End Point Assessment (EPA) Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy

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# **Why we have this policy**

## The IET recognises that in agreed and specified instances certain apprentices may require alternative arrangements for aspects of their knowledge tests and practical assessments, known as reasonable adjustments or special considerations.

A reasonable adjustment may be requested for reasons of disability or as a result of a medical condition and are not limited to these reasons.

A special consideration may be requested for reasons of a temporary illness, injury, or events outside of the control of the apprentice.

# **Who this policy applies to**

This policy applies to Employers and Training Providers upon selection and appointment of the IET as the End-Point Assessment Awarding Organisation (EPAO). This policy must be made available by Employers to apprentices at the Gateway stage to End-Point Assessment.

It is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Manager to ensure this policy is reviewed annually and updated, when necessary, in line with feedback or regulatory requirements.

The Quality Assurance Manager will also monitor the adherence and compliance of this policy on a regular basis through internal quality assurance checks.

# **Overview of this policy**

**Reasonable Adjustments**

A reasonable adjustment relates to an adjustment that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or a physical or mental health condition, which may place the apprentice at a disadvantage compared to others.

Employers, training providers and End-Point Assessments Organisation (EPAOs) **must** make reasonable adjustments to ensure apprentices with disabilities or physical or mental health conditions are not disadvantaged during training, assessment or when doing their jobs. This is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework which protects the rights of individuals from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, every person has several protected characteristics, of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation, so the act protects against unfair treatment.

During the End-Point Assessment the types of adjustments offered may include, but aren’t limited to, changes to elements such as:

* the location and timing of the assessment
* the format, wording, or type of assessment activity
* the availability of support personnel for additional needs
* the availability of adaptive software or hardware, or specialist equipment

These adjustments should mirror the types of reasonable adjustments and additional support that the apprentice has received from their employer and/or training provider during their apprenticeship programme.

It is important that reasonable adjustments **do not** affect the reliability or validity of assessment and they should not give the apprentice an advantage over other apprentices undertaking the same assessment. More information on reasonable adjustments can be found on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers).

**Special Considerations**

A special consideration relates to an adjustment which can be given to apprentices who have temporarily experienced:

* an illness
* an injury
* any other event outside of the apprentices control.

Special consideration may be given where these events have affected an apprentice’s ability to either:

* undertake EPA
* demonstrate their occupational competence

Any request for special consideration should be submitted to the IET using the appropriate form, once submitted the IET will make any decisions in line with this policy and the IFATE matrix. Any requests for special considerations will be recorded on a Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Register along with supporting evidence for auditing purposes.

These arrangements are mandatory and are a requirement of Ofqual’s General Condition of Recognition.

# **The policy itself**

In addition to this, the IET will support apprentices by ensuring that:

The reasonable adjustments or special considerations provided to apprentices support the opportunity to demonstrate attainment against occupational competence.

* The assessment is reliable, and any person using the apprenticeship certificate to identify an individual’s competence can have confidence in their skills and abilities.
* The assessment process is rigorous and fair, and the assessment activity is valid.
* The assessment is practically able to operate within available resources, following the application of any reasonable adjustments.
* Facilities and time allow apprentices to use any commercially available mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement so long as they reflect the apprentice’s normal ways of working and do not give the apprentice an unfair advantage.

# **Putting Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations in place**

The IFATE matrix will support the IET in applying appropriate and consistent judgements and is based around the Higher Education Statistical Authority’s (HESA) disability grouping framework. Each of these difficulties / disabilities have then been overlaid with the listed assessment methods to ensure the most suitable adjustments are applied for each situation and for each assessment method determined in the end-point assessment plan without changing the demands of the assessment.

These are recommendations only, and it is essential to use the matrix from an apprentice centred perspective on a case-by-case basis. Each assessment will be subject to some variance due to job role, employment context and apprentice support needs, and should be adapted, as necessary. The support need for a particular person will be unique to that individual and may not be listed as a need in the relevant category in the disability grouping framework, so flexibility is required. It is also important to remember that appropriate adjustments are likely to be a continuation of the additional support that the apprentice has received during their apprenticeship.

