

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures and responsibilities involved when a centre, candidate, or employer requests reasonable adjustments or special considerations related to assessments delivered by DSW. This policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition by ensuring fair access to assessment for all candidates, without compromising the validity, reliability, or comparability of the assessments. It also reflects DSW's values of inclusion, integrity, and candidate-centered assessment.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all candidates registered on DSW qualifications
- all centres and associated personnel involved in delivering and assessing DSW qualifications
- DSW staff and contractors involved in assessment design, delivery, and quality assurance of DSW qualifications
- external contributors such as employers.

It covers requests related to:

- methods and formats of assessment delivery
- circumstances arising during or after the assessment.

3. DEFINITIONS

Reasonable Adjustments: Pre-arranged actions that reduce the impact of a disability or condition without compromising assessment integrity.

Examples may include:

- extra time during assessments
- use of assistive technology (e.g., screen readers, speech-to-text software)
- modified assessment materials (e.g. large print)
- alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
- rest breaks
- use of a reader or scribe.

Special Considerations: Post-assessment actions that may be taken when a candidate was disadvantaged during the assessment due to unforeseen circumstances.

Examples may include:

- illness or injury at the time of assessment
- bereavement or serious personal circumstances
- disruption during the assessment (e.g., fire alarm, technical failure).

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal daily activities.

Candidate: An individual registered with the awarding organisation for the purpose of undertaking an assessment leading to a qualification or certification.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

DSW is committed to ensuring fair access to assessment by offering reasonable adjustments and considering special circumstances that may affect a candidate's performance. All requests are handled in accordance with legal, regulatory, and ethical standards while maintaining assessment validity and comparability.

4.2 SPECIFIC ACTIONS OR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Candidates must communicate any needs or issues via their centre
- Centre's must submit requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations with supporting evidence
- DSW will review and respond to all formal requests in line with the stated procedures and timelines
- Disability is addressed through reasonable adjustment, not special consideration

DSW reserves the right to apply fees for certain reasonable adjustment or special consideration requests that require significant additional resources, such as bespoke assessment materials or arrangements. Centres will be notified in advance of any applicable fees.

Where adjustments may require changes to existing contractual agreements between DSW and the Centre or Assessor, these will be agreed prior to implementation.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING

- Reasonable Adjustments: Must be submitted at least 30 days before the assessment date
- Special Considerations: Must be submitted within 2 working days of the assessment.

Requests must be submitted Proficient, Guidance for submitting requests can be found in the ATP Guidance for Submitting Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations document.

5.2 INVESTIGATION AND DECISION-MAKING

- All requests will be reviewed and a response provided within 10 working days of receipt
- If more time is required, a provisional timescale will be provided within 2 working days
- Reviews will assess the practicality, cost, and effectiveness of the proposed adjustment, ensuring assessment validity and comparability are maintained
- In cases where the requested adjustment incurs substantial cost or operational impact, DSW will assess the feasibility and may propose alternative solutions. Centres will be informed of any associated fees or contractual implications before proceeding.
- Supporting evidence must be provided for requests to be reviewed. Acceptable evidence includes but is not limited to:

- A medical letter or report from a GP or specialist
- A psychological or diagnostic assessment report
- A statement from a qualified professional (e.g., SENCo, occupational therapist)
- Historical evidence of support needs (e.g., previous adjustments in education or employment)

Candidate data submitted as part of reasonable adjustment or special consideration requests will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. It will be used solely for the purpose of processing the request and stored securely.

5.3 OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS:

- Approved
- Rejected (insufficient evidence or not reasonable)

It should be noted that we are required by law to do only what is reasonable when considering a request for such an arrangement. Factors that can be taken into consideration include cost, practicality, the effectiveness of the adjustment, and the maintenance of a valid, reliable, and comparable assessment.

Where a request is approved with associated costs or contractual changes, implementation will proceed only upon written agreement from the centre.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- Grade reviewed (adjustment not guaranteed)
- Rejected (based on investigation)

Disability may not be used as grounds for special consideration; in such situations, candidates should request a reasonable adjustment in advance of the assessment taking place.

A special consideration may result in an adjustment to the mark a candidate is given for a specific assessment. Any adjustment will take into account the specific circumstances faced by the candidate at the time of the assessment.

An opportunity to re-sit the assessment may be offered if appropriate. Appeals can be submitted in line with DSW's Appeals and Complaints Policy.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Candidates: Communicate any needs promptly via their Centre
- Centre: Gather evidence, submit requests, and support candidates
- DSW Quality Assurance Team: Ensure compliance with this policy, review requests, and maintain documentation
- DSW Governance Team: Oversee policy implementation and compliance

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually or as needed in response to regulatory updates or significant incidents. Findings from investigations are analysed to inform continuous improvement.

8. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- DSW Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- DSW Appeals Policy
- DSW Complaints Policy
- DSW Data Protection Policy
- Guidance for Submitting Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations

9. REGULATORY REFERENCES

- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (particularly C2, G6 and G7)
- DfE Apprenticeship Assessment Principles (2025)
- DfE Funding Rules (where applicable)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018/UK GDPR

10. CONTACT INFORMATION

Accessible versions of this policy (e.g., large print) are available upon request. Please contact the Quality Team for support.

For questions or further information about this policy, please contact:

DSW Quality Team

Email: quality@dswlearning.co.uk