

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Guidance for Recognised Centres

Version 2.0

 gateway
qualifications

learning your way

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Introduction

This Guide has been written to help Centre with how to apply the Gateway Qualifications [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy](#).

The Guide includes the following:

- Information and guidance to support understanding and the proper management of reasonable adjustments.
- Management and procedure for applying reasonable adjustments in Centre.
- Information and guidance to support understanding and the proper management of special considerations.

Centre Responsibilities

To meet their responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, a centre should, as far as is practicable:

- have an access to assessment policy and communicate this to all staff and learners. The Centres should ensure that all staff are aware of, and understand, the policy.
- identify as early as possible, preferably before registering a learner for a qualification, any difficulties the learner may have in accessing assessment. To assist with this the centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise, or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access related issues.
- select an appropriate qualification for the learner. The centre should explain to the learner the assessment requirements of the qualification and the planned programme of study. It should be made clear at the outset if the learner will not be able to meet all the assessment criteria. The learner may still decide to proceed with the qualification but enter only for part, or none, of the assessment. In this case the centre should explain to the learner any restriction on progression to other qualifications as a result of not achieving all the criteria.
- select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible to the learner. In order to decide whether an adjustment is appropriate, the centre should consider the nature of the skills that are being assessed and the implications for assessment of the learner's difficulties. The centre should involve the learner in making any decisions about appropriate adjustments to assessment. In cases of doubt, the centre should contact the awarding body for advice on suitable and appropriate adjustments.
- ensure that it can resource the selected adjustment to assessment. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange any assistance for the learner, such as a reader, scribe, additional invigilator, British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, etc.
- follow the Gateway Qualifications [procedures for applying reasonable adjustments](#) to assessment.
- ensure that it has effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner can query any decision taken by the centre not to allow an adjustment to assessment.
- should include details of the grounds for appeal and the timescales associated with investigations of appeals.
- design centre-set assessment activities or material in an inclusive way so that they are accessible to learners with access-related needs. The centre should ensure that the language of the assessment is clear, unambiguous and free from jargon.
- ensure that buildings used for assessment are accessible to all learners, as far as is practicable.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and centres must take all possible practical steps to apply reasonable adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Access arrangements

Access arrangements are agreed prior to assessment. They allow learners with specific needs, including special education needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access assessment(s).

There are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained, through:

- reasonable adjustments, and/or
- special consideration.

Gateway Qualifications' approach to reasonable adjustments and special consideration is set out in the [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy](#).

These arrangements aim to support the needs of the individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Situations where reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration may be required

Reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration may be required at the time of assessment where learners:

- have a permanent disability or specific learning needs
- have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs
- are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

Reasonable Adjustments

Definition of reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustment is defined as:

an adjustment made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

(From Ofqual, *General Conditions of Recognition*).

Reasonable adjustments may be made by:

- the Recognised Centre in some circumstances, or by
- Gateway Qualifications.

You need to check the qualification specification to determine whether the Centre can apply an adjustment, or if an application for an adjustment needs to be made to Gateway Qualifications.

Key features of reasonable adjustments:

- Reasonable adjustments aim to support learners who are disabled under the terms of the Equality Act 2020, who would otherwise be at a **substantial disadvantage** in comparison to a learner who is not disabled.
- A reasonable adjustment must be personal to the learner and may be applied for a period of time, or as a one-off for an assessment.
- An adjustment must ensure the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment is assured and the assessment is a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do. It recognises that for some learners the usual format of an assessment may not be suitable.
- The adjustment must be reasonable i.e. does not incur unreasonable costs to the Centre, or Gateway Qualifications', involve unreasonable timeframes, or affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Adjustments are not concessions to make an assessment easier for learners, nor advantages learners to give them a head start.

Definition of substantial disadvantage

Under the Equalities Act 2010, a person is considered to be at substantial disadvantage where the adverse effect of their impairment compared to someone who is not disabled is 'more than minor or trivial'.

Other factors that influence what may be considered as part of a substantial disadvantage include:

- The time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled student.
- The inconvenience, indignity or discomfort a disabled learner might experience.
- The loss of opportunity or the diminished progress a disabled learner might make in comparison with their peers who are not disabled.

Definition of disability and link to SEN

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'. Learning disabilities and learning difficulties, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, are covered within this definition.

Also, a learner may have 'special educational needs' as defined in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. Children and young people have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability includes substantial and long-term sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, mental health difficulties and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and cancer. Children and young people with these conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is an overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Making reasonable adjustments

The following principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for an adjustment to an assessment. Adjustments should:

- Not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification.
- Not give the learners an unfair advantage.
- Reflect the learner's normal way of working.
- Be based on the individual need of the learner.

