



Policy and Processes	
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Policy / Process	Access to Fair Assessment Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy
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As an organisation providing assessment for a CIO/CTO Standard, it is necessary to have in place systems and procedures that allow the provision of access arrangements, including Reasonable Adjustments. They reflect the needs of individual candidates and ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achieving the prescribed standard against the stated assessment criteria.

It is necessary to arrange for special consideration to be given to candidates that experience temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the assessment. This should allow them to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of for the assessments that are subject to special consideration. In accordance with Equalities Law, it is necessary to have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to the assessment and it is necessary to have in place clear arrangements for Special Consideration to be given to candidates in relation to the assessment.

Effective internal procedures will be in place for identifying a candidates needs, and those procedures will comply with the requirements of Disability and Equalities legislation.

The intended audience for this document is:

- Tech Leaders Connect Employees involved in the Standard
- Staff responsible for Quality Assurance
- Verifiers and internal moderators
- Quality reviewers
- Stakeholders involved in assessment development
- Qualifications regulators

This policy, procedures and guidance set out in this document apply to the CIO/CTO Standard and this document sets out:

- The principles that should be followed when making decisions about a) Reasonable Adjustments and b) Special Considerations

Tech Leaders Connect has a duty to ensure that the integrity of the standard, modules and assessment are maintained at all times. Tech Leaders Connect also has a duty to uphold the rights of individual candidates to access the standard, modules and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs.

Note, where the terms 'access-related needs' or 'access-related issues' are used in this guidance, they refer to any entitlement to access the assessment process resulting from

legislation, regulation, or good practice, provided the standards of the assessment are maintained.

Tech Leaders Connect's CIO/CTO Standard required knowledge, skills and competencies are defined in the modules as Assessment Criteria.

Tech Leaders Connect's policy on assessment is to give all candidates equal access and opportunity to demonstrate achievement, taking account of particular requirements, without giving unfair advantage over other candidates.

To support this policy, Tech Leaders Connect takes advice from relevant professional bodies, for example, those with expertise in disabilities and learning difficulties. Tech Leaders Connect will continue to develop and refine its practice through regular review and feedback from these bodies as well as candidates and assessors.

Reasonable Adjustments

A Reasonable Adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidates at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

Reasonable Adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes.

Reasonable Adjustments must be approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the candidates access to the assessment. The work produced by the candidate will be assessed in the same way as the work of other candidates.

Tech Leaders Connect are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable/' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability or difficulty on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to ensure the reliability and validity of assessment should be taken in to consideration.

Reasonable Adjustments are generally not appropriate where the candidate's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the attributes to be assessed.

Different types of assessment make different demands on the candidates and will influence a) whether Reasonable Adjustments will be needed and b) the kind of Reasonable Adjustments which may be put in place.

The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend on:

- The specific assessment requirements of the module
- The type of assessment
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual candidate

Assessments Not Taken Under Examination Conditions

The Standard has some aspects that are assessed not under examination conditions such as interviews and written submissions. In these situations, Tech Leaders Connect has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual candidate's needs, and to choose an assessment activity and method that

In these types of assessments the candidate may meet the specified Assessment Criteria in any way that is valid. To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, Tech Leaders Connect may allow the student to use any mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids:

- are generally commercially available;
- reflect the candidate's normal way of working;
- enable the candidate to meet the specified criteria;
- does not give the candidate an unfair advantage.

Tech Leaders Connect may present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the candidate's normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified Assessment Criteria. Materials do not have to be in written format, for example, unless specified by the assessment requirements. The candidate may use any mechanical or electronic aids that are available in the workplace, or which are commercially available, in order to demonstrate competence. This includes specially adapted equipment or assistive technology.

In a similar way, where there is an identified need, Tech Leaders Connect may allow candidate to present their answers or evidence in any format, as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the Assessment Criteria. For example a candidate may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audio cassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto video, it is Tech Leaders Connect's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or sign language is available to translate the material for the internal verifier, and for the Quality Reviewer and/or External Moderator.

Note that English must be the language of assessment the standard except where British Sign Language (BSL) is allowed.

The candidate must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of the method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted, and the adjustments must not give the student an unfair advantage over others.

The outcome produced by the candidate must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used;
- be as rigorous as assessment methods used with other candidate;
- be assessable;
- be able to be authenticated, and moderated/verified.

In the case of long-term illness of an individual candidate, or when a permanent health condition and/or disability means a candidate's completion of assessment takes additional time, it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification. It is not possible to allow time extensions for all assessments and modules, most particularly in cases where the extension would be beyond the assessment end date.

Assessments taken Under Examination Conditions

Where the method of assessment is more rigidly determined, such as for assessments taken under specified conditions, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to provide access

In order to avoid, minimise or address identified inequalities or barriers, any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the candidate reasonably needs to access the assessment. Some examples of candidate needs that may require adjustments to assessments are listed below; the list is not exhaustive and some candidates needs may fall within more than one of the categories:

- Communication and interaction needs
- Cognition and learning needs
- Sensory and physical needs
- Behavioural, emotional and social needs

Candidates will be eligible for Reasonable Adjustments if their performance during an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. Many of these candidates will be defined as being disabled under the Disability Discrimination Act.

An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with candidates who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, Tech Leaders Connect will offer to assist the candidate by offering help with study and assessment skills.

A candidate does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act) to be entitled to Reasonable Adjustments to assessment. Conversely, every candidate who is disabled will not necessarily need or be entitled to an adjustment to assessment. The candidate may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for assistance.

Tech Leaders Connect has internal procedures for identifying candidate needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of Disability and Equalities legislation.

