



Access Arrangements, Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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1.0	08/08/2024	E Nicholson	Initial policy creation
1.1	29/08/2025	P Crocker	Reviewed for completeness
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1. Purpose

This policy establishes Hybrid Training Centre's (HTC) commitment to ensuring that all learners and apprentices are treated fairly and equally with respect to assessment. It sets out how HTC will:

- Identify and support learners who may require access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, or special consideration
- Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and awarding body requirements
- Enable learners to access assessments without changing the demands of the assessment
- Maintain the integrity and validity of assessment outcomes

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners and apprentices undertaking assessments at HTC, including:

- Apprenticeship End-Point Assessments (EPA)
- On-programme assessments and examinations
- City & Guilds qualifications and assessments
- Skills Bootcamp assessments
- ACS Gas Safe assessments

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Access Arrangements	Pre-examination adjustments for learners with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries, allowing them to access assessments without changing the demands of the assessment.
Reasonable Adjustments	Adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010 where a disabled person would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage. These may be unique to an individual.
Special Consideration	A post-examination adjustment to marks or grades for candidates affected by temporary illness, injury, or other indisposition at the time of assessment.
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications - the body that sets regulations for access arrangements in UK qualifications.
AAO	Access Arrangements Online - the JCQ system for processing access arrangement applications.
EPAO	End-Point Assessment Organisation - the body responsible for conducting apprenticeship End-Point Assessments.

4. Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and supports compliance with:

Equality Act 2010 - requires reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage

JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Regulations - detailed guidance on implementing access arrangements

JCQ A Guide to the Special Consideration Process - procedures for post-assessment adjustments

City & Guilds Centre Approval Criteria - awarding body requirements for managing access arrangements

ESFA Apprenticeship Funding Rules - requirements for learner support in funded programmes

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework - expectations for supporting learners with additional needs

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Head of Operations (Exams Officer)

- Overall responsibility for implementing this policy
- Processing access arrangement applications via JCQ AAO system
- Liaising with awarding bodies regarding reasonable adjustments and special consideration
- Ensuring appropriate documentation is maintained
- Training staff on access arrangement procedures
- Monitoring compliance with this policy

5.2 Skills Coaches and Tutors

- Identifying learners who may benefit from access arrangements during initial assessment
- Referring learners to the Head of Operations for formal assessment
- Implementing approved access arrangements during teaching and formative assessment
- Providing evidence of the learner's normal way of working
- Reporting any changes in learner circumstances

5.3 Invigilators

- Implementing approved access arrangements during examinations
- Completing cover sheets for readers, scribes, and other arrangements
- Reporting any issues or concerns during the assessment

5.4 Learners and Apprentices

- Disclosing any learning difficulties, disabilities, or conditions that may affect assessment
- Providing evidence and documentation to support access arrangement applications
- Informing HTC promptly of any temporary illness or injury affecting assessment
- Using access arrangements as approved and not exceeding the agreed support

6. Access Arrangements

6.1 Types of Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are determined based on the individual needs of the learner and the nature of the assessment. Common arrangements include:

Extra Time: Up to 25% additional time, or 26-50% in exceptional circumstances

Reader: A person who reads the questions to the candidate

Computer Reader: Text-to-speech software to read questions

Scribe: A person who writes or types the candidate's dictated responses

Word Processor: Use of a computer for written responses

Prompter: A person who prompts the candidate to refocus attention

Separate Room: Assessment conducted in a room away from other candidates

Rest Breaks: Supervised breaks that do not count towards assessment time

Modified Papers: Large print, Braille, or coloured paper

Practical Assistant: Support for practical assessments

Communication Professional: Sign language interpreter or lip speaker

6.2 Approval Requirements

Access arrangements fall into two categories:

Centre-Delegated: Arrangements that HTC can approve without external authorisation, based on clear evidence of need

AAO-Approved: Arrangements requiring approval through the JCQ Access Arrangements Online system, typically requiring specialist assessment evidence

7. Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 requires HTC to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

7.1 Key Principles

- A reasonable adjustment may be unique to an individual and may not appear in the standard list of access arrangements
- The adjustment must not affect the security or integrity of the assessment

- The adjustment must not change the assessment objectives being tested
- Reasonableness depends on factors including: the needs of the learner, cost, timeframe, and impact on assessment validity

7.2 Process

Where a learner requires an adjustment not covered by standard access arrangements:

- The Head of Operations will contact the relevant awarding body to discuss the proposed adjustment
- A written agreement will be obtained from the awarding body before the adjustment is implemented
- Documentation of the agreed adjustment will be retained for audit purposes

8. Special Consideration

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment that may be applied when a candidate's performance has been affected by circumstances beyond their control.

