



Policy

**Reasonable Adjustment &
Special Consideration**

Apprenticeship End-point Assessment – Reasonable Adjustment & Special Consideration Policy

EPA Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration Policy	
Applies to:	Employers, Training Providers, Apprentices, SA staff and Associated Third Parties
Effect from and replaces all previous versions prior to	2 November 2021
Owned By	Skern Assessments
Reviewed and Monitored by	Head of Skern Assessments
Document Location	Website & EPA resource area
Review Frequency	Annually

This policy applies to the Apprenticeship End Point Assessments (EPA) provided by Skern Assessments – henceforth referred to as SA.

SA is committed to ensuring that all Apprentices are granted equal opportunity, in line with the Equality Act 2010, to receive recognition of their achievement, while maintaining the equity, validity and reliability of assessments through the application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations where appropriate.

As such, SA offers the below reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy in order to provide external parties with the process of requesting a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.

If an Employer or Training Provider does not find the information they need within this policy, they should send any queries to epa@skernassessments.co.uk

SA Internal Responsibility

SA is responsible for the maintenance and compliance of this policy.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation process and revise it as and when necessary, in response to feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, and changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

The annual review of this policy will be undertaken by the EPA Manager approximately four weeks prior to the submission of SA Statement of Compliance to our regulators. Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by SA Governing Committee.

Where the regulators notify SA of failures that have been discovered in the reasonable adjustments and special consideration processes of another awarding organisation, SA will review whether or not a similar failure could affect our reasonable adjustments and special considerations processes and arrangements and take action to amend this policy where necessary.

Training Provider / Employers Responsibility

SA suggests that all Training Provider or Employers involved in the delivery, management, assessment and quality assurance of SA End-Point Assessments, and their Apprentices, are fully aware of the contents of this policy.

An Employer or Training Provider should identify as early as possible any difficulties an Apprentice may have in accessing assessment, select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible and follow SA process for requesting adjustments. Employers should follow SA guidance for implementing adjustments to assessments while maintaining records of these adjustments and ensuring a quality appeals procedure is in place for Apprentices wishing to query any decisions made regarding adjustments by the Employer or EPAO.

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Definitions

Reasonable Adjustment

The following definition is given by Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition:

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

While the applicable definition of ‘disabled’ has been taken from the Equality Act 2010, an Apprentice seeking a reasonable adjustment does not necessarily have to fit within this definition of disabled to be entitled to one. A reasonable adjustment is any action that aids with reducing the effect of a long-term disability or difficulty which places the Apprentice at a disadvantage in an assessment situation.

SA are only required by law to do what is ‘reasonable’ in terms of allowing an adjustment, and what is considered reasonable will depend on the individual needs of the Apprentice, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. A reasonable adjustment is not a concession to make an assessment easier for an Apprentice, or to give an Apprentice an advantage over others.

Special Consideration

The following definition is given by Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition:

“Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced –

- a) an illness or injury, or
- b) some other event outside of the Learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that Learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.”

Special considerations can be a pre-assessment or post-assessment adjustment to cover a ‘temporary’ condition that may disadvantage, or may have disadvantaged, the Apprentice in an assessment situation (including, for example; a temporary illness, injury or some other event outside of their control).

If approved, a pre-assessment special consideration may result in an access adjustment being made to the assessment, and post-assessment special consideration may result in either a small

adjustment made to the mark of the Apprentice, or another appropriate adjustment. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the level of difficulty faced.

A special consideration should not give the Apprentice an unfair advantage. The result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change an Apprentice's result.

Training Providers and Employers should note that:

Where an assessment requires the Apprentice to demonstrate practical competence, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.

In some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the Apprentice an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

SA will review a request for special consideration on a case by case basis and will take the particular need of each individual Apprentice into consideration when making a decision to grant the request.

Who can request a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration?

1. A Training Provider

A Training Provider may wish to request reasonable adjustments or special considerations for an Apprentice completing an End-Point Assessment component.

2. An Apprentice undertaking End-Point Assessment with SA

An Apprentice undertaking End-Point Assessment with SA who believes they are eligible for reasonable adjustments or special considerations must first consult with their Training Provider regarding the relevant component(s). A Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration request relating to End-Point Assessment provision must be submitted by the Training Provider.

Eligibility Criteria

A reasonable adjustment to an assessment will only be considered where the permanent disability, difficulty, or individual learning need experienced by the Apprentice would place them at a disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

A special consideration to an assessment will only be considered where the 'temporary' condition would place the Apprentice at, or has placed them at, a disadvantage in an assessment situation.

An Apprentice who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may also be eligible for special considerations if:

performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the Apprentice (e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment);

alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate;

part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the Apprentice or;

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 Apprentice could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

An Apprentice will not be eligible for special considerations if:

no evidence is supplied by the Training Provider that the Apprentice has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition;

any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence;

preparation 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;

the disadvantage is caused by disregard for the Training Provider or SA requirements, recreational drugs or misreading of exam instructions or;

disruption in a controlled assessment environment is minor and momentary (e.g. a mobile phone ringing) and dealt with immediately by the assessment invigilator.

Health and Safety

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of an Apprentice should be compromised during assessment. Where there is a concern that the effect of a person's disability or additional learning needs may have health and safety implications for them or others, a suitably qualified person should carry out a risk assessment, related to the Apprentice's particular circumstances.

The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with the particular activity, but should also take account of any reasonable adjustments put in place for the Apprentice which may remove or reduce the risk.

Assumptions should not be made about an Apprentice's disability or additional learning needs, posing a health and safety risk. The health and safety of all Apprentices and others must always be of paramount importance.