Any particular requirements of an individual candidate must have been recognised and Tech Leaders Connect will:

- identify those candidates who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment;
- identify whether Reasonable Adjustments may be needed;
- identify the appropriate adjustment;
- check whether permission is required from Certa (see Appendix 1);
- make the adjustment in accordance with the Certa guidelines.

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the candidate with the necessary assistance without giving her/him an unfair advantage over others, Tech Leaders Connect are clear about the extent to which the candidate is affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where Tech Leaders Connect can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a candidate with physical difficulties, profound hearing

impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, Tech Leaders Connect will not provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, Tech Leaders Connect will provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the candidate's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable:

- Evidence of assessment of the candidate's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the Centre by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area, or by external experts. Staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. This evidence should include an indication of how the Centre plans to meet the candidate's needs and should show that the candidate can cope with the level and content of the assessment; information from previous Centres may be included. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes.
- History of provision within the Centre. This should include information about the support received by the candidate during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the candidate's needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.
- Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the candidate is affected, including the effects of any medication that the candidate may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the candidate is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A candidate with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustments. The demands of the modules and qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

Tech Leaders Connect are responsible to ensure that all applications for Reasonable Adjustments are based on the individual need of the candidate and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid. Tech Leaders Connect will maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the Reasonable Adjustments which have been made.

In some cases Certa may permit the Centre to implement Reasonable Adjustments without seeking prior permission; these circumstances are listed in the table in Appendix 1.

In some cases the Centre must consult with and obtain agreement for Reasonable Adjustments from the Quality Reviewer, these instances are listed in Appendix 1.

Arrangements must reflect the candidate's normal way of working. The candidate should therefore have experience of, and practice in, the use of any arrangement proposed for the Reasonable Adjustment for assessment, unless the need arises from a temporary injury or condition.

Tech Leaders Connect must ensure that the Reasonable Adjustments will assist the candidate to demonstrate attainment without affecting or circumventing the assessment requirements for the qualification and/or unit of a qualification. Candidates cannot be given credit for skills they are unable to demonstrate independently.

The Permissions Table (Appendix 1) lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in a template which can be used when considering where the decisions on applying different Reasonable Adjustments need to be applied. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

The Reasonable Adjustments available are listed below. Conditions governing the use of each adjustment are provided in Appendix 2.

- RA1 Prior modification of external assessment papers.
- RA2 Assessment material in enlarged format
- RA3 Assessment material in Braille
- RA4 Assessment material in BSL
- RA5 Assessment material on coloured paper
- RA6 Assessment material in audio format
- RA7 Extra Time
- RA8 Supervised rest breaks
- RA9 Changes in organisation of the assessment room
- RA10 Separate accommodation within the Centre
- RA11 Taking the assessment at an alternative venue
- RA12 Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV & OCR Scanners
- RA13 Use of assistive technology
- RA14 Use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries
- RA15 Use of ICT to present responses
- RA16 Responses using electronic recording devices
- RA17 Responses in BSL
- RA18 Responses in Braille
- RA19 Reader
- RA20 Amanuensis or Scribe
- RA21 BSL interpreter
- RA22 Communicator
- RA23 Prompter
- RA24 Practical assistant
- RA25 Transcriber

Tech Leaders Connect will keep records for audit purposes when Reasonable Adjustments are applied, whether they are permitted, or not. All such records must be brought to the attention of the Quality Controller and the relevant portfolios presented for verification.

Tech Leaders Connect will retain a copy of the application form and supporting evidence. These records are classed as assessment records and should be kept for at least 3 years from the end of the year to which they relate.

Special Consideration

The overall principles of the policy are that the Special Considerations claimed:

- do not give candidates an unfair advantage over other candidates;
- do not compromise the integrity or credibility of the qualification, for the candidate concerned, or other candidates;
- are clearly tracked for audit, with supporting documentation where appropriate.

Each request for Special Consideration will be unique to each candidate or assessment. These guidelines offer some broad principles for the Centre to follow.

A candidate who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment, and is fully aware of the assessment requirements, may be eligible for Special Consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate, for example, recent personal illness (eg severe asthma attack, severe migraine or broken limb), accident, emotional distress (eg recent bereavement of a close family member, severe domestic crisis at the time of the assessment), serious disturbance during the assessment (eg, fire or accidental event);
- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment prove inappropriate or inadequate;
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the candidate;
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which Special Consideration is applied, and other parts of the qualifications that have been achieved, to infer that the candidate could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

A candidate will not be eligible for Special Consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the Centre that the candidate has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition;
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence;
- s/he is suffering from a minor illness or subject to a minor disturbance;
- preparation for a component 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.

It may not be possible to apply Special Consideration where an assessment requires the candidate to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully.

Special Consideration should not give the candidate an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. The candidate's result must reflect her/his achievement in the assessment and not necessarily her/his potential ability.

Candidates should not be entered for the assessment if they are not in a fit state to take the assessment or if they cannot meet the minimum requirements for assessment.

The candidate needs to submit evidence in support of Special Consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information.

The application should be signed and dated by a Tech Leaders Connect representative who has formally been given delegated authority by the Head of Centre. The signatory must declare that the information given is accurate.

The application for Special Consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than seven working days after the examination. Requests for Special Consideration may only be accepted after the results of the examination have been released in the following circumstances:

- application has been overlooked at the Centre and the oversight is confirmed by Tech Leaders Connect
- medical evidence comes to light about a candidate's condition, which demonstrates that the candidate was affected by the condition at the time of the examination, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment;
- for on-screen assessments where results are immediately available.

If the application for Special Consideration is successful, the candidate's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of Special Consideration will not necessarily change a candidate's result.

Tech Leaders Connect will review this policy and procedure biennially and revise it when necessary in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the Qualifications Regulators or external agencies or changes in legislation. The review will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly