

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy

Introduction

This policy is primarily aimed at our customers (centres) and learners who are undertaking or have completed an Step4Training qualification or unit. It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests in a consistent manner.

This policy outlines:

our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to our qualifications

how learners qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations

the reasonable adjustments we will permit and those where permission is required in advance before they are applied

what special considerations will be given to learners

Centre's responsibility

It is important that all centre staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Step4Training qualifications, including your learners, are fully aware of the contents of this policy.

During centre visits, our External Verifiers may check relevant colleagues and learners are aware of its contents and purpose.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements, and revise it as necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or other external agencies, or as a result to changes in legislation.

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

Arrangements not covered by this policy

Circumstances for both internal and external assessment not covered in this policy should be discussed with Step4Training before assessment takes place. Please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Appeals Policy.

Policy overview

Step4Training is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation in relation to the development and delivery of our qualifications, and includes, at the time of writing, but is not limited to, the Equality Act 2010 or Northern Ireland Equality Law. We seek to uphold human rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and any special educational needs of our learners, and to provide equitable reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered on our qualifications. As an approved centre, we expect you to have a fair access to assessment policy or approach in operation, which reflects the following principles and guidelines.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners the standard format of an assessment may not be suitable. We ensure that our qualifications and assessments do not bar learners from taking our qualifications.

We recognise that reasonable adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of assessment where:

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

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a head start.

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

- through reasonable adjustments
- through special considerations

Process for requesting reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations

If a centre is making a request on behalf of its learners it should complete the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration request form (see end of this policy) and in doing so supply relevant supporting information:

- learner's name and Step4Training registration number
- nature of, and rationale for the request
- supporting information/evidence (e.g. medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information)

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted a minimum of 20 working days before the assessment.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and a maximum of five working days after the assessment. Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the centre 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, the learner's performance will be reviewed based on the available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

How Step4Training will deal with requests

We will aim to respond to all requests within five working days of receipt. If we are unable to respond on the same day, we will provide you with an estimated response date.

Definition of reasonable adjustments

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 must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity

adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille

providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader

re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner

changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment

using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software

providing the mechanism to have different coloured backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments

providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers

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.

Step4Training and 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, 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 also be taken into consideration.

Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who had temporarily

experienced: an illness or injury

some other event outside of their control and which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on

that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage; neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his / her potential ability. Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres should note that:

where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a licence to practice, it may not be possible to apply 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

Contact us

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

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Section 1 - Making reasonable adjustments

Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment. A reasonable adjustment:

- should not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- should not give the learners an unfair advantage
- should reflect the learner's normal way of working
- should be based on the individual need of the learner

Step4Training and our 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 criteria.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, Step4Training and our centres need to bear in mind the following (where appropriate for the related qualification):

- adjustments to assessment should not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills. The learner must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment
- any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards should not be altered. Whilst we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a learner with a disability or difficulty is not placed at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled, in terms of access to assessment, there is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice which is defined as a competence standard. All learners' performance must be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered, but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do
- any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage over other learners. The qualification of a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. As vocational qualifications may lead directly to employment, achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do
- any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of the learner. Decisions about adjustments to assessment should be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual learner, the assessment requirements of the qualification and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. A centre should not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. The learner should be consulted throughout the process
- any adjustment to assessment should reflect the learner's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment
- any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable
- all adjustments to assessment must be authorised by the Centre Contact or a member of staff with delegated authority

The process for making the adjustment

There are three routes through which a learner may be granted adjustments to assessment. These routes are to:

use reasonable adjustments permitted at the discretion of the centre

In some cases, Step4Training may permit the centre to implement reasonable adjustments without seeking prior permission. In these cases, Step4Training requires centres to keep records for inspection (including any declaration(s) that are signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Centre).

- apply to Step4Training for permission
- agree the adjustment with the assigned Step4Training External Verifier to the centre

Centres should keep records of adjustments they have permitted and those they have requested from Step4Training. These records should normally be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they apply.

It is recommended that centres nominate members of staff to take responsibility for demonstrating the implementation and recording of adjustments to assessments for monitoring by Step4Training or the regulatory authorities.