8.1 Eligible Circumstances

Special consideration may be applied for:

- Temporary illness or injury at the time of assessment
- Bereavement or serious illness of a close family member
- Serious disturbance during the examination
- Other significant events affecting performance

8.2 Application Process

To apply for special consideration:

- The learner or their employer must notify HTC as soon as possible, ideally before or immediately after the assessment
- Evidence must be provided (e.g., medical certificate, death certificate)
- The Head of Operations will submit the application through the awarding body's online system
- The correct category of special consideration must be selected (e.g., present but disadvantaged, absent)
- Applications must be submitted within the awarding body's specified timeframe (typically within 7 days of the assessment)

8.3 Limitations

Special consideration:

- Is not a guaranteed adjustment - awarding bodies make the final decision
- May result in a small adjustment to marks (typically 1-5%)
- Cannot be applied if the candidate was absent and no evidence is provided

- Cannot compensate for long-term conditions (these should be addressed through access arrangements)

9. Application Procedures

9.1 Learner Identification

Potential needs for access arrangements should be identified:

- During initial assessment and enrolment
- Through learner self-disclosure
- Through tutor or skills coach observation during programme delivery
- Through review of previous educational records

9.2 Application Timeline

To ensure timely processing:

- Learners should disclose any known needs at enrolment
- Applications for AAO-approved arrangements should be submitted at least 6 weeks before the first assessment
- Applications must demonstrate the arrangement reflects the learner's normal way of working
- Late applications may not be processed in time for the assessment

9.3 For End-Point Assessment

For apprenticeship EPA:

- Access arrangement requirements must be communicated to the EPAO before gateway
- The EPAO must confirm they can accommodate the required arrangements
- Documentation of approved arrangements must be shared with the EPAO

10. Evidence Requirements

10.1 For Access Arrangements

Evidence required may include:

- Diagnostic assessment by a qualified assessor (for specific learning difficulties)
- Medical evidence or consultant reports (for physical or mental health conditions)
- Educational Psychologist report
- Evidence of the learner's normal way of working (e.g., use of laptop in class)
- Previous access arrangement history from schools or colleges

10.2 For Special Consideration

Evidence required typically includes:

- Medical certificate or letter from GP
- Hospital discharge notes
- Death certificate (for bereavement)
- Police report (for serious incidents)
- Statement from the invigilator (for examination room disturbances)

11. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

HTC will:

- Maintain secure records of all access arrangement applications and approvals
- Retain evidence and documentation for the duration required by awarding bodies (typically 3 years after certification)
- Handle all information relating to learner disabilities and health conditions in accordance with UK GDPR
- Share information only with those who need to know for assessment purposes
- Store physical documentation in locked cabinets and electronic records in password-protected systems

12. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

HTC will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- Regular review of access arrangement applications and outcomes
- Analysis of assessment results for learners with access arrangements
- Feedback from learners, tutors, and invigilators
- Internal audit of procedures and documentation
- External quality assurance visits from awarding bodies

13. Appeals

Learners who are dissatisfied with decisions regarding access arrangements may:

- Request a review of the decision by the Head of Operations
- Provide additional evidence to support their application
- Appeal to the awarding body if HTC's decision is disputed
- Use HTC's formal Appeals and Complaints Procedure

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually, or sooner if required by changes in JCQ regulations or legislation
- Following any significant issues identified through quality assurance
- When directed by awarding bodies or regulatory bodies

15. Related Policies and Resources

15.1 HTC Policies

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Assessment Malpractice Policy
- Appeals and Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

15.2 External Resources

JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration>

JCQ 25% Additional Time Infographic:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/JCQ-25-ET-infographic-23-24_FINAL-1.pdf

JCQ 26-50% Extra Time Infographic:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/JCQ-26-50-ET-infographic-23-24_FINAL.pdf

JCQ Computer Reader/Reader Infographic:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/JCQ-Computer-reader-reader-23-24_FINAL.pdf

Appendix A: Access Arrangements Quick Reference Guide

Arrangement	When Used	Approval Required
25% Extra Time	SpLD, processing difficulties, physical disabilities	AAO with evidence
Reader	Visual impairment, reading difficulties	AAO with evidence
Scribe	Physical disability, severe writing difficulties	AAO with evidence
Word Processor	Normal way of working, physical difficulties	Centre delegated
Separate Room	Anxiety, concentration difficulties, use of reader/scribe	Centre delegated
Rest Breaks	Medical conditions, fatigue-related difficulties	Centre delegated with evidence

Appendix B: Application Timeline

Timeframe	Action
At Enrolment	Learner discloses any known learning difficulties, disabilities, or health conditions. Initial assessment identifies potential needs.
Within 4 weeks of enrolment	Referral to Head of Operations for assessment. Evidence gathering begins.
6+ weeks before first assessment	AAO application submitted (for arrangements requiring approval). Centre-delegated arrangements confirmed.
Before EPA Gateway	Access arrangement requirements communicated to EPAO. Confirmation received that arrangements can be accommodated.
On assessment day	Approved arrangements implemented. Cover sheets completed for readers, scribes, etc.
Within 7 days of assessment	Special consideration applications submitted (if applicable).

Policy Approval

For additional support with access arrangements, special consideration, or reasonable adjustments, please contact the Head of Operations.

Signature:

Date:

Sophie Gilmore
Group CEO