Gateway Qualifications and recognised centres have a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner to show what they know and can do, without compromising the assessment process.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, Gateway Qualifications and recognised centres need to consider the following (where appropriate):

1. The reasonable adjustment **must not compromise the competency standard**.
2. The reasonable adjustment **must not give the learner an unfair advantage**. While the process for examinations and assessments might be modified, the learner must demonstrate the skills and competence required by the assessment to maintain the quality, validity and reliability of the assessment.
3. The reasonable adjustment **must be based on individual requirements**. Decisions about the reasonable adjustment/s required by each learner must be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual. Different learners with the same impairment may have different reasonable adjustment requirements. Similarly, centres should not assume that the reasonable adjustment required by a learner for a particular assessment will be required for all assessments. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
4. The reasonable adjustment **must reflect the learner's normal way of working**. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment. For example, if the reasonable adjustment is for additional time for an examination, the learners must have had this reasonable adjustment in place for other examinations such as practice tests while the learner has been studying for the qualification at the centre.
5. The reasonable adjustment **must be accompanied by suitable evidence**, where appropriate. Centres will want to satisfy themselves that a learner's request for a reasonable adjustment is legitimate. On some occasions, this will involve obtaining evidence that is sufficient, valid and reliable.
6. The reasonable adjustment **must meet the requirements of the specification**. There are some restrictions to the provision of reasonable adjustments for externally set exams. Further details are provided within the Qualification Specifications.

In order to ensure that an adjustment to an assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving the learner an unfair advantage over others, the Centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

Examples of learner needs that may be eligible for adjustments

The list below is not an exhaustive list and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories listed.

Communication and interaction needs

A learner with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with reading or writing, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a reader, word processor, scribe, British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, screen reading software or voice-activated software. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Cognition and learning needs

A learner with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained examinations. They may also need assistance with reading and writing where this is permissible.

Sensory and physical needs

A learner may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader or scribe. In addition, they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and/or extra time to complete assessments.

Behavioural, emotional, and social needs

The learner may benefit from supervised rest breaks and separate accommodation, either within the centre or at an alternative venue. A learner with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter.

Learners for whom English is an additional language

A learner may benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained or who are using a bilingual dictionary.

The learner's need of the dictionary does not in itself justify allowing the learner extra time unless the learner has to refer to the dictionary so often that the assessment time is used for this purpose instead of answering the questions.

Supporting evidence

Any application for a reasonable adjustment must be supported by evidence. This evidence must be kept on file at the Centre and where a request for an adjustment needs to be submitted to Gateway Qualifications this evidence must be submitted with the request.

Centre based evidence

Where the Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or sight loss, the Centre should hold a short concise file note written by the SENCo or responsible person on centre-headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the learner's disability or impairment.

External evidence

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the Centre should seek additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment.

Examples of external evidence could include medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, the recency and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert may need to be reviewed and re-evaluated for applicability by the Centre.

For recording purposes external evidence should be accompanied by an indication of how the Centre plans to meet the learner's needs and show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment. This is important evidence for audit purposes. Any information from any previous Centres the learner may have attended may also be included in the learner's file.

A learner with an Education, Health and Care Plan does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only a limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

Health and safety considerations

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised for the purposes of an assessment. In a practical activity, if there is a concern that the effects of a person's disability or difficulty may have health and safety implications for themselves or for others, a suitably qualified person in the Centre should carry out a risk assessment related to the learner's particular circumstances.

The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with the particular activity but should also take account of any reasonable adjustments put in place for the learner which may remove or reduce the risk. The risk assessment may reveal that it is not possible for the learner to fulfil all the requirements of the assessment. In this case, it may be appropriate to

substitute another task. The Centre should contact Gateway Qualifications to discuss individual cases where further clarification is necessary.

Assumptions should not be made about a disability posing a health and safety risk but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

Procedure for Applying Reasonable Adjustments in Centre

Centres have a responsibility to ensure there are effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs and that their procedures comply with the requirements of equality legislation.

The following sequence of activities are recommended to Centres in support of their learners.

1. Identifying learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments

Learners will only be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation, in comparison to a person who is not disabled or affected.

It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid.

2. Identify those learners who are likely to have difficulties accessing assessments or are having difficulties

Initial assessment should support the process of identifying whether a learner may require adjustments to be made.

Also, learners should be encouraged to make any access-related assessment needs known to the Centre at the earliest opportunity, and preferably before they are registered or entered for a qualification.

To assist with the early identification of learners with access-related assessment needs, the Centre should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. As soon as any learner's needs are identified, they should be documented for audit purposes.

Please refer to the section [examples of learner need that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments](#) for further guidance.

3. Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed

Relevant Centre staff should discuss and decide with the learner whether they are able to meet the requirements of the assessment or whether adjustments will be required. It is important that the learner is involved in this discussion as they know best what the effect of their particular disability or difficulty is on how they do things.

Where the implications of a particular difficulty are unclear, the Centre should make use of specialist advice in order to determine how the difficulty will affect the learner's performance in the assessment. The Centre should avoid making assumptions, on the basis of previous experience of a difficulty or condition, about whether adjustments may be necessary. Judgements should be made on the basis of individual need.

4. Check the qualification specification and identify the appropriate adjustment(s)

Relevant Centre staff should check the qualification on which the learner is registered to see what adjustments are allowable, or if an application to Gateway Qualifications may be needed to permit an adjustment. This early check is important to make sure only legitimate adjustment is made.

