



# End-Point Assessment Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy



## Revisions and Amendment Register

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## 1. Introduction

SFJ Awards is committed to ensuring that reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations for End Point Assessment (EPA) are applied fairly where they are justified. This policy outlines arrangements for applying and granting reasonable adjustments and special considerations along with the application process and timelines.

## 2. Reasonable Adjustments

Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 <sup>1</sup>creates a legal duty to make Reasonable Adjustments. The duty applies where a person with a disability would suffer substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Therefore, a Reasonable Adjustment in the context of End Point Assessment is a step taken to remove, or prevent a substantial disadvantage that apprentices, who have a disability within the Equality Act definition, encounter during End Point Assessment.

The objective of a reasonable adjustment is to eliminate disadvantage and to enable an apprentice to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding on equal terms: it must not confer any advantage on the recipient.

The nature of any Reasonable Adjustment depends on the apprentice's specific identified needs and assessment methods. An adjustment may not be appropriate if the apprentice's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the aspects not being assessed.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of the assessment and examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Allowing an apprentice extra time to complete a test or in a professional discussion.
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials on different coloured paper or with a larger font size.
- Providing support personnel during assessment such as a reader, scribe or sign language interpreter.
- Changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment
- Changes to the location and timing of the assessment
- 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [Equality Act 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the assessment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety will also be taken into consideration.

### **Applying for a Reasonable Adjustment**

The following principles should be followed when making decisions about an Apprentice's need for adjustments to assessment:

- The adjustment should not invalidate the assessment requirements of the apprenticeship standard. Competence standards should not be altered.
- The adjustment should not give the apprentice an unfair advantage.
- The adjustment must be based on the individual needs of the apprentice and their normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way.
- Apprentice performance must be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that the apprentice has an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and behaviours against the standard.
- An adjustment to an assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.

The application process should begin as soon as the employer/training provider becomes aware that the apprentice is likely to need to access reasonable adjustments for their End-Point Assessment.

The Reasonable Adjustment Request Form, located on ACE 360, should be completed by the employer, training provider and apprentice. Evidence of the difficulty/disability will be required to support the application, together with any evidence of existing adjustments or additional support that has been provided during the on-programme phase of the apprenticeship and/or in the workplace. The completed application and evidence should be uploaded to SFJ Awards EPA Portal. Receipt of the documents will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

The application and evidence will be reviewed by the End-Point Assessment Quality Team and SFJ Awards will confirm a decision regarding reasonable adjustments within 21 days of acknowledging the request.

The decision will include confirmation of the specified conditions of the reasonable adjustment.

SFJ Awards may only reject applications for a reasonable adjustment in circumstances where:

- Any adjustment may create a serious loss of validity or independence within the assessment process.
- Any adjustment may constitute a serious health and safety hazard.

If an apprentice or their employer for any reason, considers that they have been wrongly refused access to fair assessment and wishes to appeal, they should follow the SFJ Awards Enquires and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

## Putting Reasonable Adjustments in Place

SFJ Awards uses the matrix developed by the Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to support decisions in applying appropriate and consistent judgement. This matrix is based around the Higher Education Statistical Authority's (HESA) disability grouping framework. As each assessment is subject to variance due to job role, the support need for an apprentice will be unique and may not be listed in the framework. SFJ Awards use the recommendations made in the guidance in conjunction with the individual application and takes into account any adjustments or additional support that has been put in place during the apprenticeship, to make an informed decision on a case-by-case basis. The matrix can be found here: [instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/3403/reasonable-adjustment-matrix.pdf](https://instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/3403/reasonable-adjustment-matrix.pdf)

We advise employers and training providers to seek guidance from us in any case where they consider that they do not have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is required.

## 3. Special Considerations

**Special Considerations** are made after the assessment where the apprentice has encountered exceptional circumstances that have disadvantaged them during their assessment, for example, due to the apprentice suffering an illness, traumatic accident or major and unpredictable life event at, or shortly before, the time of assessment.

An apprentice who is prepared and attends a scheduled End-Point Assessment may be eligible for special consideration if: *(this list is not exhaustive and is intended for guidance only)*:

- Their performance in the assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the apprentice's control, for example, illness, accident, recent bereavement or disturbance during the assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements which had been previously agreed where inappropriate or not fit for purpose.

Special consideration should not give an apprentice an unfair advantage, and the result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability.

If a special consideration is applied, it may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the grade/mark of the apprentice.

The Special Consideration Request Form (Available from ACE360) should be completed by the employer, training provider and apprentice and submitted within 2 working days of the End-Point Assessment taking place. If a group of apprentices have been disadvantaged by a particular event (for example a fire alarm taking place) a single form should be submitted with a list of the affected apprentices attached to the form.

The application and evidence will be reviewed by the End-Point Assessment quality team and SFJ Awards will confirm a decision within 7 working days of acknowledging the request.

## 4. Funding

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 and is supported to achieve their apprenticeship.

Funding can be accessed Additional Learning Support (ALS) and for the apprentice through the Access to Work fund. Further details of both can be found here: [instituteofapprenticeships.org/quality/end-point-assessment-reasonable-adjustments-guidance/](https://instituteofapprenticeships.org/quality/end-point-assessment-reasonable-adjustments-guidance/)

SFJ Awards will put in place and fund reasonable adjustments in most cases as these are classified as an eligible cost which is reflected in the price negotiated. However, there may be circumstances where there may be substantial additional costs to provide reasonable adjustments during the EPA process. These should be agreed by the employer, training provider, apprentice and SFJ Awards in advance to ensure they are appropriate. Funding may be available through ALS.

## 5. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of SFJ Awards' self-evaluation arrangements and revised as necessary in response to lessons learnt, customer feedback, changes in legislation and guidance from the Qualifications Regulators.

If you have any queries about the content of the policy or you wish to give feedback, then please contact SFJ Awards on 0114 284 1970 or email [epa@sfjawards.com](mailto:epa@sfjawards.com).

## 6. Location of the Policy

A copy of this policy can be downloaded from Odyssey, ACE360 or from the SFJ Awards website: [www.sfjawards.com/policies](http://www.sfjawards.com/policies).

## 7. Copyright

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