



Special Assessment Needs Policy

1. Policy Statement

Vision Training (North East) Limited believes steadfastly in the equality of opportunity for its learners. To enable this equality, the company recognises that it must assess each learner's needs for learning and assessment on an individual, ongoing basis. This may necessitate, on occasion, special consideration and/or special arrangements be requested/made to enable each individual's equality of opportunity.

2. Purpose

Vision Training (North East) recognises that there are learners who can cope with the learning demands of a course but for whom the standard arrangements for assessment of their attainment may present an unnecessary barrier which could be removed without affecting the validity of the assessment. This applies both in the case of learners with known and long-standing learning problems and learners who are affected at or near the time of assessment.

These unnecessary barriers can be removed through special arrangements and special consideration approved by the Centre Head and the Examining Authority.

3. Scope

Special consideration may be given to a learner following an examination or assessment to ensure the equality of opportunity to a learner who has a

- temporary illness
- injury
- indisposition

The special consideration will give some compensation for those difficulties and the circumstances. The provision for special arrangements and special consideration is made so that learners are able to receive recognition of their attainment so long as valid and reliable examinations or assessments can be provided.

Such provision is not intended to alter the assessment demands of the qualifications.



4. Roles and Responsibilities

The learners are responsible for identifying difficulties to their Tutor/Assessor.

The Tutor/Assessors are responsible for initial and ongoing assessment of learners' assessment needs and bringing to the attention of the Head of Centre any barriers the learners have that need special consideration or special arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre entering a learner to ensure that any request on behalf of a learner is based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment of attainment. Requests for special arrangements and special consideration must be submitted and supported by the Head of Centre.

The Examining Authority has responsibility for the consideration and approval of such requests.

All specific enquiries, requests for advice and all completed application forms for special arrangements and for special consideration must be sent to the particular Examining Authority conducting the examination(s) to which they relate.

5. Policy Implementation - Procedures

5.1 THE PURPOSE OF SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.1.1. Special examination arrangements are arrangements which are approved in advance of the examination to enable learners who might not otherwise be able to do so to demonstrate their attainment.

5.1.2. Special arrangements may be needed for,

- learners with a permanent or long-term disability, for example,
- mobility impairment;
- visual impairment;
- hearing impairment;
- specific learning difficulty;
- learners with other disabilities or conditions;
- learners with a temporary disability or indisposition at the time of the examination(s)

5.2 GENERAL GUIDANCE ON SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS



5.2.1 An important first step in considering how best to meet the needs of learners with a permanent or long-term disability is the selection of the most appropriate course and examination syllabus.

Schemes of assessment vary within the courses we deliver and some assessment requirements present fewer problems for learners with disabilities than others. Tutor/Assessors need to work with the learner and their employer to select the most suitable course to meet their needs.

5.2.2. Think about whether the particular disability is the only limiting factor. For example, many learners with physical disabilities also have sensory difficulties or associated cognitive problems. They can be overlooked and yet their presence can compound the needs of the student in an examination setting. If learners have multiple impairments, make sure that you have considered all the possibilities for meeting their assessment needs.

5.2.3. Consideration needs to be made for each individual assessment or examination needed for the course/qualification, as they may each make different types of demands on the learner - A learner's need for special arrangements must be identified with regard to specific examination papers and/or other forms of assessment.

5.2.4. Before making an application for special arrangements:

- Consult any specialist agency, organisation or other external advisory services available.
- Consider whether the degree or effect of the particular disability is likely to alter before the time of the examination.
- Consider the assessment objectives of the subject/s concerned.

5.2.5. Remember that the method used by the learner for producing evidence for assessment in a session or an observation conducted by the centre may be the most suitable arrangement for the examination, provided that it does not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or compromise the integrity of the examination.

5.2.6 Ensure that the learner has had experience of, and practice in, the use of any special arrangements which are requested.