When identifying which adjustment/s the learner will need in the assessment, Centre staff should take into consideration the learner's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during informal assessment and the assessment requirements of the qualification.

Certain simple adjustments may be all that is required, e.g. allowing the learner a short, supervised break between assessment tasks. The same learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment.

The Centre will also need to make a judgement as to whether the adjustment is reasonable i.e.

- that the costs involved in applying the adjustment are reasonable,
- that the timescale within which the adjustment is required is reasonable
- that the arrangement does not affect the security or integrity of the assessment

5. Understand the range of reasonable adjustments

The range of reasonable adjustments that may be applied is wide-ranging. Information and guidance on different types of adjustments are provided in the section [types of adjustments and how to apply them](#) organised under the following categories:

- Changes to assessment conditions
- Use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Modifications to the presentation of assessment materials
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Use of access facilitators.

The list is not exhaustive; centres have a duty to seek advice from Gateway Qualifications in any case where they do not have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is needed, and how it should be applied.

6. Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable.

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment only provides the learner with the necessary assistance without giving them an unfair advantage over others, the Centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by their disability or difficulty. This information should be recorded in the learner's record and application for an adjustment.

Where the Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or with sight loss, the Centre will not need to 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, the Centre will need to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment.

The Centre should decide what evidence will best assist understanding of the learner's situation.

Subject to the specific context of a request for an adjustment (the learner's specific needs and the qualification specification), the following types of information and evidence may be asked for by Gateway Qualifications:

- **Evidence of the learner's needs provided by Centre staff**

This type of evidence would apply where relevant Centre staff with competence and responsibility in this area, that may include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff are able to document the difficulty experienced by the learner.

- **History of support within the Centre for the learner**

Information about the support received by the learner during the learning programme and during formative assessments can provide useful supporting evidence when applying for an adjustment. The way(s) in which the learner's needs were/are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.

- **Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists**

If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner and provide evidence that supports an application for an adjustment. This type of evidence should include an indication of how the Centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment.

Evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous Centres attended by the learner may also be included.

Expert evidence 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 carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

7. Apply to Gateway Qualifications for approval for an adjustment to be made (if applicable)

If an adjustment needs to be applied for it will state this in the qualification specification. In this case please use the [Reasonable Adjustments Request Form](#) from the Gateway Qualifications website. Please remember the application must be submitted for approval no less than 10 working days prior to an assessment and relevant supporting evidence should be provided

8. Record and implement permissible adjustments

Please record the adjustment when registering the learner/s during the [learner registration process](#) and record the adjustment at the point of learner registration.

If you need to add an adjustment after registration, or you need to record more than one adjustment, please email registrations@gatewayqualifications.org.uk with the learner ID, cohort ID and adjustments.

Recognised Centres are required to retain any requests or decisions for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, including any supporting evidence and relevant documentation received from Gateway Qualifications, for 3 years. This can be retained in electronic or paper format.

Records must be made available to Gateway Qualifications, its representatives or regulators on request. Gateway Qualifications may request documentation for review as part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance activities.

Authorisation and record keeping

All adjustments to assessment/s must be authorised by the Centre's SENCo, named responsible person for this activity, or the Centre's principal quality assurance staff member.

It is recommended that Centres nominate members of staff to take responsibility for ensuring the implementation of and recording of adjustments to assessments made.

Centres must keep records of adjustments they have allowed and those requested from Gateway Qualifications. These records should be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they relate in order that Gateway Qualifications can monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments that have been made.

Types of adjustments and how to apply them

Adjustments detailed below fall into the following categories:

- [Changes to Assessment Conditions](#)
- [Modifications to the Presentation of the Assessment Material](#)
- [Alternative Ways of Presenting Learner Responses](#)
- [Use of Access Facilitators](#)

Changes to Assessment Conditions

Extra time

- Where assessment activities are time-constrained a learner may be allowed extra time during an assessment if they have a condition which affects their speed of processing or writing.
- The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the learner's difficulty.
- 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed.
- It is the Centre's responsibility to specify the amount of extra time the learner will need, using as a guide the extra time required during formative assessments in the Centre.
- Extra time will not be allowed for computer-based assessments testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as keyboarding speed tests. Extra time may, however, be available for those computer-based assessments where the manipulation of software, and not processing speed, is the primary aim of the assessment.
- Extra time for onscreen assessments may have to be customised for each learner. In these cases, the centre is advised to contact Gateway Qualifications to apply for a time extension to be set up.
- Before the Centre allows extra time for the learner, the Centre should be satisfied that the learner can cope with the content of the qualification and that the learner is medically fit to undertake the extended time assessment.
- Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or in group activities where the learner's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

Key points

- Extra time should not be allowed where its use will invalidate the assessment criteria.
- Extra time should not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.

Supervised rest breaks

- Where assessment activities are time-constrained, a learner may, if there is demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment.
- Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room. The duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the assessment time. The Centre should be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the learner is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing conduct of assessments will apply during this time.

- Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, supervised rest breaks can be allowed.
- For on-screen assessments, the Centre needs to check with Gateway Qualifications whether the time for rest breaks must be built into the extra time requested for the assessment. This is necessary because the test runs continuously on the system. The system must also be supervised during the break to ensure that no one else can interfere with the learner's test during the break.

Key points:

- Centres must ensure that both the learner and their work is supervised during the break.
- The duration of the break should not be deducted from the assessment time.
- Rest breaks should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment criteria.

Change in the set-up of the assessment room

- Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners.
- Visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good lighting.
- Some learners may benefit from using chairs with armrests or adjustable heights.
- Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

Key points:

The centre should consider the needs of the individual learner and, where possible, arrange the assessment room to suit the learner.

Separate accommodation within the Centre

- It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL/English interpreters, or word processing equipment which may disturb other learners.

Key points:

Centres should ensure that, where learners are accommodated separately for assessments taken under examination conditions, usual examination conditions apply, and separate invigilation is arranged.

Taking the assessment at an alternative venue

- In certain circumstances, the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue, for example at home or in hospital. Gateway Qualifications advice must be sought on this.

- The centre should ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment.

Key points:

For assessments in alternative venues, taken under examination conditions, standard examination conditions should be in place at the alternative venue and the standard procedures for security of assessment material and dispatch of the learner's work should be followed.

Use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids

- This may include the use of coloured overlays, low-vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners.
- The Centre should ensure that the learner is familiar with these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.
- For assessments taken under examination conditions, the learner should be accommodated separately with separate invigilation if the use of any of these aids will disturb other learners. In these cases, the invigilator should be fully informed of the learner's support.
- Centres should contact Gateway Qualifications if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements.

Key points:

- The learner should be familiar with how the aid works.
- The use of aids should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.

Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice-activated software

- Some learners may benefit from the use of software that reads the assessment material to them and/or records their spoken responses.
- Text to speech software should not be allowed for qualifications where reading is the competence being assessed. Elsewhere, and especially in vocational areas, such software may be used to allow learners to have access to assessments that are appropriate for them and enable them to show their proficiency.
- The Centre should ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the learner an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, centres should seek advice from Gateway Qualifications if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.
- Software used for assessment purposes should reflect learners' normal ways of working. It should not create an additional assessment burden for learners. Some learners may need extra time if they use such software.

Key points:

- The learner should be familiar with any assistive technology used.
- The assistive technology should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.

Use of bilingual dictionaries or bilingual translation dictionaries (manual or electronic)

- The use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries (including BSL/English dictionaries/glossaries) can be allowed in vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements in the qualification specification.
- An additional allowance of extra time may be permitted for timed assessments if the centre is satisfied that the learner can cope with the subject content, but the learner's knowledge and comprehension of English impairs their ability to complete the assessment within the normal time allocated.
- The Centre should check the dictionaries used by the learner to make sure they do not contain notes which would give the learner an unfair advantage.
- Where permission is given to use electronic dictionaries, the Centre must check that the equipment does not contain additional functionality that will give the learner an unfair advantage. If such functionality is present, it must be disabled, or the equipment disallowed.

Key points:

The use of a bilingual dictionary should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.

Modifications to the Presentation of the Assessment Material

Assessment material in enlarged format

- Enlargements for paper-based assessments may be used. Examples of these include:
 - Unmodified enlarged assessment papers where the standard paper is photocopied from A4 to A3, thus enlarging the whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation.
 - Modified enlarged assessment papers where the paper is modified by simplifying the layout and, where necessary, reducing the content while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original paper.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in an enlarged format, the Centre must apply no later than four weeks before the date of the assessment to ensure the modified paper can be produced.
- Where the Centre is permitted to make the enlargements to externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of incomplete enlargement of the material.
- Centres should note that assessment material containing scale diagrams cannot be enlarged.

It is the Centre's responsibility to provide Centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

On-screen assessments adaption

- If the default font and text size used for an on-screen assessment is not suitable for the learner, screen magnification software programmes may provide an option to magnify the text to a suitable size. Advanced screen software programmes used by Gateway Qualifications provide options to change screen colours and fonts.
- Learners are able to select a screen background in a colour that is suited to their needs. It is advised that learners explore the selection available using a practice test before they take an assessment.

Key points:

Learners should become familiar with the ways the screen may be adapted in onscreen exams by using the practice tests.

Assessment material in Braille

- Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner.
- The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to Braille.
- Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in Braille, the Centre must apply not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment. If Braille assessment material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the Centre should inform Gateway Qualifications immediately as any costs incurred in producing such material may be passed to the Centre.
- Permission may be given to the Centre to Braille externally set assessment materials. Gateway Qualifications will advise when this can be permitted.
- Where the Centre is permitted to Braille externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is Braille. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the Braille material.
- Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner; not all blind people use Braille.
- It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the Braille of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Key points:

- Where appropriate, the Centre must meet Gateway Qualifications' deadlines of not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment for requesting Braille assessment material.
- In cases where the Centre is permitted by Gateway Qualifications to Braille assessment material, the Centre should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is Braille.