Qualification specific information

Health and safety considerations for practical assessments

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised in the name of 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 him/her and 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 Step4Training 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.

Assessments which are not taken under examination conditions

With these types of assessments, the centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment.

These types of assessments may include, for example, coursework, set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time, assessment activities devised by the centre or by Step4Training, assessments where the learner has to collect, present or describe evidence, information or opinion in order to demonstrate competence.

The assessment requirements for many vocational qualifications fall into the above.

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In these types of assessments, the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, the centre may:

allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids: are generally commercially available

reflect the learner's normal way of working

enable the learner to meet the specified

criteria do not give the learner an unfair

advantage

present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified assessment criteria, for example, materials do not have to be in written or spoken format, unless specified by the assessment requirements

allow the learner to present their answers or evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria, for example, answers or evidence do not have to be in written or spoken format unless specified by the assessment criteria

The centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements. The centre is advised to contact Step4Training to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used
- be assessable
- be able to be moderated or verified

In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition/disability means a learner's completion of assessment takes additional time it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification. A centre should note that it will not be possible to allow time extensions for all qualifications.

Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for these types of assessments, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from Step4Training. The centre should ensure that they adhere to Step4Training's requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

Assessments for work-based competency qualifications

Work-based competency qualifications require learners to compile a portfolio of evidence which can consist of a mixture of work products, observation reports, witness statements, knowledge tests, etc. Making appropriate access arrangements in qualifications of this type can be more straightforward than in qualifications where the mode of assessment is more firmly fixed.

The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when the learner is first accepted onto a programme.

Where there is an identified need, the learner may present their evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille or on digital audio/visual media. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses or signed delivery. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto digital media, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or sign language is available to translate the material for the internal and external verifier/assessor if this is required.

Where the learner uses alternative means of providing evidence, the method must have equal rigour to those used for other learners.

The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of the method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.

The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids which are available in the workplace or which are commercially available in order to demonstrate competence. For example, these may include specially adapted equipment or assistive technology. The centre is required to ensure that a learner has the necessary and appropriate resources to enable the learner with access-related needs to produce evidence of developing the portfolio.

All adjustments should be consistent with the learner's normal way of working and must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.

While assessors, internal and external verifiers normally prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence which is varied, the centre should be prepared to accept a more restrictive variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. It is sensible, however, to discuss this matter with the internal and/or external verifier at an early stage.

Where reasonable adjustments are put in place for verified types of assessments, the centre should check whether permission needs to be obtained from Step4Training or the external verifier. The centre should ensure that they adhere to Step4Training's requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

Assessments which are taken under examination conditions

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

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.

Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below:

Communication and interaction need

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) or Irish Sign Language (ISL)/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.

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/ISL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader and scribe. In addition, they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and extra time to complete assessments.



Behavioural, Emotional and Social needs

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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 examination time is used for this purpose instead of answering the questions.

Identifying learners' needs

Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment.

The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs

and that these procedures comply with the requirements of disability and equal opportunity

legislation. A centre may choose to use the following guide:

identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment. A learner 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. Once the learner's need has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes

identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed. Relevant centre staff should decide, in conjunction with the learner, whether he or she will be 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 he or she knows 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, about whether adjustments may be necessary. Judgements should be made on the basis of individual need. If an adjustment is needed, it should be documented for audit purposes

identify the appropriate adjustment. When identifying which adjustments 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 assessments and the assessment requirements of the qualification. Certain simple adjustments may be all that is required, e.g., adjusting seat height or providing an arm rest, etc. The same learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Different qualifications make different demands. For example, a dyslexic learner may need extra time to complete a written test, but may not need extra time for a purely practical activity. Once the adjustment has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with the guidelines in this policy. The centre must ensure that the adjustment will not impair the ability to assess the learner's performance, skill or knowledge fairly in each assessment.

Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable using the form at the back of this policy.

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

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 who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the centre does 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 have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. The centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation.

- Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the centre by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area; staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff.

If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This 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. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included.

