

# Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy

## Purpose

The Equality Act 2010 requires Recognised Centres (“Centres”) and/or awarding organisations to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled Learner would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment in comparison to a Learner who is not disabled.

The provision of reasonable adjustments and special consideration is concerned with enabling Learners to receive recognition of their achievement, providing that the comparability, validity, and reliability of the assessment can be assured. These arrangements are not concessions that make assessment easier for Learners, nor are they advantageous to give Learners a head start.

Gateway Qualifications supports the provision of reasonable adjustments and special consideration as part of its access to assessment arrangements and in support of equalities law. These arrangements support Learners with special education needs, disabilities, temporary illness, extenuating circumstances or injuries where it does not alter the integrity or demand of the assessment.

This Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy (the Policy) outlines:

- Gateway Qualifications’ commitment to arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- The responsibilities for ensuring arrangements are considered and applied for according to guidance and procedures for requesting reasonable adjustments and special consideration.

Please note there will be some differences in approach for determining reasonable adjustments and special consideration for different qualifications/apprenticeship standards (standards), and the qualification/standard specification must always be checked to confirm the arrangements.

Both in accordance with equality law and, more generally, under no circumstances should the cost of a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration be passed onto or otherwise met by the relevant Learner (or their parent/carer, as the case may be).

## Scope

This Policy applies to the following qualifications and assessment services where learner assessment is undertaken:

- Qualifications regulated by Ofqual (including apprenticeship assessment), Qualifications Wales and QAA (Access to HE Diplomas)
- Tailored Qualifications.

This Policy does not apply to Quality Mark provision, as Quality Mark courses do not include formal assessment and do not result in assessment decisions or achievement outcomes.

Title: Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy

Requirements relating to accessibility and inclusion for Quality Mark courses are set out separately as part of the Quality Mark service.

## Audience

This Policy is intended for the following audience:

- Recognised Centres (“Centres”) in relation to the offer of qualifications including all Centre staff, associates, freelance staff and contractors
- Apprenticeship Training Providers (“Providers”) in relation to apprenticeship assessment – including all staff, associates, freelance staff and contractors
- Learners
- Gateway Qualifications’ Board of Trustees and Committee members
- Gateway Qualifications’ staff
- Gateway Qualifications’ wider workforce – including consultants, qualification developers, assessment.

## Definitions

### Learner

An individual pursuing a qualification or apprenticeship offered by Gateway Qualifications. For the purposes of this policy, the term learner includes apprentices, and the term learner will be used throughout unless specific distinction is required.

### Reasonable Adjustment

“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.”<sup>1</sup>

A Learner does not necessarily have to be disabled to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment under this Policy. Every Learner who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The Learner may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for reasonable adjustments. (The Equality Act 2010)<sup>2</sup>

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the Learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. They are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the Learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a Learner’s work.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition source: [Ofqual Handbook: General Conditions of Recognition - Section J](#)

<sup>2</sup> Definition source: [Equality Act 2010](#)

## Special Consideration

“A 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.”

## Responsibilities

### Centre/Provider responsibility

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Gateway Qualifications expects its Recognised Centres/Providers to have a Fair Access to Assessment Policy in operation, which reflects the following principles:

- Assessment should be a fair test of Learners’ knowledge and skills
- Recognise that, for some Learners, the usual format of assessment may not be suitable and support Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration, where applicable.
- Support Learners where qualifications and assessments might otherwise unreasonably bar Learners from participating in taking qualifications or assessments.

Recognised Centres/Providers 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 three 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.

Recognised Centre/Provider staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of qualifications must be fully aware of the contents of the Policy and able to inform and advise Learners of any entitlements to Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations. During Recognised Centre visits, Gateway Qualifications’ External Quality Assurers may check relevant colleagues and Learners are aware of its contents and purpose.

During apprenticeship assessment planning, Gateway Qualifications will confirm the apprentice is aware of the contents and purpose of this Policy and whether any adjustments are in place.

Recognised Centres/Providers must read and understand Gateway Qualifications’ [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Guidance](#) for Recognised Centres and Providers and check the relevant qualification/standard specifications for any more specific guidance.