Language modified assessment material

- The carrier language in assessment material may be modified for a deaf learner whose first language is either English or British Sign Language (BSL). In either case, the learner's English may be limited, and modified assessment material may be necessary. BSL is a language in its own right and has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary and written assessment material will have to be modified for most deaf learners for whom BSL is their first language.
- Technical language may not be modified. The modified version of the assessment material should contain the same questions as the standard version and the same answers will be expected from the learner.
- In listening tests, a transcript of the test may be provided, which can be read to the learner by a live speaker. This will enable the learner to lip-read.
- Where the Centre is permitted to modify externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the modification. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of inaccurate modification of the material.
- It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the modification of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Key Points:

- Where appropriate, the Centre should meet Gateway Qualifications' deadlines for requesting language modified assessment material, not later than ten weeks before the date of the assessment.
- In cases where the Centre is permitted by Gateway Qualifications to modify assessment material, the Centre should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the modification.

Assessment material in BSL (British Sign Language)

- Where the Centre cannot provide a BSL/English interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL version of assessment material may be provided on a USB stick or a secure link instead of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English. This facility may not be permitted for assessments where reading or listening is the competence being assessed.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in BSL, the Centre will have to apply not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the Centre is permitted to translate externally set assessment material into BSL, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the translation. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the material.
- It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the translation of Centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL.
- Centres should note that translation of Centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL will not be suitable for all assessments and that they need to contact Gateway Qualifications for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.
- Centres should read the guidance for BSL/English interpreters in conjunction

Key points:

- The Centre should meet Gateway Qualifications' deadlines for requesting assessment material in BSL, normally not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment
- In cases where the Centre is permitted to translate the assessment material into BSL, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the translation.
- The Centre should provide sufficient playback equipment that is in full working order.

Assessment material on coloured paper

- It is the Centre's responsibility to provide Centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material on coloured paper, if required.

Key Points:

- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material on coloured paper, the Centre will have to apply by the deadlines set by Gateway Qualifications normally no later than four weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the Centre is permitted to photocopy externally set assessment material onto coloured paper, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied.
- The learner may be penalised for any errors in his / her script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.

Assessment material in audio format

- Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format. This facility is not available if reading is the competence being assessed or if understanding and interpreting visual content such as illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketches is crucial to the assessment.
- Where Gateway Qualifications is able to provide externally set assessment material in audio format, the Centre will have to apply not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the Centre is permitted to produce an audio version of externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the recording is accurate. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the recording.
- It is the Centre's responsibility to provide Centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

Key points:

- Where appropriate, the Centre should meet Gateway Qualifications deadlines for requesting assessment material in audio format, not later than four weeks before the date of the assessment.
- Where the Centre is permitted to produce an audio version of the assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied.
- The Centre should ensure that sufficient playback equipment is provided in full working order.

Alternative Ways of Presenting Learner Responses

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment. The use of digital devices can have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessments.

The guidance given below relates to the use of digital devices in written assessments. Digital devices can normally be used for Centre-devised and portfolio work unless the use is expressly prohibited by the qualification specification.

Use of digital devices to present responses

- The use of digital devices in this context should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs), laptops and other microprocessor-controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.
- For many learners with additional support needs, digital devices provide an effective means of independent communication. Consideration should be given to whether the learner can meet the assessment criteria using a device.
- A device should only be used if it is appropriate to the learner's needs and if the learner is confident in its use, can use it effectively and if it reflects their normal way of working.
- When a device is used, other than as a basic word processor, the centre needs to consider the effect and appropriateness of facilities like spellcheckers, electronic dictionaries, thesaurus, calculators, predictive software, etc that are available.
- The use of the device should not create a misleading impression of the learner's attainment or confer an unfair advantage over other learners.
- The Centre should ensure that workstations are adapted for the needs of the learner and that enabling technologies (for example screen reading software, coloured background, adapted keyboard, large tracker ball mouse, sticky keys) are available.
- Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a device is used, the Centre should identify alternative arrangements.

Key points:

- The device should be used solely by the learner and not by someone acting on the learner's behalf unless the learner has permission to use a scribe.
- The learner should have access only to those facilities (e.g. spell/grammar checker, voice-activated software, speech reading software) which have been agreed in advance with Gateway Qualifications.
- The learner should not be able to gain access to existing files or documents.
- The learner should be accommodated separately if the use of a device is likely to distract other learners. In this case, separate invigilation should be arranged.
- The learner should be familiar with and able to use the device.
- The learner's work should be saved frequently.

Spoken responses using electronic recording devices, for example USB sticks

- Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to record their responses electronically.
- Spoken responses will only be available for assessments where text responses are required.
- Where the learner's responses are recorded electronically, the Centre should provide an authenticated transcript on paper of the learner's responses.
- It will be the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep this and the original recording as a record of the assessment.

