

HiQual UK

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

HQUK-POL-RASC-001

Document Control Item	Details
Organisation	HiQual UK
Policy Title	Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy
Policy Reference	HQUK-POL-RASC-001
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Policy Status	Approved
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Next Review Date	1 June 2027
Policy Owner	Sarah Williams, Head of Quality Assurance
Approved By	HiQual UK Academic and Standards Committee
Review Cycle	Annual, or earlier where legal, regulatory, qualification or assessment changes require review
Classification	Public Policy
Applies To	Learners, Approved Centres, assessors, tutors, invigilators, IQAs, quality assurance personnel, governance committees and relevant contractors

Fair access to assessment without compromising the validity, reliability or integrity of qualifications

1. Purpose

HiQual UK is committed to providing fair access to assessment and ensuring that learners are not unfairly disadvantaged because of a disability or because of temporary circumstances outside their control. This policy establishes arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration while protecting assessment standards and the credibility of HiQual UK qualifications.

2. Scope

This policy applies to HiQual UK qualifications and to all stakeholders involved in their assessment, including Approved Centres, learners, assessors, internal quality assurers, invigilators, tutors and HiQual UK quality assurance personnel.

3. Regulatory Framework

For qualifications regulated by Ofqual, this policy addresses the principles in General Conditions G6 (Reasonable Adjustments) and G7 (Special Consideration). Ofqual requires awarding organisations to have clear arrangements explaining eligibility and what adjustments or consideration may be provided.

HiQual UK will also comply with applicable equality law and any qualification-specific regulatory requirements.

4. Policy Statement

HiQual UK will provide reasonable adjustments where appropriate to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the qualification. Adjustments must not compromise the competence or standard being measured or provide an unfair advantage.

5. Definitions

Reasonable Adjustment means an adjustment to an assessment that enables a disabled learner to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and understanding without changing the required standard.

Special Consideration means consideration for a learner who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or another event outside their control that materially affects their ability to take or perform in an assessment.

These concepts are distinct and must not be applied interchangeably.

6. Fundamental Principles

All decisions will be individual, evidence-informed, proportionate, fair, consistent, confidential and documented. The adjustment or consideration must be appropriate to the assessment, qualification objective and learner's circumstances. The result must continue to provide a reliable indication of the learner's attainment. Ofqual's current guidance emphasises that reasonable adjustments must preserve the same knowledge, skills and understanding being assessed, while special consideration addresses temporary circumstances affecting assessment access or performance.

7. Reasonable Adjustments – Eligibility

A learner may qualify where a disability creates a substantial disadvantage in demonstrating the required attainment in an assessment. Decisions will consider how the disability affects the learner in the particular

assessment, whether the proposed adjustment addresses the disadvantage and whether the adjustment preserves the assessment standard. Individual circumstances must be considered case by case.

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8. Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Depending on the qualification and assessment, adjustments may include additional time, supervised rest breaks, changes to the assessment environment, adapted assessment materials, alternative presentation of information, assistive technology, a reader, a scribe, alternative methods of recording responses, modified communication arrangements or other appropriate measures. The availability of any adjustment is subject to the qualification's assessment requirements and any regulatory restrictions.

9. Adjustment Must Preserve the Assessment Standard

A reasonable adjustment must not change the competence, knowledge, skill, understanding or learning outcome that the assessment is designed to measure. An adjustment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or undermine validity, reliability or comparability.

10. Case-by-Case Decision Making

The same disability does not automatically result in the same adjustment for every learner. The same learner may require different adjustments for different assessment methods. Decisions will consider the learner's needs, the assessment demands, the effectiveness of the proposed adjustment, proportionality and the requirements of the qualification.

11. Evidence

HiQual UK or an Approved Centre may request appropriate evidence to support a reasonable adjustment decision. Evidence should explain the functional effect on assessment rather than requiring unnecessary personal information. Evidence may include an appropriate professional report, support plan, previous assessment arrangements or other reliable information. HiQual UK will avoid disproportionate evidence requirements.