### Gateway Qualifications Responsibilities

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Gateway Qualifications is responsible for making reasonable adjustments for Learners defined as disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Also, to ensure that the

process of approving reasonable adjustments and special considerations is applied fairly and consistently.

As part of the Recognised Centre monitoring activity, External Quality Assurers will review the Recognised Centre's procedure for advising on applying, managing, and recording Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations. The aim is to ensure that Recognised Centres meet the requirements of equality legislation and the qualification specification.

## Related Policies and Documents

This Policy should be read alongside the following:

### Gateway Qualifications

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- Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Centre Agreement Terms and Conditions
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Guidance

### Other Guidance

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- [Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Throughout the development of the policies and processes cited in this document, we have given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as cited under the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not share it.

## Application of Reasonable Adjustments

Gateway Qualifications and its Recognised Centres/Providers are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of removing disadvantage, and what is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of a proposed adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

An adjustment to an assessment should only be considered where the disability or difficulty experienced places the Learner at a significant disadvantage. Where the difficulty is minor, the Recognised Centre/Provider should assist the Learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.

Recognised Centres/Providers should also bear in mind that:

- Learners may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications/standards;

- Learners may need a single adjustment or a combination of adjustments;
- adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions;
- any adjustment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy;
- any adjustment must not give the Learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage;
- any adjustment must reflect the Learner's normal way of working;
- any adjustment must be based on the individual needs of the Learner;
- any adjustment must not compensate the Learner for lack of knowledge, skills or understanding;
- any adjustment must not alter competency standards;
- any adjustment must not compromise health and safety; and
- no adjustment must place other Learners at a significant disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of the assessment, but may involve:

- Revising usual assessment arrangements, e.g. allowing a Learner extra time to complete the assessment.
- Adapting assessment materials, e.g. providing materials in Braille.
- Providing assistance during assessment, e.g. using a sign language interpreter or a reader.
- Re-organising the assessment room, e.g. removing adverse visual stimuli for an autistic Learner.
- Changing the type of assessment, e.g. from a written assessment to a spoken assessment. (Please note for apprenticeship assessment we may require additional permission from the appropriate regulatory authority)
- Using assistive technology, e.g. using screen reading or voice-activated software.
- Providing different coloured backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or using different coloured paper for paper-based assessments.
- Allowing different coloured transparencies to help view assessment papers.

A reasonable adjustment is unique to an individual Learner. For an adjustment to be considered reasonable, this will depend on a number of factors, which will include, but are not limited to:

- the specific assessment requirements of the qualification/standard
- the type of assessment
- the particular needs and circumstances of the disabled Learner
- the effectiveness of the adjustment
- the cost of the adjustment; and
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the Learner and other Learners.

An adjustment may not be approved if it:

- cannot be evidenced that it is the Learner's usual way of working
- involves unreasonable costs to the Recognised Centre/Provider or Gateway Qualifications
- is not deemed to be practical, affordable or involves unreasonable timeframes; or
- affects the security and integrity of the assessment and, therefore, the qualification/standard.

This is because the adjustment is not 'reasonable'.

Reasonable adjustments and, in some circumstances, special considerations are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place.

Where necessary, Recognised Centres/Providers should contact Gateway Qualifications to discuss individual cases.

## Reasonable Adjustments for Access to HE

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For Access to HE, Recognised Centres must follow their own internal processes to determine what access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are required for their students.

All Access to HE Diploma students are required to complete the selected assessment method, as outlined in the Rules of Combination and/or assessment grid. Where a reasonable adjustment may be needed to support an individual student's needs, an alternative assessment may be used for that student, applying the equivalence set out in Gateway Qualifications' guidance on assessment methods to ensure that the same standard is adhered to.

Recognised Centres must keep a record of where students have been provided with an alternative method of assessment, and these must be advised to the Access to HE moderator during their subsequent visit. This ensures that students are not given an unfair advantage or disadvantage in the assessment method issued.

## Process for requesting reasonable adjustments

### Declaring Recognised Centre permitted reasonable adjustments:

Recognised Centres can authorise reasonable adjustments to assessments as detailed in the relevant Qualification Specification. Recognised Centre-approved reasonable adjustments must be recorded against the learner registration record and will be asked for during as part of a quality assurance activity.

