**Reasonable Adjustments Guidance and Access to Fair Assessment**

Notting Hill College actively supports the policy of removing barriers to assessment that might disadvantage learners who have special needs or who experience special circumstances.

1. **What are access arrangements?**

Awarding organisations are required to make sure that learners who have particular special requirements are able to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding by making arrangements that will allow them to do this. Access arrangements are essentially modifications to the assessment or test conditions. These arrangements must not give an unfair advantage over other learners, as the aim is to provide a “level playing field” for all. Nor may the arrangements undermine the integrity of the qualification.

An example could be the provision of modified assessment material, such as large print or braille for visually impaired learners. Also Centres must give special consideration to learners who are affected by an unforeseen and temporary situation at the time of the assessment (eg illness, bereavement).

Centres may need to make reasonable adjustments to the assessment environment to meet Disability legislation so as not to discriminate against individuals. Further guidance may be found in the JCQ document “Access arrangements, special considerations and reasonable adjustments” which is available through the Ofqual website.

It is important to note that Centres must undertake the recruitment and acceptance of learners onto the programmes with integrity. This is to ensure that the qualification meet the learner’s needs, and also to see whether the learner has potential to successfully complete the assessment and gain the qualification.

**2. Reasonable Adjustments**

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the Learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not compromise the assessment process or the assessment objectives and may involve:

* changing standard assessment arrangements, for example, allowing Learners extra time to complete the assessment activity
* adapting assessment materials
* providing access facilitators during assessment, for example a sign language interpreter or a reader.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the Learner access to the assessment activity. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a Learner’s work.

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

**2.1  Making Reasonable Adjustments**

All Awarding Organisations and Centres have a responsibility to ensure that the assessment process is robust and fair and allows the Learner to demonstrate his or her full potential.

Adjustments to assessments should:

* not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
* not give Learners an unfair advantage
* reflect the Learner’s normal way of working
* be based on the individual need of the Learner.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments should be made either to the Head of Centre/ Principal or to the External Awarding Body as relevant.  Evidence may be requested to support the claim, e.g. Medical Report, Certificate of Vision Impairment etc.  ***Thorough records are to be kept of all arrangements made.  These may be requested by external awarding bodies as part of on-going monitoring.***

**3. What are special considerations?**

Special considerations are adjustments made to the marking or outcome of an assessment (after the assessment has taken place) when the learner was present or prepared for the assessment but may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, indisposition or other unforeseen circumstance, injury or adverse circumstances that have come about at the time of the assessment.

The following is a list of examples which might be eligible for special considerations (the list is not exhaustive):

* serious illness of the Learner
* serious illness of a parent
* bereavement of an immediate family member
* incapacitating illness of the Learner
* recent domestic crises
* accident and injury to the Learner
* trauma caused by a recent event or experience.

Learners cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty.

Special consideration should not give the Learner an unfair advantage. The Learner’s results must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

Special consideration may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the Learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the Learner but will always be a minor adjustment, as to do more may jeopardise the standard.

Where an assessment requires a competence to be met fully, it may not be possible to apply any special consideration. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer the Learner an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date or to extend the registration period so that the Learner has more time to complete the assessment activity.

It may not be possible to apply special considerations where:

* An assessment requires demonstration of a practical competence
* The assessment criteria have to be fully met
* Units or qualifications confer licence to practice.

**3.1 Applying for Special Considerations**

Requests for Special Considerations should be made either to the Head of Centre/ Principal or to the External Awarding Body as relevant.  Evidence may be requested to support the claim, eg in the case of an illness, a doctor’s letter or a statement of events from the Centre.  ***Thorough records are to be kept of all arrangements made.  These may be requested by external awarding bodies as part of on-going monitoring.***

**Examples of the most common situations**

Visual impairment and possible arrangements:

* Modified assessment paperwork with large print, Braille or Moon
* A reader
* A scribe (who takes dictation)
* Audio recording equipment
* A keyboard to produce typescript or raised type responses

Hearing impairment and possible arrangements:

* Communicators / interpreters
* Mechanical and electronic aids
* Induction loops

Physical impairment (these may be permanent or temporary) and possible arrangements:

* A reader / interpreter / amanuensis
* Extra time allowance
* Appropriate mechanical or electronic aids

Learning difficulties (specific learning difficulties eg dyslexia) and possible arrangements:

* Extra time allowance / extension
* Recording equipment
* An amanuensis and / or reader
* Appropriate audio visual aids