

# Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in internal assessments

2024

## Who and what is this guide for:

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.

# Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values

At Pearson, our purpose is simple: to add life to a lifetime of learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c.20,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's leading 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 [www.pearsonplc.com](http://www.pearsonplc.com)

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), SQA Accreditation (Scotland), 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.

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# 1. What this guide applies to

- 1.1 We will support access to our vocational qualifications for learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration in assessments, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding, behaviours, or competence being measured. This guide supports the requirements of the UK Equality Act and any other equalities legislation relevant in the UK to achieve this.
- 1.2 This guide 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 of your centre may provide special consideration for any BTEC Higher National learners subject to mitigating circumstances, as outlined in your centres' assessment regulations.

## 2. Reasonable adjustment in internally assessed units

### When can I apply a reasonable adjustment?

- 2.1 Reasonable adjustment should be put in place **before** the learner **starts** the **assessment**. You should identify whether any action is needed to help reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which will place a learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment. Reasonable adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability<sup>1</sup> or validity<sup>2</sup> of assessment outcomes or give a learner an advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> "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)

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

- 2.2** 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'. This guide provides further specific guidance about internal assessment in vocational qualifications. As each learner's circumstances are different, each case needs to be reviewed separately so that the best type of support can be put in place for the learner. Evidence required for a Reasonable Adjustment could include an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a fully completed Form 8 supplemented by a detailed picture of need, detailed assessments to show the learners needs. A reasonable adjustment should be agreed at the start of a course and is an action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty when completing all aspects of a qualification.

## What types of reasonable adjustment can I apply?

- 2.3** The key to reasonable adjustment is that it must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment, influence the outcome of assessment, or give the learner(s) an unfair assessment advantage, 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.
- Alternative ways of presenting responses.
- Using assistive technology.

## Do I need to assess it differently?

- 2.4** The work produced following the application of a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other learners and be available for external quality assurance, where required.
- 2.5** You'll need to record the reasonable adjustment using the RA1 form, and store it with the learner records for three years. The record needs to be available for us or a qualifications regulator, if requested.

## I'm still not sure about applying a reasonable adjustment, who should I contact?

- 2.6** If you're unsure about a learner's ability to achieve the assessment criteria or feel that the proposed reasonable adjustment may affect the validity or reliability of assessment, you can contact us through our Pearson Support Portal.

### 3. Special consideration for internally assessed units

#### What is a special consideration?

- 3.1** This is an allowance to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. Any special consideration granted is not intended to fully compensate for the difficulty the learner faced at the time of assessment and can only be a small adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised.
- 3.2** Special consideration cannot give the learner an unfair advantage or mislead anyone about the learner's achievement. The learner's results must reflect real achievement in assessment and not potential ability.
- 3.3** Special consideration can only seek to go some way to assist a learner affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence their performance. 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. Only minor adjustments can be made to the achievement because to do more than this would risk the standard of the qualification.

#### When can I apply for a special consideration?

- 3.4** You may apply for a special consideration where:
- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner, for example, recent personal illness, accident, bereavement.
  - Part of an assessment was missed due to circumstances beyond the learner's control.
  - Learner's work has been lost.
  - Posthumous certification is being requested (see section 4 of this guide).
  - Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.

#### How can I apply for a special consideration?

- 3.5** When applying for a special consideration we will ask you to complete an SC1 Form.
- 3.6** Applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis and separate applications must be made for each learner.

- 3.7** We will only accept group applications in extraordinary circumstances where all learners are affected equally. For example, if a fire has destroyed a cohort's work or there has been a notifiable disease such as Foot and Mouth and a college has been required by law to close.
- 3.8** Given the nature of internally assessed units within vocational qualifications, where there is no single fixed assessment date, we would expect learners to be given the opportunity to complete the assessment later. Where circumstances have led to a learner not being able to complete a significant amount of evidence it may be more appropriate for the learner to be certificated on a smaller sized qualification within the same level.
- 3.9** Our experts will take various factors into account when reviewing your application for special consideration and this will vary from learner to learner, and from one subject to another. These may include:
- the severity of the circumstances;
  - the date of the assessment; and
  - The nature of the assessment (for example practical, oral presentation).

## Conditions where you cannot apply a special consideration

- 3.10** We can't approve a special consideration if:
- There is insufficient evidence 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 such as holidays or unauthorised absence.
  - Preparation for a unit is affected by difficulties during the course, for example, disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.
  - Assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence.
  - Criteria has not been fully met.
  - Units/qualifications confer licence to practise.
- 3.11** Centres have the right to appeal if a special consideration application is rejected. The centre should put this in writing to [edexcelappeals@pearson.com](mailto:edexcelappeals@pearson.com).

## Can I apply my own special consideration?

- 3.12** You cannot apply your own special consideration and certification claims should not be made until the outcome of your application has been received.

## 4. Posthumous certification

- 4.1** Applications for posthumous certification should be submitted on a [SC1 Form](#) together with details of the units and grades the learner had already achieved along with the units and grades they were expected to achieve. We will work with the Head of Centre/Principal/CEO who must authorise the SC1 form, and we may ask to see a copy of the death certificate before approving a posthumous certification.

## 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 principles:

Qualification regulator or relevant governing body	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition, criteria, or principle
Ofqual	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	G6
Ofqual	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	G7
Ofqual	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	E4.2 (d)
Qualifications Wales	<a href="#">Standard Conditions of Recognition</a>	G6
Qualifications Wales	<a href="#">Standard Conditions of Recognition</a>	G7
Qualifications Wales	<a href="#">Standard Conditions of Recognition</a>	E4.2 (d)
CCEA Regulation	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	G6
CCEA Regulation	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	G7
CCEA Regulation	<a href="#">General Conditions of Recognition</a>	E4.2 (d)
SQA Accreditation	<a href="#">Regulatory Principles (2021)</a>	14

## 6. Useful contacts

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



## 7. Review date

7.1. This guide will be reviewed in February 2025.