### Applying for Gateway Qualifications' permitted reasonable adjustments:

Where the qualification states that reasonable adjustments must be approved by Gateway Qualifications, Recognised Centres will need to apply for adjustments to assessments on behalf of a Learner by completing the [Reasonable Adjustments Request Form](#). A separate application will need to be completed for each Learner.

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted no less than **ten working days** before the assessment. Gateway Qualifications will then aim to respond to requests within five working days of receipt. If this is not going to be possible, then we will provide you with an estimated response date.

### Apprenticeship Assessment

Reasonable adjustments for apprenticeship assessment must be approved by Gateway Qualifications. Requests for reasonable adjustments should ideally be submitted when the learner is registered but no later than 30 days prior to assessment.

## Application of special considerations

Recognised Centres/Providers should always aim to reschedule an assessment for a Learner in the first instance. Applying a special consideration should be a last resort and must not compromise the integrity of an assessment or the reliability and validity of its outcome.

Gateway Qualifications may consider extending the registered cohort end date for the qualification to allow time for assessments to be completed. If, however, a Learner is unable to attend alternative assessment sessions due to specific circumstances, a special consideration may be applicable.

Each request for special consideration will be unique to that Learner or assessment. These guidelines offer some broad principles for the Recognised Centre/Provider to follow. Further information should be sought in each case from Gateway Qualifications.

Special consideration should not give the Learner an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause users of the certificate, for example potential employers or Higher Education application scrutineers, to be misled regarding a Learner's achievements. The Learner's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the Learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. The effect of the consideration given will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the Learner. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a Learner's result.

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 circumstances.
- 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 at the time of the assessment or after the assessment in the case of mark-based adjustments.

Recognised Centres/Providers should note that requests for special consideration will not be permissible under the following circumstances:

- 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/standards that confer a Licence to Practice, it may not be possible to apply a special consideration.
- In some circumstances, for example, for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the Learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.
- If the assessment is missed due to pre-planned arrangements such as holiday, and hospital appointments.
- If it provides unfair advantage or disadvantage to Learners.
- If the insufficient supporting evidence is not provided, such as a medical certificate, where consideration is requested for a medical condition.

- If the request is based on a minor illness or a minor disturbance during the assessment, such as a mobile phone ringing.
- If the request alters or prevents the assessment / activity from providing a reliable indication of the understanding and demonstration of the knowledge, skills and behaviours being assessed.

The following examples reflect where special considerations may be applied for. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Incapacitating illness of the Learner
- Terminal illness of the Learner
- Serious injury affecting the Learner
- Recent bereavement of a close family member or friend
- Terminal illness of a parent or sibling
- Serious domestic crisis
- Serious disturbances during the assessment
- Accidental or unexpected events at the time of the assessment (for example, being given the wrong examination paper, a power failure or other technical issues, cyber-attack on the Centre or provider)
- Serious car accident
- Flare up of a congenital illness, such as, Asthma, Diabetes, Epilepsy
- Physical assault trauma.

## Process for requesting special considerations

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### Applying for Gateway Qualifications special consideration

Recognised Centres / Providers need to apply to Gateway Qualifications for special consideration using the [Special Consideration Request Form](#). A separate form should normally be completed for each Learner for each qualification/assessment. However, in cases where a group of Learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event (e.g. fire alarm), a single form should be submitted, with a list of Learners affected attached to the form. Supporting information or evidence should be submitted to support the request, such as:

- A doctor's certificate
- Medical certificate
- Statement from the invigilator

This is not an exhaustive list.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted **no later than two working days before the assessment** or **as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than two working days** after the assessment. Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of the assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- the application has been overlooked at the Recognised Centre/Provider, and the oversight is confirmed by the Recognised Centre/Provider contact;

- medical evidence comes to light about a Learner's condition, which demonstrates that the Learner must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment;
- for onscreen assessments where results are immediately available.

If the application for special consideration is successful, Gateway Qualifications will review the Learner's performance based on the available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a Learner's result.

Gateway Qualifications has also provided further guidance for Recognised Centres/Providers to aid in completing these forms, which is available within Gateway Qualifications' Centre Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations (available via the website).

