

Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in internal assessments

Document summary

This guide is for centres that are seeking to apply a reasonable adjustment to a Pearson vocational internally assessed unit or qualification to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty which would place a learner at a disadvantage in an assessment. Where these reasonable adjustments have not been successful, we have provided information about how to request for a special consideration to be applied to an assessment result.

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Pearson Education Ltd – our mission and values

Our purpose is simple: to help people realize the life they imagine through learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c. 18,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's lifelong learning company, serving customers in nearly 200 countries with digital content, assessments, qualifications, and data. For us, learning isn't just what we do. It's who we are. Visit us at [pearsonplc.com](https://www.pearsonplc.com).

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales (Wales). Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate how we meet regulatory requirements. These policies are designed to support centres and students and set out clearly our approach to the design, delivery, and award of Pearson qualifications and services.

1. Purpose of this guide

- 1.1 Our aim is to help you support learners who may face a disadvantage during internal assessment. This guide explains:
- How reasonable adjustments can reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty.
 - What to do when an adjustment isn't enough and you need to request special consideration.
 - How these processes protect fairness, validity and the integrity of our qualifications.
- 1.2 This guide aligns with the [UK Equality Act](#) and any other equalities legislation. It applies to internal assessment in all Pearson vocational qualifications and Self-Regulated qualifications (for example, coursework, or portfolio marked by a centre).
- 1.3 For information on access arrangements and special considerations for General qualifications and vocational qualifications with external assessment (for example, exams or tests marked by Pearson) please read [JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for General and Vocational qualifications](#).
- 1.4 For BTEC Higher National qualifications the Assessment Board at your centre may provide special consideration for any BTEC Higher National learners subject to mitigating circumstances, as outlined in your centre's assessment regulations.

2. Reasonable adjustments in internally assessed units

When should I apply a reasonable adjustment?

- 2.1 A reasonable adjustment should be agreed **before** the learner **starts** the **assessment**. Your role is to identify whether a disability or difficulty would place a learner at a *substantial disadvantage* and take appropriate action to reduce that impact.

- 2.2 Adjustments must not:
- Affect the reliability¹ or validity² of the assessment
 - give a learner an unfair advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.
 - Change the skills, knowledge or behaviours the assessment is designed to measure.
- 2.3 Each learner's situation is different, so decisions should be based on clear evidence – for example:
- an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP);
 - a fully completed [Form 8](#) with detailed assessment information; or
 - a documented picture of the learner's needs.
- 2.4 You can apply and manage any reasonable adjustments for your learners, in line with the '[Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for General and Vocational qualifications - JCQ Regulations and Guidance](#)'.
- 2.5 A reasonable adjustment should be in place from the start of a course, supporting the learner throughout.

What kinds of reasonable adjustments can I apply?

- 2.6 Adjustments 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.
 - Alternative ways of presenting responses.
 - Using assistive technology.

¹ "Reliability is about consistency and so concerns the extent to which the various stages in the assessment process generate outcomes which would be replicated were the assessment repeated." ([Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition](#))

² "The extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretation that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses." ([Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition](#))

- 2.7 Whatever approach you take, the learners work must still be assessed in the **same way** as all other learners' work and must be available for external quality assurance.

How do I record the adjustment?

- 2.8 Use the [RAI form](#), and keep it as part of the learners records for three years. You may be asked to share this record with Pearson or a qualifications regulator.

Need help deciding?

- 2.9 If you're unsure whether an adjustment may affect validity or reliability, or whether a learner can still meet the assessment criteria, you can contact us at the [Pearson Support Portal](#). We're here to help you make the right decision confidently.

3. Special consideration for internally assessed units

What is a special consideration?

- 3.1 Special consideration is an allowance intended to reflect **temporary illness, injury or other circumstances** that affected a learner **at the time of assessment**.
- 3.2 Special consideration:
- Cannot fully compensate for the difficulty the learner experienced
 - Must not give an unfair advantage
 - Must not misrepresent a learner's real achievement.
 - Applies only where the learner has demonstrated sufficient competence to meet assessment standards.
- 3.3 It is designed to go *some way* towards supporting learners who experienced unexpected challenges, without compromising the qualification standard. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the learner. There will be situations where learners shouldn't be entered for an assessment if you think that it is unlikely that they can meet the standard required.

When can I apply for a special consideration?

- 3.4 You may apply when:
- A learner's performance was affected by circumstances beyond their control (e.g. illness, accident, bereavement).
 - Part of an assessment was missed for reasons outside the learner's control.
 - Learner work has been lost.
 - A pre agreed alternative arrangement turned out to be inappropriate.
 - A learner requires posthumous certification.
- 3.5 Because internally assessed units do not have a single assessment date, centres should normally give learners another opportunity to complete the assessment. If a learner cannot complete enough evidence, it might be more appropriate to certificate them for a smaller qualification at the same level.

How do I apply?

- 3.6 Submit an [SC1 Form](#) for each learner.
- 3.7 Group applications are only accepted in exceptional cases where all learners are affected equally (e.g., building closure, notifiable disease, destruction of work).
- 3.8 Our team will consider:
- the severity of the circumstances;
 - the date of the assessment; and
 - The nature of the assessment (for example practical, oral presentation).

When can't special consideration be applied?

- 3.9 We cannot approve a special consideration if:
- There is not enough evidence the learner was affected.
 - The assessment was missed due to personal arrangements (e.g. holidays).
 - Preparation was affected by long term course issues (e.g. building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes).
 - Practical competence must be demonstrated and criteria were not met.
 - The qualification confers licence to practise.
- 3.10 If an application is rejected, centres may appeal by writing to edexcelappeals@pearson.com.

Can centres apply their own special consideration?

3.11 No. You must wait for the outcome of your submitted application before making certification claims.

4. Posthumous certification

4.1 Submitted on a [SCI Form](#), including:

- Achieved units and grades
- Expected units and grades.
- Authorisation from the Head of Centre/Principal/CEO.

4.2 We may request a copy of the death certificate before approval.

5. Regulatory references

5.1 UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies and guides that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.

5.2 This guide addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Qualification regulator or relevant governing body	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition or criteria
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	G6; G7; E4.2(d)
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition	G6; G7; E4.2(d)
Qualifications Wales	Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of recognition	G6; G7; E4.2(d)

6. Review date

6.1 This guide will be reviewed in February 2027.

7. Useful contacts

7.1 For more advice on reasonable adjustment or special consideration or to make an enquiry, please contact: [Pearson Support Portal](#).

8. Version control

Version	Changes	Date
2.5	Plain English updates throughout	27 th February 2026