

The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications

NPTC, and its centres, are required to demonstrate their commitment to ensuring that individual candidates can access qualifications and assessment. The NPTC publication 'The application of reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational qualifications' can be obtained from Verification Services (verification@nptc.org.uk) and provides full details of the requirements, their application and the procedures to follow.

In summary there are three main ways in which to facilitate access:

- By recognising the diverse needs of candidates at the stage where qualifications and assessments are designed. An inclusive design approach will help to ensure that access is built into the qualification and assessment for all candidates;
- By making appropriate reasonable adjustments to standard assessment arrangements, wherever this is required to enable access;
- By giving special consideration to candidates who are temporarily suffering from illness or indisposition.

Reasonable adjustments

- A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation;
- Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve allowing a candidate extra time to complete the assessment activity or adapting assessment materials, such as providing assessment materials in Braille;
- Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place. They constitute an arrangement to give the candidate access to the qualification;
- In all cases, the work produced by the candidate will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed candidates.

NPTC, and its centres, are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will be taken into consideration.

For details on the requirements of centres, please see **section 4**.

Section 5 explains how adjustments will depend upon:

- The specific assessment requirements of the qualification;
- The type of assessment;
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual candidate.

Section 6 describes how candidates needs can be identified, whether a reasonable adjustment may be needed, and how to identify the appropriate adjustment. It also explains the requirements for identifying and obtaining supporting evidence.

Section 7 describes in detail the principles for making reasonable adjustments, and identifies those that:

- Are permitted by the centre
- Need to be permitted by the external verifier
- Require permission from NPTC directly

(Please note, Appendix 1 contains all the forms for recording and applying for reasonable adjustments and special considerations and Appendix II holds the detailed 'permissions table' for quick reference)

The range of reasonable adjustments and principles to be adopted are described in detail together with additional considerations for different qualification types.

Section 8 describes the requirement for record keeping within the centre.

Special consideration

- Special consideration may be given following a scheduled assessment to candidate's who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the assessment. Each request for special consideration will be unique to that candidate or assessment;
- Special considerations can, if successful, result in a minor post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the candidate;
- Special consideration should not give the candidate an unfair advantage, and neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. The results must convey a true reflection of the candidate's ability, and not their potential;
- Centres should note that where an assessment requires the candidate to demonstrate practical competence or where the criteria need to be fully met, or in the case of qualifications that confer a 'License to Practice', it may not be possible to apply a special consideration.

Special consideration may be given following a scheduled assessment to candidate:

- Who is present for the assessment, but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances that arose at, or near to, the time of the assessment;
- Who misses part of the assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

Section 9 describes the general principles for centres to follow and candidate eligibility criteria regarding special considerations.

If you have any queries or comments, please contact Verification Services or verification@nptc.org.uk.