Key points:

- The Centre should check whether permission should be sought from Gateway Qualifications to record the learner's responses electronically.
- Recording the learner's responses electronically should not be allowed where it will invalidate the assessment requirements.
- The Centre should ensure that the appropriate recording equipment is provided in full working order.
- The learner using recording equipment should be accommodated separately, with separate invigilation, where its use will not disturb other learners.

Responses in BSL

- Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be allowed to sign their responses to questions.
- Signing of responses should not be permitted if the ability to write or speak English, Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge) is being assessed.
- A learner can sign full responses in BSL. Where the learner is required to show knowledge of an expression/name in their response, this must be finger spelt.
- The Centre will provide a translation of the responses on paper for validation purposes.
- The Centre should ensure that the person doing the translation is appropriately qualified.
- Where the Centre provides a transcript of the learner's response, the Centre should ensure that the transcript is authenticated and an accurate reflection of the learner's responses. The Centre should keep this as a record of the assessment.

Key points:

The Centre should check whether permission should be sought from Gateway Qualifications to allow the learner to sign responses.

Responses in Braille

- Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to present their responses in Braille.
- In these cases, an authenticated paper transcript of the learner's responses should be provided by the Centre.
- It will be the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep the transcript for their records.

Key points:

The Centre should select a transcriber with the required level of skill in Braille and fully brief them on their responsibilities.

Use of Access Facilitators

Reader

A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the learner all or part of the assessment material and the learner's written responses.

Where there is evidence of need, a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading is not being assessed.

For a learner requiring a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.

Where a learner is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the learner to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances, the learner must be accommodated in a separate room so that other learners are not disturbed. Separate invigilation should be arranged in these cases. The invigilator may not correct the reading of the learner.

A separate invigilator must be present when a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.

The Centre:

- should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective arrangement. The learner may be more comfortable with:
 - The use of speech/screen reading software which reads out the material without decoding or interpreting it
 - Accessing the assessment material in electronic format, in Braille or through sign language.
- is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader.
- should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.
- should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.
- should give the reader clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.

The reader:

- should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary for them to be so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.
- is responsible to, and should be approved by the Head of Centre, SENCo or the Centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

The learner:

- should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during any training programme leading up to the assessment.
- using a reader should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

During the assessment a reader:

- Should read only as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment themselves.
- Should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing-impaired learner, it is especially important that the reader articulates clearly.
- Should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase, or interpret anything.
- Should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the learner.
- May consult a dictionary, where this is allowed, at the learner's request and read out entries.
- Should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proof-reader.
- Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- May enable a visually impaired learner to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question but should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestion.
- Is permitted to help a visually impaired learner using diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted learner.
- Should, if requested, give a visually impaired learner the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise, spellings must not be given.
- Should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of a reader is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a reader and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a reader is used.
- Use of a reader should not be allowed where it would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Scribe (sometimes called amanuensis)

A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a learner's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed. The most common need for a scribe is where a learner has injured their arm and is unable to write.

A scribe should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

For a learner requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.

The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases, the writing of answers by the learner may be the skill being assessed. Voice to text technology (assistive technology) may be used in the writing component of qualification where its use reflects the learner's normal way of writing.

A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.

The Centre:

- should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires high-level communication skills from the learner, the Centre is advised to consider whether the learner would be more comfortable with the use of a computer.
- is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe.
- should ensure that the learner and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.
- should give the scribe clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do and what he/she is not allowed to do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner.

The scribe:

- should be able to produce an accurate record of the learner's responses, write legibly and/or word process at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly. is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing or ICT skills.
- should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it is necessary for them to be so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.
- is responsible to, and should be approved by, the Head of Centre, SENCo, or the Centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

The learner:

- should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.
- should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

During the assessment a scribe:

- Should check with the learner for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The learner may choose to write some responses themselves.
- Should neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestions.
- Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- Should write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the learner. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words.
- Should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the learner.
- Should not assist the learner to produce any diagrammatical or graphical material. If assistance with this is needed, approval should be obtained from Gateway Qualifications in advance of the assessment. Exceptions to this are Entry Level qualifications where the scribe is allowed to draw or add to diagrams in accordance with the learner's instructions.
- Learners must respond in English, Irish or Welsh as appropriate, so as to meet the assessment of written communication in English, Irish or Welsh.
- A scribe, may, at the learner's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the learner's response.
- Should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of scribe is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a scribe and fully brief them on their responsibilities
- A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used.

British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter

Although British Sign Language (BSL) is now recognised as an official language in the UK, it is not a statutory language, unlike English, Welsh and Irish (Gaeilge).

Where BSL is the primary means of communication for a deaf learner, these learners may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the questions (or part-questions) where they are undertaking written assessments.

For assessments where reading or speaking and listening are the competencies being assessed, BSL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions.

A separate invigilator should be present when a BSL/English interpreter is used to ensure that guidance regarding BSL/English interpreters is followed.

The Centre:

- should ensure that the BSL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment.
- should ensure that the learner and the person providing the interpretation is clear about the limitations of the latter's role in the assessment situation.
- should ensure that the person providing the interpretation has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing. This arrangement should be agreed with Gateway Qualifications.