5.3 PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE APPLIED TO DECISIONS ABOUT SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.3.1. The nature of the special examination arrangement will be determined according to the assessments needs of the individual learner.



5.3.2. The special arrangement must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage with other learners.

5.3.3. Arrangements must be such that they do not mislead users of the certificate about the learner's attainment.

5.3.4. Arrangements should not reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment and must not compromise the integrity of the examination

5.3.5. Account will normally be taken of the learner's usual method of working in the classroom/session.

5.4 THE RANGE OF SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MAY BE MADE.

The kinds of special arrangements which can be considered are listed below.

5.4.1 Time Allowance

Additional time, according to need, may be allowed in most subjects and types of examinations.

Additional time will not normally be permitted in an examination component where performance of a task in a limited time is an assessment objective or where a learner's ability to demonstrate attainment in a subject is not affected by his or her special assessment need.

An additional allowance of up to 25% of the total examination time should meet most needs. Where an additional time allowance of more than 25% is requested, the Examining Authority may consult with the Head of centre as required but it should be borne in mind that too much time may be counter-productive.

Supervised breaks or rest periods may be given within the examination centres, in or outside the examination room. The duration of the break will not be deducted from the time allowed for the examination component. Permission may be given, according to need, for additional time as well as rest breaks.

5.4.2 Means of Access to Questions

Modifications to the visual presentation of papers, for visually-impaired learners whose impairment is not corrected by spectacles or other forms of vision aid:

- enlarged / large-print papers
- modified print (simplification, e.g. layout, items of visual complexity);
- Braille versions of papers;
- tactile enhancement



- Use of low vision aids and technological devices, e.g. closed circuit televisions, scanners, for visually-impaired learners whose impairment is not corrected by spectacles or other forms of vision aid.
- Modification of the language used in question papers for severely hearing-impaired learners (prelingually deaf or hearing-impaired from such an early age that vocabulary and understanding of syntax are limited). Exceptions to this are: technical terms in any subject; text and stimuli material in English; text in the foreign language in relevant modern foreign language papers; literary extracts; source material where understanding of the original material is specifically being assessed.
- Modification is:
 - Carried out by the teacher of the deaf in collaboration with the representatives of the Examining Authority.
 - Carried out well in advance of the examination day.
 - Restricted to the carrier language but the technical language may be presented in an alternative way.
- Reading of questions to learners if access to the paper is not possible through other means, except where reading is an assessment objective.
- Signing of questions or appropriate communication of questions for hearing-impaired learners (except where reading is an assessment objective) in exceptional circumstances, if this is the usual method of communication in the classroom and access to the examination cannot be achieved by other means.
- Special amplification for aural tests for hearing-impaired learners or reading of the tests to enable learners to lip-read.
- Use of flashcards for hearing-impaired learners in mental arithmetic tests which are orally conducted.
- Use of taped recordings of question papers may be permitted but only in exceptional circumstances if no other means can be found of supporting the learner.
- Use of a prompter under exceptional circumstances.

5.4.3 Means of Presenting Responses

- Responses in braille with a transcript commissioned by the Examining Authority.
- Use of mechanical or technological aids for learners who are unable to write, have difficulty in writing or need support during the examination. Use must not be made of spell-checks, thesauri or similar electronic devices, whether part of word-processing software or otherwise. If in exceptional cases, permission is given for use of a spell-check facility.



- Learners who have difficulty with speech may be permitted to use augmentative speech equipment in oral examinations but may not be able to meet all the assessment criteria using such equipment.
- A transcript provided by the Examining Authority of the learner's responses, where necessary.
- Use of amanuensis if responses cannot be communicated through other means.
- Dictation of responses on to tape may be permitted but only in the most exceptional circumstances. Transcript must be provided by a competent body authorised by the Examining Authority.
- In practical examinations or tests, use of a practical assistant or helper to ensure the learner's safety and to support the learner by assisting with those elements of the tasks which are not the focus of the assessment.

