

6 Access to Fair Assessment

Policy Statement

Please note. In this Policy, the terms “Employee” or “Staff” refer to: 1) Salaried staff; 2) Freelance contractors; and 3) those working in a voluntary capacity or on a placement. The term “Learner” applies to anyone undergoing a learning or assessment programme at Appa Training, whether it be a qualification programme, a skills and knowledge learning programme or a workshop or other CPD activity.

Appa Training is committed to giving all learners equal access and opportunity to demonstrate their achievements.

There may be circumstances whereby, to take account of particular learners requirements, arrangements will need to be made, which ensure that this is achieved without conferring any unfair advantage over other learners.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements should be agreed before an assessment takes place. This allows learners with identified special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access the assessment.

Access arrangements allow learners to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment, e.g. readers, scribes, word processors, and Braille question papers.

An Access arrangement that meets the needs of a disabled learner would be a “reasonable adjustment” for that learner.

Reasonable Adjustments

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

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of the assessment outcomes but may involve:

- Changing the usual assessment arrangements, e.g. allowing a learner extra time to complete an assessment activity
- Adapting assessment materials e.g. by providing course materials in BSL
- Providing assistance during an assessment e.g. by providing a signer, interpreter or a reader
- Changing the assessment method e.g. from a written assessment to a spoken/signed assessment
- Using assisted technology such as screen reading or a voice activated software
- Reasonable adjustments are approved and set in place before the assessment takes place. The work produced by the learner will be assessed in the same way as all other learners

Identification of learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments

Any adjustment to an assessment activity will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

- Communication and interaction needs
- Cognition and learning needs
- Sensory and physical needs
- Behavioural, emotional and social needs

The learner 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 will be defined as being disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act.

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

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

Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, Appa Training must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

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

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable.

The centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation:

- Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the centre 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. If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This evidence should include an indication of how the centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the

assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes.

Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included

- History of provision within the centre. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.
- 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 is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

It is Appa Training responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

Appa Training will maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments which have been made.

Special considerations

Appa Training follows the Special Consideration Policy set out by Signature, our Awarding Body as shown below and on their webpage

(<http://www.signature.org.uk/useful-documents>) (10 March 2015):

Signatures policy statement

Signature aims to ensure that access to assessment is provided so as to maximise opportunity for as many learners as possible. As a general principle, Signature

would wish to allow learners the same level of support during assessments as they have received during the learning process, providing that the support does not give the learner any unfair advantage or disadvantage over others who do not have such support.

Special consideration may be given for learners who were ill on the day of the assessment, injured or indisposed at the time of an assessment, or where performance was affected by unforeseen circumstances, e.g. serious disturbance during the assessment.

To apply for a special consideration for a learner, centres should contact their Customer Support Officer by email or by fax, along with any of the below:

- an explanation/description of the circumstances; and evidence, where appropriate. If the application for special consideration is accepted in the light of the above information, Signature may:
 - review the learner's performance in the light of the evidence available and make a decision; or offer the learner the opportunity to re-sit the assessment at a suitable date; or reach an alternative solution, appropriate to the circumstances.

Requests for special consideration will not be accepted after the results of the assessment have been published. For further information please contact Signature's Customer Support Officer.

Date 19-10-18

SIGNED 

ROLE OPERATIONS DIRECTOR