The BSL interpreter:

- Should have access to the assessment material in advance of the examination to prepare for the signing. Gateway Qualifications will advise how long before the assessment the BSL/English interpreter can have access to the assessment material.
- Should not interpret technical language or give additional explanations.
- May, at the learner's request, sign any labels or text connected with reference material such as maps, diagrams or graphs. The learner should, however, study the reference material independently.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during the learning programme leading up to the assessment.

The interpretation should not give the learner an unfair advantage and care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, where the learner's understanding of these words is inherent in the purpose of the question. The interpretation should not explain or clarify. In some instances, it may be more appropriate to fingerspell a word.

Any words or phrases interpreted for the learner because a standard sign is not available or appropriate should be underlined on the assessment material, which, if separate from the answer book, should be attached to the learner's answer book. Amended versions of questions should be shown on the assessment material.

The learner using a BSL/English interpreter should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of BSL interpreter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a BSL/ interpreter and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a BSL interpreter is used.
- A BSL interpreter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.
- The BSL interpreter should have an appropriate qualification in the sign language so as not to disadvantage the learner.

Prompter

A learner with severe difficulties with attention may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.

Verbal prompting should not normally be used. The method used by the prompter to bring back the learner's attention should be agreed before the assessment between the learner and the prompter and should be acceptable to the centre. It should be noted that some learners with emotional and behavioural sensitivity/vulnerability and/or mental health conditions may not be comfortable with a 'light tap' prompt. A form of verbal prompting should be considered and agreed for these learners.

In the case of an epileptic learner where the problem is one of temporary absence, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.

A separate invigilator should be present when a prompter is used to ensure that the guidance regarding prompters is followed. The invigilator should be fully informed of the strategies used to regain the learner's attention.

The Centre:

- should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement.
- is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.
- should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.
- should give the prompter clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions should also be given to the invigilator.
- should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.

The prompter:

- should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it may be necessary for them to be so. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. **On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.**
- should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when his / her attention is no longer on the assessment task and that he or she is not, for example, looking away from the paper whilst thinking. Under no circumstances may the prompter draw the attention of the learner to part of the question paper or the learner's answer paper.
- should sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and draw his / her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The learner's attention may be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the learner's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, on the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper).

- is responsible to, and should be approved by, the Head of Centre, SENCo, or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During an assessment, a prompter:

- Should draw the learner's attention back to the task in hand.
- Should use the method of prompting agreed with the learner.
- Should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
- Should not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done. For Entry Level qualifications it may be appropriate for the prompter to direct the learner to the place in the assessment paper where they were last.
- Should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the assessment but should remain vigilant.
- Should immediately refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

Where the problem is one of sustaining concentration, consideration should be given to allowing supervised rest breaks rather than a prompter.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of a prompter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a prompter and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a prompter is used.

A prompter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Practical Assistant

A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks in which the practical assistant may assist include turning the pages of the question paper or guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.

The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations is the skill being assessed, the use of a practical assistant will not be permitted.

A learner using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated separately from other learners. In these cases, a separate invigilator should be present to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed. During practical assessments, the assessor should be present in addition to the practical assistant.

The Centre:

- should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant is an appropriate arrangement. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those qualifications where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.
- is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant.
- should prepare clear written instructions for the practical assistant on the assistance they are able to give the learner. A copy of these instructions should also be given to the invigilator and learner.
- should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.

The practical assistant:

- should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment but should not normally be the learner's own teacher/tutor/assessor except when it is necessary. In such cases, Gateway Qualifications should be specifically consulted. **On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.**
- should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out their instructions accurately.

During the assessment, a practical assistant:

- Should follow the instructions prepared by the Centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner.
- Should ensure the safety of the learner and those around them.
- Should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
- Should not advise the learner which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done.
- Should carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so would cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret

the learner's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment.

- Should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment (there may be parts of the assessment which the learner can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills).
- Should immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of a practical assistant is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a practical assistant and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- A separate invigilator should be present when a practical assistant is used.
- A practical assistant should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Other languages and use of translators

Gateway Qualifications' main language of assessment is English. Gateway Qualifications will undertake to support the delivery of its qualifications in other languages, most notably Welsh, Irish (Gaeilge) and British Sign Language where appropriate, on request and where there is evidence of sufficient demand.

A learner may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification:

- for the Learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language, or

to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English, Irish or Welsh is not required for the role supported by the qualification.

In implementing any arrangements to support other languages, Gateway Qualifications may engage with the relevant regulatory body to seek further advice and guidance on the most appropriate arrangements to put in place to ensure comparability of assessments, moderation and awarding.

Assessments in other languages will only be allowed where proficiency in English, Welsh or Irish is not deemed integral to the assessment.

At all times requests from Centres/learners for reasonable adjustments in relation to the use of other languages must be approved by Gateway Qualifications in advance so as to ensure that final assessments are comparable to that offered in English (Welsh and/or Irish).