5.4.4 Alternative Accommodation Arrangements

Examinations may be taken outside a learner's examination centre e.g. in hospital, provided that security can be guaranteed by the Examining Authority and that the supervision requirements of the Examining Authority concerned can be met. In the case of a learner with a mobility impairment the examination venue must be completely accessible in such a way as to ensure the learner's dignity.

5.4.5 Exemption

If a learner is unable to fulfil an assessment objective, a special award may be made by giving compensation for the missing element. In such cases, there will be an indication on the certificate that the learner was exempt from fulfilling one of the assessment objectives

5.4.6 Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

- In examinations where Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar form part of the assessment, all learners will be assessed under the same nationally agreed criteria.
- It is not considered to be in the interests of learners to be exempt from this assessment but if exemption is requested and compensation, in the form of an adjustment to marks, is given, there will be an indication on the certificate that the learner was exempt from fulfilling one of the assessment objectives in the subject.
- If, in exceptional circumstances, for example, for a learner with a severe physical disability or a learner with a broken arm, permission is given for the use of an amanuensis, learners will not be expected to dictate spelling and punctuation. If reliable alternative evidence is available, such as examples of the learner's written work under controlled conditions, special consideration



procedures will be applied to enable an assessment to be made; otherwise the provisions of exemption will apply.

5.5 HOW TO APPLY FOR SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.5.1 Either Tutor/Assessors or Learners can apply for special arrangements in person to the Head of Centre, who will apply the awarding bodies criteria and judge if the request complies with the criteria.
- 5.5.2 In normal circumstances, the Head of Centre is responsible for applying for, and recommending, the special examination arrangements which are considered to be necessary. A request for special examination arrangement is normally required to be supported by the Head of Centre. In cases where applicants no longer attend centre, applications and recommendations for special examination arrangements should be made by a parent or guardian.
- 5.5.3 Contact the Examining Authority early to discuss possible approaches but be aware that the condition of a learner may change before the examination takes place. Avoid making assumptions, based on previous experience or hearsay, about the kind of arrangements which may or may not be made. Judgements are made by the Examining Authority according to the circumstances and needs of the individual learner.
- 5.5.4 A formal request for special arrangements is to be submitted to the Examining Authority by not later than the date specified by that Authority.
- 5.5.5 Applicants must provide medical or other appropriate evidence to the satisfaction of the Examining Authority.
- 5.5.6 Requests for special arrangements for learners with specific learning difficulties must be supported with evidence derived from psychological assessment.

For Edexcel such evidence must include the information requested on the Psychological Assessment Form, see Edexcel Site.

For NCFE <https://www.qualhub.co.uk/delivery-and-learner-support/forms/request-for-reasonable-adjustments/request-for-modified-papers/>

Any assessment used as evidence must have been conducted by an appropriately qualified psychologist and the report prepared within the two years prior to the examination. A report by a Dyslexia Specialist / Advisor documenting the particular nature of the difficulties experienced by learner is also required.



5.5.7 The Examining Authority must receive historical evidence of the learner's needs and an indication of how the centre meets these needs. The centre will be expected to establish that the learner's needs have been recognised over a period of time and that the arrangements requested for the examination reflect past and present needs.

5.6 AWARDING BODY GUIDANCE

Edexcel - This guidance can be found in the document Guidance on Special Arrangements and Considerations – Particular Disabilities.

NCFE see Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy and Guidance on Accessing Reasonable Adjustments.



Signed:

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Review Date: 30.02.2015

Reviews

Date	Signed - no changes	Signed with amendments
29.02.2014	X	
30.02.2015	X	
06.05.2015		x
02.05.2016	x	
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21.05.2018		<i>J Foster</i>

Admin: If amendments are needed please remember to change the version number once they have been completed

06.05.2015 – Updated into a new format. Guidance on Special Arrangements and Considerations Particular Disabilities moved into a supporting document.

21/05/2018 – 5.0 updated with links to NCFE guidance