12. Timing of Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments should normally be agreed and implemented before the assessment begins. Centres must plan adjustments early enough to ensure they can be provided effectively and securely. Where an unforeseen need arises close to an assessment, the Centre must seek advice from HiQual UK where required rather than making an inappropriate adjustment.

13. Centre Approval and HiQual UK Approval

HiQual UK will publish which adjustments Centres may approve locally and which require prior HiQual UK approval. Centres must follow the current qualification-specific guidance and maintain evidence of decisions. Where a Centre is uncertain whether an adjustment could affect validity or reliability, it must refer the matter to HiQual UK before the assessment.

14. Reasonable Adjustments Not Permitted

An adjustment must not be made where it changes the competence being assessed, compromises assessment validity or reliability, gives an unfair advantage, conflicts with a qualification-specific requirement, or is prohibited by applicable regulation or law. Where an adjustment cannot be permitted, HiQual UK will consider whether another valid route is available.

15. Assessment Methods Requiring Particular Care

Additional scrutiny may be required for assessments involving practical competence, direct observation, performance, oral communication, professional competence, safety-critical skills or other outcomes that must be demonstrated in a particular way. An adjustment must not remove an essential competence.

16. Special Consideration – Eligibility

Special Consideration may be considered where a learner has been fully prepared for an assessment but experiences a temporary illness, injury, indisposition, bereavement or other event outside their control immediately before or during the assessment that materially affects access to or performance in the assessment. Ofqual describes Special Consideration in these terms and requires clear eligibility arrangements. [\[cite?turn1search0?turn1search5?\]](#)

17. Special Consideration – Possible Outcomes

Depending on the qualification and assessment, Special Consideration may include an alternative assessment opportunity, adjustment to assessment arrangements for a temporary condition, carrying an assessment opportunity forward, or a limited post-assessment adjustment where permitted. The approach must preserve the integrity and reliability of the qualification.

18. Rescheduled or Later Assessment

For flexible vocational or internally assessed qualifications, where circumstances prevent completion, the preferred solution will normally be to allow the learner to complete the assessment at a later appropriate opportunity, where feasible. This allows the learner to demonstrate the required learning outcomes rather than receiving credit based on potential ability.

19. Limits on Special Consideration

Special Consideration will not normally be granted merely because a learner was unprepared, joined a programme late, experienced planned disruption, lacked facilities due to centre planning issues, took an unauthorised absence, went on holiday or experienced ordinary course-delivery difficulties. Ofqual's 2026 guidance distinguishes qualifying temporary circumstances from course disruption or lack of preparation.

[\[cite?turn1search2?\]](#)

20. Practical Competence and Full-Criteria Requirements

Special Consideration may not be appropriate where the learner must demonstrate practical competence, all assessment criteria must be met in full, the qualification leads to a licence to practise, or the qualification

objective requires direct demonstration of a particular competence. In such cases, HiQual UK may require reassessment or another valid route.

21. Evidence for Special Consideration

Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence where reasonably available. Evidence may include medical evidence, incident information, Centre records or other reliable information demonstrating that the circumstances affected the learner at the relevant time. HiQual UK will consider each case individually.

22. Application Process

Applications should be made through the Approved Centre using the current HiQual UK application route. Each learner and affected assessment or unit should be considered separately where the circumstances and impact differ. The application should identify the assessment, circumstances, impact, evidence, action already taken and requested outcome.

23. Decision Making

HiQual UK will consider the severity and timing of the circumstances, the nature of the assessment, the amount and quality of evidence, the qualification objective, the learner's completed assessment evidence and whether the proposed outcome preserves validity, reliability, equity and qualification integrity.

24. No Automatic Mark Adjustment

Special Consideration does not automatically mean that marks will be increased. Where the learner can reasonably demonstrate the required outcomes through a later assessment, reassessment will normally be preferred. Any post-assessment adjustment must be small, proportionate and consistent with the qualification's rules.

25. Incomplete Assessment Evidence

Where a learner has completed insufficient evidence to demonstrate the qualification or unit requirements, HiQual UK will not award achievement merely on the basis of potential ability. The learner may instead be offered a later assessment opportunity or another permitted route.

