of facilities or taking</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other accidental events, such as being given the wrong assessment. <p>The learner/ apprentice is absent with good reason e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner/ apprentice being unable to travel to the assessment location in the time of a national crisis. <p>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/ apprentice could have performed more successfully in the assessment.</p> <p>The assessment plan for the apprenticeship standard defines permissible special considerations and the circumstances surrounding the apprentice's End-point assessment fall within this definition.</p>	<p>holidays at the time of the assessment.</p> <p>Any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.</p> <p>Minor disturbances during the assessment, e.g., a mobile phone ringing or a badly-behaved learner/ apprentice.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence or license to practice. This will affect all End-point assessments except where permissible special considerations are defined in the assessment plan for the Apprenticeship standard.</p>
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For Access to HE learners, providers must ensure that they have followed their procedures for dealing with cases of extenuating circumstances. In most cases, extenuating circumstances that affect achievement on individual units (for example, in relation to requests for extended deadlines) are handled at course level, and appropriate action and decisions taken according to the provider's approved procedures. Course teams must document cases of extenuating circumstances and the action taken and report these to the Final Awards Board.

Where extenuating circumstances have affected an Access to HE learner's performance in more than one area or in any other way that falls outside the provider's normal processes, the provider must apply for special consideration for the learner using Open Awards Form EC1-AHE, along with supporting evidence. Cases must be fully documented, include appropriate evidence and include a recommendation on whether each individual request should be supported and to what degree. Cases will be considered at the Final Awards Board.

10.2 Application

The provider must inform Open Awards of any requests for special consideration **within 48 hours** of becoming aware of the mitigating/ adverse circumstances having occurred.

Special Consideration requests must be made via the Secure Portal. A request can be made for individual learners where they are only person affected or for a group of learners all affected by the same adverse circumstances.

Requests must be accompanied by evidence of any/ all mitigating circumstances that occurred before or during the assessment for which you are applying for special considerations. Where possible, the provider should provide screenshots or video record evidence demonstrating the issues faced by learners/ apprentices. Medical records, witness statements and other supporting evidence will be accepted.

If the provider is not aware of all the relevant details within 48 hours, nor have been able to collate supporting evidence, the request for special consideration must still be submitted within 48 hours.

Open Awards will not be able to consider special considerations requests until all necessary evidence has been made available. If we need to request additional information to make appropriate judgements, this will delay the decision-making process. If the provider does not provide sufficient additional evidence within set timescales, the request will be rejected.

Please note that any requests for learners/ apprentices that were not directly affected will be considered to be maladministration/ malpractice. Open Awards will apply its maladministration and malpractice policy and sanctions policy accordingly.

10.3 Decision

Open Awards will consider each case on its individual merits and normally inform the provider of the outcome **within five (5) working days** of all evidence needed to making a decision being uploaded to the Secure Portal.

Where special considerations are requested due to technical issues with XAMS (Open Awards' controlled assessment platform), the investigation will incorporate any issues relating to XAMS. Open Awards will attempt to replicate errors as part of the investigation and system improvements will be made where appropriate to avoid future occurrences.

Results for controlled assessments for which a special consideration request has been submitted will not be released until the investigation has been completed. Where it is not possible to conclude investigations **within five (5) working days** due to the complexity of a case, we will advise you of this.

There are three potential decisions made against applications:

Approved	The decision will outline the action Open Awards will take in upholding the application, such as increasing results by x% or y marks. It is possible that a special consideration can be approved, but this does not automatically result in a result being changed.
Rejected	The evidence presented did not demonstrate that the learner/ apprentice was disadvantaged, or the claim was ineligible.
Further information required	We may request further information in order to come to a final decision. Providers may withdraw applications if they do not have sufficient evidence to satisfy Open Awards requirements

Special consideration applications are normally reviewed by the Quality and Standards Advisor (QASA) allocated to the provider. If the QASA is minded to reject the application, this decision will be ratified by the Head of Quality and Standards before being made final.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner/ apprentice'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/ apprentice's results.

Decisions to award special consideration be based on various factors, which may vary from learner to learner and from one assessment to another. These factors may include the severity of the circumstances, the date of the assessment and the nature of the assessment.

It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where:

- an assessment requires the demonstration of a practical competence;
- the assessment criteria must be fully met;
- units/qualifications confer 'Licence to Practise'.

10.4 Decisions for Access to HE Diplomas

Special considerations for Access to HE learners unable to complete the Diploma due to extenuating circumstances are considered at the Final Awards Board where extenuating circumstances have affected performance in more than one area or in any other way that falls outside the provider's normal processes. Cases of extenuating circumstances brought to the Final Awards Board must have been considered by the provider's course team and external moderator prior to the meeting.

