



Special Conditions Policy

December 2024

1. Introduction

The Retrofit Academy CIC (TRA) is committed to ensuring it accommodates reasonable adjustments and special considerations for learners engaged on its qualifications and curricula, and this policy is aimed at delivering that commitment. It is important that relevant TRA staff and learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy and should note that centre arrangements will be checked through ongoing quality assurance activities, both internally and externally.

2. Purpose

The aim of this document to ensure that TRA and learners are aware of the kind of adjustments that can be made to assessments and how to request and implement those adjustments. It ensures that all learners have every opportunity to access assessment and to achieve the qualification or outcome they are undertaking.

3. Arrangements not covered by this policy

In circumstances not covered in this policy, affecting either internal or external assessment, TRA must be contacted before assessment takes place to agree any variation in the specified assessment arrangements.

4. Appeals

Learners who wish to appeal against a decision relating to reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, should refer to the Retrofit Academy Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification (Ofqual 2017).

The Equality Act 2010 requires TRA to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled.

TRA is required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage. An example would be a Braille paper which would be a reasonable adjustment for a visually impaired learner who could read Braille.

A reasonable adjustment may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available access arrangements. The reasonable adjustment must reflect the learner/candidate's normal way of working, to ensure that an unfair advantage is not provided to the learner during assessment.

Whether an adjustment will be considered reasonable will depend on a number of factors which will include, but are not limited to:

- The needs of the disabled candidate/learner.
- The effectiveness of the adjustment.
- The cost of the adjustment and
- The likely impact of the adjustment upon the learner/candidate and other learners/candidates.

An adjustment will not be approved if it:

- Involves unreasonable costs to the organisation.
- Involves unreasonable timeframes.
- Unfairly advantages or disadvantages a learner/candidate or group of learners/candidates.
- Prevents the qualification from providing a reliable indication of the extent to which a learner/candidate has the knowledge, skills and understanding being measured.
- Would alter the knowledge, skills and understanding being measured as opposed to the way they are demonstrated.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

6. Applying Reasonable Adjustments

The process for implementing reasonable adjustments depends on the nature of the adjustment.

Some adjustments may be used at the discretion of TRA, others require permission from the Awarding Organisation. Table 1 outlines some reasonable adjustments that can be made, if they do not compromise the validity of the assessment.

However, TRA has a duty to seek advice from the Awarding Organisation in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied. There are some restrictions to the provision of reasonable adjustments for certain qualifications. Reasonable adjustments will only be permitted in accordance with the qualification requirements detailed within each qualification guide.

- Permitted – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre.
- Apply – Apply to Open College Network West Midlands for permission.

Table 1: Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	Permitted	Apply
Extra time in excess of 25%	Permitted	Apply
Supervised rest breaks	Permitted	Apply
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Permitted	Permitted**
Separate accommodation within the centre	Permitted	Permitted
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Permitted	Apply
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	Permitted	Apply
Use of assistive software	Apply	Apply
Use of bilingual translation dictionaries	Apply *	Apply
Assessment Material in enlarged format	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in Braille	Apply	Apply
Language modified assessment material	Apply	Apply
Assessment material on coloured paper	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in audio format	Apply	Apply
Use of ICT	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Responses using electronic devices	Permitted	Apply
Responses in Braille	Permitted	Apply
Reader	Permitted/Apply*	Apply
Scribe	Permitted/Apply*	Apply
British Sign Language (BSL)	Permitted/Apply*	Apply
Prompter	Permitted	Apply
Practical assistant	Apply	Apply
Transcriber	Permitted	Apply
Other	Apply	Apply

* Permitted at the discretion of the centre unless the adjustment is implicitly or explicitly excluded in the Standard being assessed or in its associated Assessment Strategy or Qualification Guide

**As long as meets minimum requirements, otherwise apply.

7. Applying for Reasonable Adjustment

7.1 Reasonable adjustments permitted at the discretion of the Retrofit Academy.

Where a reasonable adjustment is permitted at the discretion of TRA, TRA must have documented procedures for: implementing adjustments equitably; maintaining supporting evidence relating to the barrier to assessment, and the adjustment granted. Awarding Organisations' will require TRA to keep records for inspection (including any declarations that are signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Learn). Failure to implement reasonable adjustments in line with this policy may be dealt with through the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

7.2 Reasonable adjustments requiring Awarding Bodies Permission permission

Where an Awarding Organisations' permission is required, TRA should complete a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form providing relevant details and appropriate supporting evidence. Requests for reasonable adjustments should be in English and submitted no later than 25 working days before the assessment.

Centres should keep records of adjustments they have permitted and those they have requested from any Awarding Organisation. These records should normally be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they apply.

Persons appointed to provide reasonable adjustments must be independent of the candidate and must be suitably trained and/or qualified.

8. Special Considerations

Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a learner/candidate who has temporarily experienced:

- An illness or injury.
- Some other event outside of the learner/candidate's control which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner/candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment. (Ofqual 2017).
- Special Considerations are referred to as Extenuating Circumstances within Access to HE Provision.
- TRA is required to have their own procedures for dealing with Extenuating Circumstances which are checked through ongoing quality assurance and monitoring.

Special consideration can be applied either before or after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who had temporarily experienced:

- Incapacitating illness.
- Serious injury.
- Terminal illness.
- Recent bereavement of a family member or close friend.
- Terminal illness of a parent, child or dependent.
- Serious disturbance at the time of the assessment.
- Accidental events at the time of the assessment (i.e., being given the wrong examination paper or equipment failure).
- Serious domestic crisis.

- Serious car accident.
- Flare up of congenital illness.
- Physical assault trauma.

This list is not exhaustive.

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 their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability.

Requests for Special consideration (subject to agreement with the Awarding Organisation), if successful, may result in:

- Up to a 5% addition to the mark for a learner registered to an externally assessed qualification.
- An adjustment to arrangements for accessing the assessment.
- An Aegrotat or Posthumous award for other qualifications.

The extent of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner. Where such an adjustment is impractical the learner will be allowed a further opportunity to undertake a comparable assessment.

It should be noted 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 Licence to Practise, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.

- In some circumstances for example on-demand assessments or Externally Quality Assured qualifications, it will usually be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

8.1 Applying for Special Consideration

Requests for special consideration should be submitted using the Special Consideration Request Form/Extenuating Circumstances Form as soon as possible and not later than 5 working days after the assessment. Requests for special consideration will only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- The application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by TRA staff.
- 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.
- For onscreen 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.

8.2 Review arrangements

TRA will review this policy regularly as part of its self-evaluation arrangements and monitoring, and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in TRA practices, actions and/or guidance from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

Contact details

Anyone who would like to feedback on this strategy, or have any queries about its content, please contact us on:

T: 0330 055 7629

E: training@retrofitacademy.org

Related Policies (or documentation)

- Reasonable Adjustment Request Form.
- Special Consideration Request form.
- Extenuating Circumstances Form.
- Complaints policy.
- Appeals policy and procedures.
- Any other policy that may constitute malpractice or maladministration.