26. Retrospective Requests

Retrospective applications may be considered where the circumstances could not reasonably have been reported at the time and there is sufficient evidence to assess their effect. The fact that an application is late does not automatically make it invalid, but lack of timely evidence may affect the decision.

27. Records and Confidentiality

All reasonable adjustment and special consideration decisions must be recorded securely, including the learner, assessment, circumstances or need, evidence considered, decision, date, authorising person and any conditions. Records must be available for HiQual UK quality assurance and regulatory scrutiny where required.

28. Data Protection

Personal information and supporting evidence must be handled in accordance with the HiQual UK Data Protection & UK GDPR Policy. Only information necessary to make and administer the decision should be collected or shared.

29. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

HiQual UK will operate this policy consistently with its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and applicable equality law. The objective is to remove unnecessary barriers while preserving the standard and purpose of the qualification.

30. Centre Responsibilities

Approved Centres must identify learner support needs, provide appropriate information, make permitted adjustments, obtain approval where required, maintain records, protect confidentiality, ensure competent personnel deliver adjustments, report concerns and cooperate with quality assurance.

31. Learner Responsibilities

Learners should inform the Centre of relevant needs as early as reasonably possible, provide appropriate supporting information where required, cooperate with assessment arrangements and comply with assessment conditions.

32. HiQual UK Responsibilities

HiQual UK will maintain clear published arrangements, provide qualification-specific guidance, determine cases requiring central approval, support Centres, monitor the use of adjustments and special consideration, investigate misuse and take corrective action where necessary. Ofqual's G6 and G7 conditions require clear arrangements to be maintained and published. [?cite?turn1search0?](#)

33. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

HiQual UK will monitor the frequency, type and outcomes of adjustments and special consideration to identify inconsistent practice, excessive use, inappropriate approvals or potential disadvantage. Monitoring may include Centre sampling, EQA review, data analysis and audit of records.

34. Misuse or Inappropriate Application

Where evidence indicates that an adjustment was granted without sufficient basis, was implemented incorrectly, materially affected validity or provided an unfair advantage, HiQual UK may investigate and take proportionate corrective action. Deliberate misuse may be addressed under the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

35. Appeals

Learners and Centres may appeal a decision relating to Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration through the HiQual UK Appeals Policy. Ofqual Condition I1 includes appeals against decisions concerning

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for applicable regulated qualifications.

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36. Conflict of Interest

Anyone making or reviewing a decision must declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. Where appropriate, the decision will be transferred to an independent authorised person.

37. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where required by regulatory changes, legal developments, qualification experience, audit findings, learner feedback or external guidance. Lessons learned will inform assessment design and support arrangements.

38. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside: Assessment and Assessment Integrity Policy; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy; Academic Governance Policy; Quality Assurance Policy; Malpractice and Maladministration Policy; Appeals Policy; Complaints Policy; Data Protection & UK GDPR Policy; Qualification Development, Approval & Review Policy; Centre Recognition Policy; Centre Monitoring Policy; Records Management and Retention Policy.

39. Document Control

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Classification	Public Policy

40. Version Control

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author	Approval
1.0	1 June 2026	Initial publication of HiQual UK Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy, informed by OTHM v6.0 structure and current Ofqual G6/G7 requirements.	Sarah Williams, Head of Quality Assurance	Academic and Standards Committee

41. Policy Statement

HiQual UK will provide fair and proportionate arrangements for learners who require Reasonable Adjustments because of disability and for learners whose assessment is materially affected by temporary circumstances outside their control.

These arrangements will be applied individually and consistently, with appropriate evidence and records, while protecting the validity, reliability, fairness and integrity of HiQual UK qualifications. No adjustment or consideration will be permitted where it changes the competence being assessed or creates an unfair advantage.

42. Regulatory and Source References

Primary external references used in developing this policy:

- Ofqual Handbook – General Conditions of Recognition, Section G, Conditions G6 and G7 (current page updated 4 December 2025).
- Ofqual Guide for Schools and Colleges 2026 – Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.
- OTHM Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy v6.0, publication date April 2025, supplied as the requested reference model.

END OF POLICY