Employers and training providers should work collaboratively with the apprentice and the IET to determine the appropriate reasonable adjustment or special consideration. Employers and training providers are advised to seek clarification from the IET in any cases where they consider that they do not have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment or special consideration is required.

The outcome produced by the apprentice must at all times:

* meet the requirements of the occupational standard regardless of the process or methods used.
* be as rigorously assessed as outcomes generated by other apprentices.
* be assessable.
* be a valid measure of occupational competence; and
* be able to be moderated or verified.

Note: It is not necessary to obtain approval from the ESFA prior to putting reasonable adjustments or special considerations in place.

# **Applying to the IET for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations**

This process should begin as soon as the employer is aware that the apprentice is likely to need to access reasonable adjustments or special consideration for the End-Point Assessment.

In all cases, the employer, with input from the training provider and the apprentice, must apply to the IET for reasonable adjustments to be applied no later than 14 days before the End Point Assessment is due to take place. Should the Employer, or Provider fail to do so, and the End Point Assessment needs to be rescheduled, the Employer, or Provider will be liable to pay the applicable fee.

Evidence of the difficulty/disability will be required to support the application, along with evidence of any existing adjustments or additional support currently being provided by the employer or training provider. These will be kept for auditing purposes.

Employers or training providers should complete the IETs reasonable adjustments or special considerations application form and return it back to the IET where the Account Manager will confirm a decision within 14 working days of acknowledging the request.

1. When the Provider creates the apprentice record within ACE360 they must activate the RA flag.
2. At the Gateway check, the IET Account Managers will ask for the completed RA /SC Request form from the Provider if an RA flag is indicated on the ACE360 record.
3. As part of the Gateway sign-off of occupational competence the employer will be asked to confirm that no RA or SC is required (unless a RA has already been indicated). If a RA / SC is identified, the Provider will be contacted to complete a RA / SC Request form.
4. When scheduling the viva, the Account Manager will ask the Provider for a final confirmation that no RA / SC is indicated.
5. If an apprentice identifies a RA /SC requirement during the viva, we ask for the assessor to note this but to carry on with the viva as normal. If the outcome of the viva is a fail, a RA /SC assessment will be carried out which, if shown to be justified, may affect the viva outcome, or ask for a fresh viva to be delivered.

As it is a legal duty, the IET may only reject applications for a reasonable adjustment or special considerations in circumstances where:

* Any adjustment may create a serious loss of validity or independence within the assessment process.
* Any adjustment may constitute a serious safety hazard that cannot be reasonably provided.

The IET will keep a record of any reasonable adjustment applications and the decisions we make regarding them, the reasons for making any changes and any appropriate evidence behind the decision. All reasonable adjustments or special considerations must also be recorded on the apprentice’s registration.

Any records pertaining to the implementation of and/or rejection of reasonable adjustments or special considerations records should be retained and will be made available to External Quality Assurance regulators such as Ofqual when requested**.**

# Funding for Reasonable Adjustments

During the apprenticeship, the Employer and Training Provider must make reasonable adjustments to ensure any apprentice with a disability or physical or mental health condition is not at a disadvantage compared to their peers. To do this they may be eligible for additional support through [DWP Access to Work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) funding, which provides support with everyday employment difficulties that are not directly associated with the apprenticeship programme, or the ESFA Additional Learning Support (ALS), which is available to fund apprentices who require extra support to meet the learning goals of their apprenticeship.

In some circumstances, there may be some substantial additional costs associated with providing reasonable adjustments during the End-Point Assessment process. These should be agreed between the Employer, Training Provider, Apprentice and the IET in advance to ensure that they are appropriate and proportionate. These may be funded through ALS if they meet the criteria of additional support that enables the apprentice to demonstrate how the apprentice meets the occupational competency requirements.

The funding should be claimed by the Training Provider through the ILR using the standard ALS process and must be evidenced in the same way and to the same standard. These records must be kept for audit purposes. Funding found to be claimed for unnecessary or inadequately evidenced support may potentially need to be repaid to the ESFA.

# Appeals

If an apprentice, for any reason, considers that they have been wrongly refused access to fair assessment and wishes to appeal, they should follow the Appeals Policy [POL-APP-0003](http://sg1p-sp01/accaw/EPA1/EndPoint%20Assessment%20Documentation/EPA%20Appeals%20Policy.docx)). If an employer for any reason, considers that their apprentice(s) have been wrongly refused access to fair assessment and wish to appeal, they should follow the Appeals Policy.

# Training

EPA Staff and Assessors will undertake training on a regular basis which includes Equality and Diversity.

# Supporting Documentation

# This policy should be used in conjunction with the following supporting documentation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reference  | Name of Document |
| [GUI-RAF-0001](http://sg1p-sp01/accaw/EPA1/EndPoint%20Assessment%20Documentation/Reasonable%20Adjustment%20Matrix.pdf) | Reasonable Adjustment Matrix |
| [POL-APP-0003](http://sg1p-sp01/accaw/EPA1/EndPoint%20Assessment%20Documentation/EPA%20Appeals%20Policy.docx) | Appeals Policy |
| [PRO-APP-0003](http://sg1p-sp01/accaw/EPA1/EndPoint%20Assessment%20Documentation/Appeals%20Process.vsdx) | Appeals Process |

# **Regulatory Requirements**

Under the regulatory requirements of Ofqual we are required to establish and comply with the conditions and criteria as set out in the [Ofqual Regulations General Conditions of Recognition](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook/section-h-from-marking-to-issuing-results). This policy specifically applies to Condition G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Condition G7 Arrangements for Special Consideration.

# **Related Legislation**

[Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents/enacted)- this act legally protects people from discrimination.

# **Appendix A**

[IFATE Reasonable Adjustment Matrix.](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/5489/reasonable-adjustment-matrix.pdf)

The examples in the matrix below are recommendations only. The included examples are not a definitive list of what can, or cannot, be requested or approved.

EPAOs must consider all requests for reasonable adjustments on an individual, case-by-case basis.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Reference No  |  |
| 1 | No known disability |
| 2 | Cognitive processing need such as dyslexia, dyspraxia; a need in executive function, visual processing speed, visual perception,literacy, numeracy, verbal reasoning, verbal memory, nonverbal memory |
| 3 | Social/ communication need such autistic spectrum condition |
| 4 | Long standing illness such as cancer, epilepsy, Crohn’s, IBS, Chronic Fatigue |
| 5 | A mental health condition |
| 6 | A physical need such as crutches or wheelchair user, arthritis, paraplegia, quadriplegia, cerebral palsy |
| 7 | Hearing need |
| 8 | Visual need |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Observation | Practical Skills Test | Test | Project | Presentation | Professional Discussion |
| Extra time allowance | 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,3,4,5 | 2,3,4,5,7 | 2,3,5,6,7 |
| Scribe |  |  | 2,6,8 |  |  |  |
| Reader |  |  | 2,8 |  |  |  |
| Personal Support worker in attendance  | 2,5,6,8 | 2,5,6,8 | 2,5,8 | 2,5,8 | 2,5,6,8 | 2,5,8 |
| Timed rest breaks | 2,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,4,5,6,7,8 | 2,4,5,6,7,8 |
| Bathroom breaks  | 4,6 | 4,6 | 4,6 | 4,6 | 4,6 | 4,6 |
| Voice explanation  | 2,8 | 2,8 |  |  |  |  |
| BSL interpreted and extra time | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Assistive technology – voice recognition  |  |  | 2,4,6 |  |  |  |
| Assistive technology text to speech |  |  | 8 |  |  |  |
| Flexibility with location  |  |  | 2,4 |  |  |  |
| Flexibility of method of assessment  |  |  |  | 3,4,5,6 | 3,4,5,6 | 3,4,5,6 |
| Pre-recorded evidence delivered by video link | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Permission to write notes |  | 6 | 3,4,5,6 | 3,4,5,6 | 3,4,5,6 | 3,4,5,6 |
| Permission to bring notes |  |  |  | 2,3,4,5 | 2,3,4,5 |  |
| Info presented in required format - size, font style, colour |  |  | 2.8 |  |  |  |
| Individual testing |  |  | 3,4,5 |  |  |  |
| Paper based option |  |  | 2,4 |  |  |  |
| Supervised assessment taken at home |  |  | 3,4,5,6 |  |  |  |
| Written questions to back up verbal |  |  |  |  | 2,4,5,6 | 2,4,5,6 |
| Rewording of questions - clarification if needed |  |  |  |  | 2,3,7 | 2,3,7 |
| Time allowance for processing verbal questions |  |  |  |  | 2,4,5,7 | 2,4,5,7 |
| Information presented in small chunks |  |  |  |  | 2,4,7 | 2,4,7 |

