



Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy

2018

Preamble

TSMR recognises disabilities are of a diverse nature and does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of disability. It aims to facilitate open access for learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration in assessments, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured.

This will be achieved through

1) Reasonable Adjustment

This is agreed at the pre-assessment planning stage and is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the learner an assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments

2) Special Consideration

This is a post-assessment allowance to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. Any special consideration granted cannot remove the difficulty the learner faced at the time of assessment and can only be a relatively small adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised. Special consideration cannot apply to “licence to practice” units within a qualification, or to “licence to practice” qualifications

Guidance on Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

1. Reasonable adjustment

1.1 Explanation of reasonable adjustment

A reasonable adjustment 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 affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements
- Adapting assessment materials

- Providing assistance during assessment
- Re-organising the assessment physical environment
- Changing or adapting the assessment method
- Using assistive technology.

Reasonable adjustments must be approved (internally or externally) and set in place prior to assessment commencing. It is an arrangement to give a learner access to a qualification.

The work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other learners.

Below are examples of reasonable adjustment. It is important to note that not all adjustments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. The learner may not need, nor be allowed the same adjustment for all assessments.

Reasonable adjustments permitted by TSMR may fall into the following categories:


- Changes to assessment conditions
- The use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Modification to the presentation of assessment material
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Use of access facilitators.

Please note that a reasonable adjustment must never affect the validity or reliability of assessment, influence the outcome of assessment or give the learner(s) in question an unfair assessment advantage.

Examples of reasonable adjustments as defined by the above categories are listed below.

- Allowing extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- Using a different assessment location
- Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, CCTV
- Use of assistive software
- Assessment material in large format or Braille
- Readers/scribes
- Practical assistants/transcribers/promoters
- Assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- Language-modified assessment material
- Use of ICT/responses using electronic devices

1.2 Centre recruitment



It is vital that all departments recruit with integrity onto TSMR courses and programmes. Departments must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualifications and that the qualifications will meet their needs. The recruitment process should include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgments about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve their qualification. Such assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the assessment.

Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all parts of assessment for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner may still decide to proceed with studying a particular qualification and not be entered for all or part of the assessment.

All departments are advised to ensure that learners are aware of:


- The range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all required assessment; and
- Any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes.

1.3 Applying reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustments are approved before an assessment and are intended to allow attainment to be demonstrated. A learner does not have to be disabled (as defined by the DDA) to qualify for reasonable adjustment; nor will every learner who is disabled be entitled to reasonable adjustment. Allowing reasonable adjustment is dependent upon how it will facilitate access for the learner. A reasonable adjustment is intended to allow access to assessment but can only be granted where the adjustment does not:

- Affect the validity or reliability of the assessment
- Give the learner(s) in question an unfair advantage over other learners taking the same or similar assessment
- Influence the final outcome of the assessment decision.

TSMR expects all centres to apply reasonable adjustment in a transparent and unbiased manner. This must be recorded on or in an appropriate manner and must be held on the student's file and should be available at all times for scrutiny if so requested.



All reasonable adjustments implemented by departments are subject to meeting the requirements of the appropriate accrediting body.

It is the responsibility of section or unit heads to ensure that any access arrangement implemented by the department on behalf of the learner, is based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment.

1.4 Assessing achievement

Departments must ensure that for all internal assessment, achievement is given only for the skills demonstrated by the learner and that reasonable adjustments do not compromise the outcomes of assessment (as identified in 1.3 above).

1.5 Special Educational Needs

Departments should note that a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) does not automatically qualify the learner for reasonable adjustment to assessment, as:

- The SEN statement may not contain a recent assessment of the needs; and
- The reasonable adjustment may compromise assessment (as identified in 1.3 above).

1.6 Inappropriate use of reasonable adjustment

If a department misuses the reasonable adjustment policy, TSMR will take appropriate action such as implementation of steps to manage assessment malpractice; this could ultimately lead to the recall of certificates, removal of qualification approval.