Types of Assessment

End-Point Assessments

End-Point Assessment activities cover a range of assessment types, including, for example; Multiple Choice Question examinations, Professional Discussions, Interviews, Portfolios of Evidence, Practical Observations and Synoptic or Written Projects.

As all of these assessment components are externally set and assessed by SA, any reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests must be submitted to SA for approval and cannot be applied by Training Providers themselves.

Where End-Point Assessments are subject to assessment windows in which the entire End-Point Assessment must be completed within a certain timeframe. This timeframe is specific to each Apprenticeship Standard and is detailed within the respective Assessment Plan. Should an Apprentice have experienced an event outside their control which may cause this timeframe to be breached, a Training Provider may seek an extension with SA via the special considerations process.

Records

It is the responsibility of the SA to maintain records of all adjustments made to internal assessments, and to hold these on file within SA for Internal Quality Assurer and External Quality Assurer audit purposes.

Requesting Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Once the need for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration has been identified and the assessment type requires permission to be sought from SA, the Training Provider must complete and submit the appropriate form on behalf of the Apprentice.

The Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Forms are available on the following platforms: Skern Assessments Website, The Apprentices Portal. Separate forms will typically be completed for each Apprentice. However, in the event that a particular disturbance or situation has affected a cohort of Apprentices then a single form may be submitted, with a list of all the affected individuals attached. The forms will require the Apprentice's name, SA registration number, the affected assessment(s), the nature of and rationale for the request, and additional supporting evidence.

For Training Providers, requests for reasonable adjustments on behalf of Apprentices must be submitted prior to submission through Gateway. Approved reasonable adjustment requests will be submitted as a Gateway requirement to be discussed in the Assessment Planning Meeting.

Requests for special considerations must be submitted at least 10 working days before the scheduled assessment. Requests for special considerations following the completion of an assessment should be submitted immediately and not after the confirmation of results by SA.

Should a Training Provider be made aware of the need for a special consideration within the 10 working days prior to an assessment after the due date for requests has passed, SA advises that the assessment be delayed to a later date.

Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

The application has been overlooked by the SA or Training Provider and the oversight is confirmed by the SA or Training Provider Coordinator;

Medical evidence has come to light about an Apprentice's condition, which demonstrates that the Apprentice must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment.

SA will confirm receipt of the request within 2 working days. The request review stage will typically take 5 working days from the date the request was received. With more complex cases which require input from experts, SA may be unable to respond in this timescale and an estimated extended response date will be communicated.

The review of the reasonable adjustment or special consideration request will be conducted by a suitably competent SA staff member.

Supporting Evidence

All reasonable adjustment or special consideration requests must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable alongside the relevant form. Requests may not be accepted without appropriate supporting evidence. It is the Training Provider's responsibility to provide this evidence

and to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual needs of the Apprentice.

The Training Provider should decide which of the following types of additional supporting evidence will best assist understanding of the Apprentice's situation:

An assessment of the Apprentice's needs in relation to the relevant assessment, raised by the Training 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;

History of provision within the Training Provider;

Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative specialists.

Appeals

If a Training Provider or Apprentice wishes to appeal against a SA decision regarding reasonable adjustments or special considerations, please refer to the SA Appeals Policy.

If necessary, please also refer to the SA Appeals Policy for information on further avenues beyond the appeals process.

Glossary

Extra time up to 25%

Where an assessment is time-constrained, a candidate may be permitted up to 25% extra of the time allowed to complete the assessment.

Extra time in excess of 25%

Where an assessment is time-constrained, a candidate may be permitted up to over 25% extra of the time allowed to complete the assessment.

Supervised rest breaks

Supervised rest breaks, taken under assessment conditions, may be taken either in or outside the assessment room and the duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the overall assessment time.

Separate accommodation within the Recognised Centre

There may be a need to accommodate a candidate separately from others during an assessment, often to enable the candidate to utilise another approved adjustment while reducing distraction for others who are not requiring this adjustment.

Conduct assessment at an alternative venue

In certain circumstances, the candidate may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue suited to the candidate's requirements. Assessment conditions must still be met and the security of the assessment material maintained.

Assessment material on coloured paper

Subject to the supporting evidence, candidates with a visual impairment or learning difficulties may benefit from having assessment material printed on coloured paper.

Assessment material in enlarged format

Subject to the supporting evidence, candidates with a visual impairment or learning difficulties may apply for assessment material to be enlarged to a format suitable.

Assessment material in audio format

Subject to the supporting evidence, SA may be able to provide Learners with assessment material in audio format.

Use of English dictionaries

Learners may use an English dictionary for the purpose of checking the spelling of words or finding the meaning of words and phrases.

Use of ICT

The use of ICT in this context is taken to include electronic word processor devices producing output in text during an assessment. Spelling and grammar checks must be disabled prior to the assessment taking place.

Read aloud

Learners are permitted to read aloud during assessments, if this reflects their normal way of working. Recognised Centres must ensure that these Learners are accommodated separately.

Reader or computer reader

A reader is a responsible adult who reads the instructions of the question paper and the questions directly to the candidate. This may involve reading the whole paper to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read.

A computer reader is computer software which accurately reads out text but does not decode or interpret the paper.

Prompter

A prompter is a responsible adult who can refocus a candidate with severe attention problems. A candidate may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.

Scribe

A scribe is a responsible adult who may write, type or word process a candidate's dictated answers to the questions during an assessment.

Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competency being assessed.

Transcriber

A transcriber is a responsible adult who will produce a transcript to assist the examiner/assessor in the assessment of a candidate's work.

The examiner/assessor will assess the work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the candidate's response. In some instances the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript.