

1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at centres, teachers and learners who are involved with RSL qualifications. RSL staff, external assessors and external quality assurers should also refer to this policy. This policy covers vocational qualifications only.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures that centres should follow when implementing reasonable adjustments and special considerations. The policy also gives details of the service provided by RSL for these arrangements. This policy is informed by the guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications. Further information and guidance about reasonable adjustments can be found at www.jcq.org.uk

This policy is available on our website at www.rslawards.com.

This policy will be subject to review and monitoring by RSL and if necessary, will be amended and updated following feedback from learners and centres. All versions of this policy will be approved by the RSL Quality Committee and posted on our website dating each review.

Please note that we treat all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements in confidence and retain them in accordance with our GDPR obligations.

If learners wish to appeal against the decision by RSL for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Appeals Policy, available to download from our website at www.rslawards.com.

2. Issue and review

The date of issue of this policy is October 2022. This policy will be reviewed annually.

3. What are reasonable adjustments and special considerations?

RSL is committed to fair and equal assessment of its qualifications. We expect all learners to have equal and fair access to all the assessments we provide.

We recognise that in some cases there will be a need for some learners to have access to a range of accommodations to meet their individual needs and provide fair access to the assessments they are undertaking. This could include:

- » learners who have a permanent disability or specific learning needs
- » learners who have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs
- » learners who are indisposed at the time of the assessment

Reasonable adjustments can be applied for learners who have a permanent disability or specific learning needs.

Special considerations can be applied for learners who have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs or who are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive fair recognition of their achievement whilst maintaining the integrity of the assessment.

3.1 Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is defined as an action that will reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage during assessment. Reasonable adjustments apply to long term conditions such as dyslexia.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of the assessment, but may involve:

- » Making changes for individuals to the standard assessment arrangements, for example allowing learners extra time to complete the assessment
- » Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille for those with visual impairments
- » Providing access facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- » Re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner

For Vocational Qualifications, reasonable adjustments are managed within the centre. Reasonable Adjustments apply to how the examination or assessment is conducted not the assessment of the work. Centres do not need to apply to RSL for reasonable adjustments. For controlled external assessment, evidence of reasonable adjustments applied will need to be submitted with the learner evidence, using the '[Evidence of Reasonable Adjustment for Vocational Qualifications](#)' form.

3.2 Special consideration

Special considerations are different to reasonable adjustments as they apply to a **temporary** illness or adverse circumstance that could affect the candidate's performance. For vocational qualifications, this could be taken into account before or during the assessment. RSL will consider applications for special consideration based on the information provided on a case by case basis.

4. Reasonable adjustment examples

Below are examples of adjustments that could be made for learners by the centre with particular disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The examples are not exhaustive and are for illustrative purposes only:

4.1 Cognition and learning needs

(e.g. general and/or specific learning difficulties)

- » Supervised rest breaks
- » Extra time
- » A practical assistant
- » A computer reader or a reader
- » A word processor
- » A scribe
- » A prompter
- » Coloured overlays
- » Coloured/enlarged papers
- » Modified language papers

4.2 Communication and Interaction needs

(e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN))

- » Supervised rest breaks
- » Extra time
- » A computer reader or reader
- » Modified language papers
- » A word processor
- » A scribe

4.3 Sensory and Physical Needs

(e.g. Hearing Impairment (HI) Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Disability (PD), Vision Impairment (VI)).

- » Supervised rest breaks
- » Extra time
- » A computer reader or a reader
- » A word processor
- » A scribe
- » A live speaker
- » A Sign Language Interpreter
- » A practical assistant
- » Braille papers, modified enlarged and/or modified language papers.

4.4 Social, Mental and Emotional Needs

(e.g. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Mental Health Conditions).

- » Supervised rest breaks
- » Extra time
- » A prompter
- » Separate invigilation within the centre
- » Alternative site arrangement
- » Extra time
- » A word processor
- » A computer reader or a reader
- » A scribe

4.5 Use of individuals to facilitate assessments

Where a person is appointed to facilitate an access arrangement, e.g.:

- » A Sign Language Interpreter
- » A practical assistant
- » A scribe
- » A reader
- » A live speaker

He/she is responsible to the centre or teacher. The person appointed must not be the learner's music teacher, relative, friend or peer.

The centre/teacher must make sure that the person appointed is appropriately trained and understands the rules of the particular access arrangement they are facilitating.

5. Process for applying Reasonable Adjustments in RSL Vocational Qualifications

All learners undertaking RSL Vocational Qualifications must apply for Reasonable Adjustments directly with their delivery centre. Centres are therefore expected to have their own policies and procedures for applying reasonable adjustments to assessments. RSL do not manage reasonable adjustments at approved centres but require evidence of their application to be submitted alongside controlled assessment evidence or as part of the moderation process for internally assessed units. RSL expect all approved centres to assess the capability of each candidate to complete RSL Vocational Qualifications at the enrolment stage and factor any adjustments into their delivery planning accordingly.

For Controlled External Assessment, if learners are entitled to additional time, this time must be allocated within the controlled external assessment window and under controlled conditions. This time will need to be logged on the controlled external assessment log which is submitted with the assessment evidence. Centres will also need to provide a completed '[Evidence of Reasonable Adjustment Applied for Vocational Qualifications](#)' form with the evidence for the learner.

6. Evidence requirements

Centres must ensure that learners applying for reasonable adjustments present medical evidence of their learning difficulty or disability. For individuals with physical or mental conditions, RSL accept diagnostic confirmation on headed paper by medical practitioners and for learning needs from Educational Psychologist or SEND qualified personnel.

7. Evidence requirements

Special considerations are granted for a temporary illness or indisposition. This can be applied for before, or during the assessment window.

Please allow 10 working days for decisions on requests for Special Considerations.

7.1 Before the assessment

A centre may apply for special consideration for a learner prior to the assessment (for example if they have broken their arm a few weeks beforehand), although it would normally be more appropriate to apply a reasonable adjustment where the condition is understood to be permanent rather than temporary.

Centres need to provide sufficient information to RSL about the disability, illness, injury or other circumstance and whether they feel that this is permanent or temporary. RSL will then make a decision about how to process the application. In the case of a permanent disability, the centre should process this as a reasonable adjustment, only temporary illness or indisposition will be processed as a special consideration.

In most cases, special consideration will normally be granted in the form of an extension to the deadline for the production of and submission of evidence.

Centres will need to complete an 'Application for Special Consideration for Vocational Qualifications' form alongside supporting evidence. RSL will do its best to accommodate any special considerations, however it may not always be possible to arrange for adjustments to be made in the timescales.

Applications should include:

- » Centre name Learner/ Learner name
- » Qualification title and level
- » Summary of the temporary illness or indisposition affecting the learner's performance
- » The details of what special consideration the centre would like to be put into place.
- » Any medical evidence to support the application

7.2 During an assessment

In some cases, a learner can be affected by an event which happens on the day of the assessment or in the assessment itself. In these cases, a teacher would make a decision about how the performance was affected and submit a special consideration application.

RSL cannot grant special considerations for requests for marks to be adjusted due to illness or injury affecting performance that has been submitted for assessment. The assessment and grading criteria must be fairly applied across all learners.

7.3 Awarding organisation calculated grades

In some special consideration cases it may not be possible for learners to complete their assessments. In this instance the learner may be eligible for an awarding organisation calculated grade. Awarding Organisation Calculated Grades are accessed through the usual special consideration policy. RSL will determine if an AOCG is appropriate and provide the centre with the information and forms needed to initiate the process.

In accordance with JCQ guidelines we will use a minimum assessment threshold basis for students to qualify for a calculated grade. Any student that has completed 40% of the qualification's assessments (defined in terms of the assessments' total contribution to the qualification) is eligible for an awarding organisation calculated grade.

The awarding organisation calculated grade will only be applicable if the following is true:

- » The learner would have achieved if not for an enforced absence
- » A valid and reliable grade can be generated by the awarding organisation

Once qualifying factors have been established RSL will compare attained learning outcome grades against those that are missing. Where possible the grades will be matched to previously attained learning outcomes of a similar type. I.e. a performance-based LO with attainment of 'Merit' will be duplicated for any missed LOs where performance is central to the criteria.

Once an AOCG has been determined and communicated to the centre, the centre may take the following actions:

Accept the AOCG, no further actions required

Dispute the AOCG, the centre must then provide evidence supporting their grade assertions or accept a delay to certification to allow the learner more time to complete their qualification.

RSL applies the same approach across all qualification to ensure consistency and fairness for all learners. The approach has been developed in consultation with JCQ, other awarding organisations and Ofqual.

8. Centre checklist for applications

8.2 Reasonable Adjustments:

- » Managed within the centre.
- » For controlled external assessment, submit an '[Evidence of Reasonable Adjustment for Vocational Qualifications](#)' form with the evidence for the learner.
- » Evidence could include diagnostic confirmation on headed paper by medical practitioners and for learning needs from Educational Psychologist or SEND qualified personnel.

8.3 Special Considerations:

- » '[Application for Special Consideration for Vocational Qualifications](#)' form
- » Supporting evidence e.g. Doctor's note.