# **Professional discussion: Viva**

Timed rest breaks

Breaks or rest periods may be required for apprentices with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, sensory impairments (visual and hearing), physical difficulties or medical conditions either temporary or permanent, communication and interaction needs or mental health conditions.

Subject to supporting evidence, an apprentice may be allowed rest breaks. These rest breaks must be taken in the room in which the viva is being undertaken unless a toilet break is needed. The IET will allow 2 breaks throughout the discussion of 10 minutes each with no set intervals or timings (and this should be as required by apprentice). This will be advised and agreed with the apprentice at the start of the Viva.

Extra time allowance

Subject to supporting evidence, the apprentice may be allowed extra time for example if they have disabilities which affect the speed of cognitive processing. The amount of additional time usually applied will be 25% and this will be agreed and advised prior to the Viva discussion.

**Control Sheet**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sponsor:** | Head of Accreditation and Awards |
| **Document reviewer:** | Quality Assurance Manager |
| **Document adopted on:** | 1 October 2020 |
| **Next review date:** | 1 January 2025 |

Review/change history

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date of Review/Change | Summary of changes | Version no. |
| October 2020 | New Policy  | 1.0 |
| May 2021 | Removed old application form and updated with a new one which contains more relevant information for a Reasonable Adjustment to be considered.  | 2.0 |
| October 2021 | Annual Review completed and no changes made to document.  | 3.0 |
| March 2022 | Amended to include statement on the following:If during the assessment the apprentice identifies a reasonable adjustment need that hasn’t been previously brought to the IET’s attention the assessor should stop the assessment and explain to the apprentice that this will have to be investigated and a new date will be scheduled at a cost to the provider.  | 4.0 |
| May 2022 | Document was loaded onto the new SharePoint System. The version started at Version 4.0 and subsequent changes have been made to the metadata which has moved this document to version 5.0 | 5.0 |
| May 2022 | Amended timescale of responding to the RA from 21 days to 14 days.  | 6.0 |
| October 2022 | Amendment made to section where the assessor stops the Viva if an apprentice discloses a health condition curing viva. Added in the new process on page 5.  | 7.0 |
| December 2022 | To include updated Reasonable Adjustment Form with declaration for Employer / Provider and sign off section for the IET EPA team | 8.0 |
| December 2022 | Updated IET Stevenage Address details to match the Ofqual Register and the review date to 01/01/2024 | 9.0 |
| November 2023  | Updated to include additional information on the arrangements for applying special considerations. | 10.0 |
| January 2024  | Updated to include the IFATE Reasonable Adjustment MatrixIncluded some guidance on time allowed for rest breaks and additional time | 11.00 |
| June 2024 | Updated to include a statement of the Account Manager confirming the decision for the reasonable adjustments or special considerations within 14 working days. | 12.00 |