2. Special Considerations

2.1 What is special consideration?

A special consideration is consideration given following a period of assessment for a learner who:

- Was prepared for and present at an assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances that have arisen at or near to the time of assessment
- Misses part of the assessment due to circumstances outside their control

It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration in instances where:

- Assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence
- Criteria have to be met fully
- Units/qualifications confer licence to practice.

Where assessment is in the form of on demand assessment, such as electronic tests set and marked by computer, then it is probably more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

A special consideration cannot give the learner an unfair advantage, nor must its use cause the user of a certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievement. The learner's results must reflect real achievement in assessment and not potential ability. To this end, special considerations can only be a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark or outcome.

TSMR's decision will be based on various factors, which may vary from learner to learner, and from one subject to another. These factors may include the severity of the circumstances, the date of the assessment, the nature of the assessment (e.g. practical, oral presentation, etc).

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner, 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 learner.

A learner will **not** be eligible for special consideration if:

- No evidence is supplied by the department that the learner 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 following are examples of circumstances, which might be eligible for special consideration (this list is not exhaustive):

- Terminal illness of the learner

- Terminal illness of a parent
- Recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family
- Serious and disruptive domestic crises leading to acute anxiety about the family
- Incapacitating illness of the learner
- Severe car accident
- Recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative
- Flare-up of severe congenital conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack
- Recent domestic crisis
- Recent physical assault trauma
- Broken limb on the mend.

Unlike reasonable adjustment, there are no circumstances whereby an individual member of staff can apply its own special consideration. Applications must be made to a relevant department.

2.2 Applying for special consideration

TSMR expects all units to put arrangements in place to enable a learner, in extenuating circumstances, to complete assessment and thus achieve the qualification. Only when this is unsuccessful should an application for special consideration be made. All applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis and thus separate applications must be made for each learner. The only exception to this is where a group of learners has been affected by a similar circumstance such as a fire alarm during an assessment; in this case a group application is permissible. In this situation, however, a list of learners affected should be attached to the application.

Applications for special consideration should be submitted to TSMR Quality Standards Team.

To ensure effective processing of the application the centre should submit:

The Head of Department must authorise all applications for special consideration. Applications must be submitted to the TSMR Quality Standards Team within seven days of the assessment having taken place. Following receipt, TSMR will confirm receipt within two working days and will usually give a decision within a further ten working days. Where a case is complex, TSMR will inform the centre if a decision cannot be made within the time scale specified.

During the processing of an application, TSMR will only liaise with the student making the claim and not with the learner's designated third party.

It is important to note that special consideration applications will not be considered where learner achievement has been claimed and certificated.

2.3 Posthumous certification

Applications for posthumous certification should be submitted on the appropriate form together with the learner's Student Report Form (SRF). The Head of department must authorise this form. TSMR reserves the right to see a copy of the death certificate prior to recommending/granting posthumous certification.

2.4 Lost or damaged work

When a learner's work has been lost or damaged, TSMR may consider accepting a grade for which there is no available evidence. In all cases, the department concerned must be able to verify that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress.

Applications to accept grades, for which there is no available evidence, should be submitted on an appropriate form. With this completed form, the department must also provide evidence of learner achievement (assessment/records) and include a signed Student Report Form (SRF).


3. Complying with policy

Department's should note that failure to comply with the requirements contained within this policy document could lead to assessment malpractice, which will impact on the learner's result.

Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- Where applicable, putting in place arrangements without TSMR's approval
- Exceeding the allowance agreed by TSMR
- Agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by evidence
- Failing to maintain records
- Failing to report delegated adjustments when requested to do so

- Implementing delegated adjustments that affect the validity and reliability of assessment, compromises the outcomes of assessment or gives the learner



in questions an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessment.

4. Right to appeal

Where a department fails to agree with on a decision made in respect of this policy, then the department has the right of appeal.

Appeals must be submitted to the provost within ten working days.

Upon receipt of an appeal, TSMR will acknowledge receipt within two working days and adjudicate within a further ten working days.

Detail of the appeals process is contained in the student's handbook