## Eligibility criteria

Please refer to the [Gateway Qualifications' Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations](#) Guidance for Recognised Centres and Providers for eligibility criteria.

## Special Considerations for Access to HE

Wherever possible, if a learner can be assessed, they should be assessed. Extensions to the deadlines for specific units within the duration of the course, for good reason, should be granted using the Centre's own systems before the unit deadline. Otherwise, the work/submission is late. For extensions past the end of the course deadline, it is necessary to submit these to the moderator for approval during Final Moderation. These will be agreed upon, where appropriate, at the Final Awards Board.

In some exceptional circumstances, not all assessments can take place, and in such cases, the award through extenuation can support the award of unit(s) that make up the Diploma. The award through extenuation is evidence-based and will be agreed upon at the Final Awards Board.

Download the appropriate documentation from our website on the [Forms and Templates](#) page or contact [access@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:access@gatewayqualifications.org.uk) for any help or support with this process.

## Apprenticeship Assessment

Centres, Learners and/or Employers need to apply to Gateway Qualifications for special consideration using the [Special Consideration Request Form](#).

Requests for special consideration should be submitted **no later than two working days before the assessment** or **as soon as possible after the assessment and no later than two working days** after the assessment.

If the application for special consideration is successful, Gateway Qualifications will review the Apprentice's performance based on the available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a Apprentice's result.

## Malpractice

A Centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to assessments set out by Gateway Qualifications has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead Gateway Qualifications to withhold the Learner's result or revoke their certification. Failure to comply includes any or all of the following, without limitation:

- implementing Gateway Qualifications approved reasonable arrangements without obtaining prior approval from Gateway Qualifications;
- implementing Recognised Centre permitted reasonable adjustments that are not supported by evidence; failing to declare Recognised Centre permitted reasonable adjustments to Gateway Qualifications; or
- failing to retain records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations in accordance with Gateway Qualifications' retention of assessment material requirements.

Instances of malpractice will be dealt with in accordance with the [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure](#).

## Review arrangements and monitoring

Gateway Qualifications will periodically review this Policy and the associated procedures and revise as necessary. As part of the review consideration will be given to feedback received and regulatory/legislative requirements.

If you would like to feedback on any views on this Policy, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this document.

Gateway Qualifications' Quality and Standards and Access to HE Committees are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the application of this Policy. An annual summary is provided to the Board of Trustees for monitoring and ratification.

## Legal and Regulatory References

UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Gateway Qualifications' status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.

This Policy addresses the following legislation and/or regulatory requirements:

Regulator or Relevant Governing Body	Reference Details	Legislation/Regulatory Reference
UK Law	Equality Act 2010	Section 96(7)
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	Condition No: G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustment G7 Arrangements for Special Consideration
Qualification Wales	Standard Conditions of Recognition	Condition No:

		G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustment G7 Arrangements for Special Consideration
Qualification Assurance Agency	QAA Licensing Criteria (until 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2026)	50(f) Provider and course recognition 96 Standardisation and moderation
	QAA Access to HE Conditions (from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2026)	Condition D1: Content and structure of Diplomas Condition E2: Assessment design

## Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact:

Telephone: 01206 911211  
 Email: [enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk)  
 Post: Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 6 Tollgate Business Park, COLCHESTER, CO3 8AB

## Document Controls

<b>Document Name</b>	Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy
<b>Version</b>	4.7
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<b>Review Date</b>	May 2028
<b>Owner:</b>	Director of Awarding

## Revision History

Revision Date	Version	Updated By	Summary of Changes
May 2026	4.7	Director of Awarding	Update to remove references relating to End-point Assessment with Apprenticeship Assessment as applicable.  QAA Regulatory reference update to show the Conditions effective from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2026 and Licence Criteria effect to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2026.
February 2026	4.6	Director of Awarding	Scope revised to include the position of reasonable adjustments and special

			considerations for Tailored Qualifications and Quality Mark provision.
May 2025	4.5	Head of Quality and Standards	Policy transferred to the new policy document template. Criteria by which a reasonable adjustment may not be granted reviewed and updated.