History of provision within the centre.

This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.

Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative specialists.

This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who 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.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need 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 limited effect on achievement in the assessment. 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. A centre should maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments that have been made.

Range of reasonable adjustments

The Permissions Table (in Appendix 1) lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list and centres and external verifiers have a duty to seek advice from Step4Training in any case where they do not consider that they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is needed, and/or how it should be applied.

Centres should note that:

not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the centre is advised to contact Step4Training for advice. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to select an alternative assessment task for the learner the learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions

The list of reasonable adjustments is organised under the following

headings: changes to assessment conditions
use of mechanical and electronic aids
modifications to presentation of assessment material
alternative ways of presenting 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 he/she has a condition which affects the speed of processing. 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 Step4Training 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 assessment.

Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or



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in group activities where the learner's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

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 onscreen assessments, the centre needs to check with Step4Training 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.

Summary:

Centres must ensure that both the learner and his/her 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 organisation of the assessment room

Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.

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 light.

Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.

Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

Summary:

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/ISL/English interpreters, or word processing equipment which may disturb other learners.

Summary:

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. Step4Training advice must be sought on this.

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

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

Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners

The centre should ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of 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.

A centre should contact Step4Training if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage/disadvantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements.

Summary:

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 records their spoken responses.

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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 Step4Training if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear. It should be noted that the use of such software may introduce a hidden assessment agenda, in that the learner has to master the use of the software in addition to mastering the assessment criteria. Some learners may need extra time if they use such software.

Summary:

The learner should be familiar with how the assistive technology works.

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/ISL/English dictionaries/glossaries) can be allowed in all vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements.

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 his/her 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.

Summary:

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

For paper-based assessments, enlargements for paper-based assessments may be used. Examples of these include: unmodified enlarged 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 paper 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 Step4Training is able to provide externally set assessment material in enlarged format, the centre must apply a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment.

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 his/her 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

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.

Summary:

Where appropriate, the centre should meet Step4Training's deadlines for requesting enlarged assessment

material, normally a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment.

In cases where the centre is permitted by Step4Training to enlarge assessment material, the centre should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged.

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



the practice tests.

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Assessment material in Braille

Assessment material may be provided by Step4Training in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner. Please note; there will be a cost for this service. Please contact Step4Training for further details.

The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailing.

Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams (where possible).

Where Step4Training is able to provide externally set assessment material in Braille, the centre must apply a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment. If Braille assessment material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the centre should inform Step4Training immediately as any costs incurred in producing such material will be passed to the centre.

Permission may be given to the centre to produce externally set assessment materials in Braille. Step4Training will advise when this can be permitted.

Where the centre is permitted to produce externally set assessment material in Braille, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is brailled. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the brailled material.

Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner, not all blind people are fluent in Braille. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the brailing of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

Summary:

Where appropriate, the centre should meet Step4Training's deadlines of a minimum of ten weeks before

the date of the assessment for requesting brailled assessment material.

In cases where the centre is permitted by Step4Training to Braille assessment material, the centre should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is brailled.

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) or Irish Sign Language (ISL). In either case, the learner's English may be limited and modified assessment material may be necessary. BSL/ISL 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/ISL 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 the text.

Where Step4Training is able to provide language modified externally set assessment material, the centre will have to apply a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment. Please note; there will be a cost for this service. Please contact Step4Training for further details.

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 his/her 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.

Summary:

Where appropriate, the centre should meet Step4Training's deadlines for requesting language modified



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assessment material, normally a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment.

In cases where the centre is permitted by Step4Training 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 British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL)

Where the centre cannot provide a BSL/ISL/English interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL/ISL version of assessment material may be provided on DVD 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 Step4Training is able to provide externally set assessment material in BSL/ISL, the centre will have to apply a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment. Please note; there will be a cost for this service. Please contact Step4Training for further details.

Where the centre is permitted to translate externally set assessment material into BSL/ISL, 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 his/her 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/ISL.

Centres should note that translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL/ISL will not be suitable for all assessments and that they need to contact Step4Training for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.