Key points:

- Gateway Qualifications may permit the user of a translator if there is a strong rationale and it is clear that the lack of English, Welsh or Irish would not undermine the assessment.
- Gateway Qualifications will not permit the use of an interpreter.
- If the Centre employs the translator themselves, Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to quality assure the assessments and the Centre must be able to produce evidence of the translator's credentials.
- Gateway Qualifications also reserves the right to employ its own translator to carry out an assessment and/or support our quality assurance of the Centre's arrangements.
- Should a translator be used at the Centre then Gateway Qualifications' External Quality Assurer or other staff member will include learners that have had the support of a translator within their monitoring sample.

Transcriber

The transcriber will produce a transcript to assist the examiner/assessor in the assessment of a learner's work. The examiner/assessor will assess the learner's work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner's response(s). For responses produced in Braille or BSL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript.

This arrangement may be used by a learner in the following circumstances:

- Where it would be unreasonable to expect an external assessor to read a learner's handwriting because of poor legibility– it may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competence being assessed.

Where the learner's responses are produced in Braille or in BSL.

The transcriber:

- Should produce the transcript in a separate copy of the question paper/answer booklet or on lined or unlined white paper as appropriate.
- May handwrite or word process the transcript. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink should be used. Pencil must never be used.
- Should, for examinations, produce the transcript immediately after the examination under secure conditions.
- Should not involve the learner in the production of the transcript.
- Should normally transcribe complete answers. In cases where only occasional words need to be transcribed, these may be written on a photocopy of the learner's script. On no account should the learner's original script be marked or annotated in any way.
- Should normally be a word-for-word transcription, i.e. an exact copy of what the learner has written. The transcriber may not insert or omit words or alter their order. In English, any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the learner and must not be corrected. In other qualifications, the transcriber may correct the spelling of non-technical words.
- Should indicate any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- Should not transcribe diagrammatical material. Assessment of such material will be based on the learner's own work.

The Centre:

- should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a transcript will be an effective arrangement.
- should give the transcriber clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do after the assessment.
- should not inform the assessor/marker of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

The transcript should be produced by a member of the Centre's staff who is familiar with the learner's handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where the transcription is for learner's

responses are produced in Braille), or who has the required skills in BSL (where the transcription of learner's responses is produced in BSL).

The transcript(s) should be securely attached to the back of the learner's work and be included with the other work from the Centre for dispatch to the assessor in the normal way. The production of the transcript should not delay the dispatch of scripts to the assessor/marker.

Key points:

- The Centre should check that the use of a transcriber is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The Centre should select a transcriber and fully brief them on their responsibilities.
- A transcriber should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Special Consideration

Definition of special consideration

A special consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or some other event outside of the Learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have materially affected the Learner's ability to:

- (a) take an assessment, or
- (b) demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

(From Ofqual, *General Conditions of Recognition*)

Applying special considerations

All special considerations must be applied for to Gateway Qualifications using the [Special Consideration Request Form](#) on the website.

Special considerations may be applied in the following ways:

- in the form of an allowance of marks, where the assessment is mark based. The size of the mark allowance being determined by the timing, nature and extent of illness or other circumstance.
- in the form of an adjustment made to arrangements for accessing an assessment, where the Learner is not disabled, but whose ability has been affected by an injury or illness.

Special considerations may be applied prior to the time of the assessment, or after the assessment in the case of mark-based adjustments.

Centres should note that where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate a skill or competence or where criteria have to be fully met, or in the case of qualifications that confer a License to Practise, it may not be possible to apply a special consideration.

Circumstances where special consideration may be applied

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, domestic crisis, serious disturbance during the assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.
- Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- No evidence is supplied by the Centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition or circumstance.
- Any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.

- Preparation for an assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.
- The learner is experiencing long term illness or difficulty.
- Misreading of any assessment instructions, lateness or failing to attend the assessment.
- A request is not received within the permissible timescale to apply for special consideration.

Requests for special consideration

Timescales

Requests for special consideration must be submitted **no later than ten working days before the assessment date** where changes to access arrangements to the assessment are being requested.

If a modified version of an assessment paper is required and Gateway Qualifications support in providing these are requested, as much advance notice as possible should be provided of the special consideration request to support its timely availability.

Where the conditions under which the assessment has been conducted are the basis for applying for special consideration **this request must be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than 5 working days after the assessment date.**

Requests and evidence

Requests must include information on the precise nature of the adverse circumstances affecting the learner, including the date when the circumstances first began to affect the learner and whether the learner is still affected during the assessment.

Where the Centre is seeking an adjustment to be applied to the assessment arrangements please refer to the section on [types of adjustments and how to apply them](#) to identify any rules around the provision of those adjustments.

In some cases, medical, psychological or professional letters or reports may be required to support the application for special consideration. These should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessment and wrote the letter/report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. The recency and relevance of this evidence will be evaluated by Gateway Qualifications.

Gateway Qualifications reviews the circumstances and evidence surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage.



gateway
qualifications

enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk

www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk

Tel: 01206 911 211

Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House,
3 Tollgate Business Park, COLCHESTER CO3 8AB

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