Cases must be fully documented and include evidence which is presented in a standardised manner and with a recommendation to the awards board on whether each individual claim for extenuating circumstances should be supported and to what degree.

Access to HE providers may apply for an Access to HE Diploma award by extenuation for a learner whose ability to complete was impacted by significant personal difficulties beyond their control. Circumstances or the impact of existing circumstances on the learner is normally unforeseen when they start the course.

Applications for Access to HE Diploma awards by extenuation must be submitted to Open Awards by an authorised manager of the provider and made as soon as possible and **no later than five (5) working days after the end date of the course**. Extenuation application forms must be uploaded to the Secure Portal for consideration by the Quality Team. Forms must be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence.

Cases must be fully documented and include evidence which is presented in a standardised manner and with a recommendation to the awards board on whether each individual claim for extenuating circumstances should be supported and to what degree.

11. Malpractice

A provider's failure to comply with the guidance regarding reasonable adjustments or special considerations could constitute malpractice and may lead Open Awards to withhold the learner/ apprentice's result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from Open Awards, where this is required.
- Exceeding the allowances agreed with Open Awards (as appropriate).
- Agreeing adjustments at provider level that are not supported by evidence.
- Failing to maintain records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations for audit.
- Failing to report adjustments made at provider level to Open Awards upon reasonable request.
- Submitting a special consideration request for a learner not affected by mitigating circumstances.

12. Appeals

Appeals against the outcome of an application for reasonable adjustments or special consideration can only be submitted by a provider and/or (in the case of End-point assessment) employers. Providers may only submit appeals with the explicit written consent of the learner/ apprentice(s).

For more information, please refer to the Open Awards Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures available on our website.

13. Monitoring and Review

Open Awards will review this policy biennially as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and learner/ apprentice feedback, changes in its practices, advice from the regulatory authorities or external agencies, changes in legislation, or trends identified from previous reasonable adjustments and/ or special considerations.

Open Awards will monitor all requests for reasonable adjustments made by its providers. Where requests for a reasonable adjustment occur repeatedly and overtime, it may indicate that a unit needs to be reviewed in order to ensure the inclusiveness of its design. Therefore, monitoring of all requests will be undertaken and considered through the unit review and validity audit process.

In addition, this policy may be updated in light of operational feedback to ensure our arrangements for dealing with reasonable adjustments and/ or special considerations remain effective.

Open Awards will monitor and report on the use of reasonable adjustments and special considerations to the Regulators as required.

14. Related Documents

This document is linked to the following Open Awards documents:

- Provider Guidance - Applying for 25% additional time as a Reasonable Adjustment
- Provider Guidance - Reasonable Adjustments other than 25% additional time
- Provider Guidance - Rules for the use of Readers, Scribes, Prompts and Practical Assistants
- Provider Guidance – Submitting a Special Consideration Request
- RA1 – Provider Log of Reasonable Adjustments
- Provider Recognition Agreement
- Provider Handbook
- EPA Handbook (specific to each Apprenticeship standard)
- Access to HE Provider Handbook
- Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments
- Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments Remotely

15. Regulatory Requirements

The Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy is designed to fulfil the requirements of our regulators. In particular:

General Conditions of Recognition (Ofqual and Qualifications Wales)

- E4 Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered
- G2 Language of the assessment
- G3 Use of language and stimulus materials
- G6 Arrangements for reasonable adjustments
- G7 Arrangements for special consideration
- G8 Completion of the assessment
- G9 Delivering the assessment
- H1 Marking the assessment
- H2 Centre Assessment Standards Scrutiny where an assessment is marked by a Centre
- H5 Results for a qualification must be based on sufficient evidence
- I1 Appeals process

Ofqual's additional rules and guidance for specific qualifications:

End-point Assessments

[EPA Qualification-Level conditions and requirements](#)

Reformed Functional Skills Qualifications

[Functional Skills English conditions and requirements](#)

[Functional Skills English guidance](#)

[Functional Skills mathematics conditions and requirements](#)

[Functional Skills mathematics guidance](#)

[Controlled assessment regulations for Functional Skills](#)

Essential Digital Skills Qualifications

[Ofqual Handbook: Essential Digital Skills Qualifications](#)

QAA AVA Licensing Criteria

Standardisation and moderation

92, 93, 96, 99

Moderator reporting

110

Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education

End-point Assessment Reasonable Adjustments Guidance

Education and Skills Funding Agency

<i>Originator:</i>	<i>Director of Quality and Data</i>
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