Centres should read the guidance for BSL/ISL/English interpreters in conjunction with this section.

Summary:

The centre should meet Step4Training's deadlines for requesting assessment material in BSL/ISL, normally

a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment.

In cases where the centre is permitted to translate the assessment material into BSL/ISL, 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.

Summary:

Where Step4Training is able to provide externally set assessment material on coloured paper, the centre will have to apply by the deadlines set by Step4Training a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment. Please note; there may be a cost for this service. Please contact Step4Training for further details.

- 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.

On-screen assessments

Learners may normally be 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 the practice test before they take an assessment.

Summary:

Where the centre is permitted to modify the assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for the accuracy of the modification.

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 the assessment material has visual content that is crucial to the understanding of the questions, such as illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketches.

Where Step4Training is able to provide externally set assessment material in audio format, the centre will have to apply a minimum of ten weeks before the date of the assessment. Please note; there will be a cost for this service. Please contact Step4Training for further details.

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 his/her 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.

Summary:

Where appropriate, the centre should meet Step4Training deadlines for requesting assessment material in audio format, a minimum of ten 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 ICT is generally perceived to have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessment.

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



Use of ICT to present responses

Special Considerable Policy

The use of ICT in this context should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.

For many learners with additional support needs, computers provide an effective means of independent communication. Consideration should be given to whether the learner can meet the assessment criteria using a computer.

A computer 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 his / her normal way of working. The learner should be consulted before a decision is taken whether the use of ICT is an appropriate adjustment.

When a computer is used, other than as a basic word processor, the centre needs to consider the effect and appropriateness of facilities like spell-checkers, electronic dictionaries, thesauri, calculators, predictive software, etc that are available.

The use of the computer 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 computer is used, the centre should suggest alternative arrangements.

Summary:

The centre should ensure that:

The computer is 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 computer is working correctly at the time of an assessment. It is the centre's responsibility to arrange the ICT provision for the learner.

The learner has access only to those facilities (e.g., spell/grammar checker, voice activated software, speech reading software,) which have been agreed in advance with Step4Training.

The learner is not able to gain access to existing files or documents. Where a system operates from CD, the learner must be supplied with a formatted disk containing only the software required for the assessment. The computer should be free-standing and not be connected to the Internet, unless this is required in the assessment and if it is connected to the Internet then access to the Internet is strictly monitored by a supervisor.

The learner is accommodated separately if the use of a computer is likely to distract other learners. In this case separate invigilation should be arranged.

The learner is present when his/her work is printed. It is normal practice for a printed version of the learner's work to be submitted and authenticated for assessment, and not the disk. Where a question/answer booklet is provided, the learner might need to answer some questions in the booklet and type other answers. Answers should be clearly labelled and the printout must be attached to the question paper/answer booklet. The learner should be familiar with and able to have use of the computer and its software. The learner's work is saved frequently and, if possible, using an auto-save facility.

Spoken responses using electronic recording devices, for example CD ROMs, memory sticks, audio cassettes

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 there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material.

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.

Summary:

The centre should check whether permission should be sought from Step4Training 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/ISL

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 (Gaelige) is being assessed.

A learner can sign full responses in BSL or ISL. 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 paper translation of the responses 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.

Summary:

The centre should check whether permission should be sought from Step4Training to sign the learner's 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.



Special Considerable Policy

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.

Summary:

The centre should select a transcriber with the required level of skill in Braille and fully brief him / her 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

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

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader.

The reader should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, Step4Training should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.

The centre 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.

A 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.

The centre should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role. If the learner and reader are accommodated separately, on a one to one basis, the invigilator may act as the reader to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.

The centre 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, if they are not accommodated separately.

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.

The learner using a reader should be accommodated separately, wherever possible, so as not to disturb other learners.

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.

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

The reader:

Should read only as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment him/herself.

Should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing-impaired learner, the reader should articulate 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.

Summary:

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 him / her on their responsibilities.

If the learner and reader are accommodated separately, on a one to one basis, the invigilator may act as the reader.

A reader should not be allowed where such use 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.

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, especially where the learner is likely to use a word processor rather than a scribe in the workplace.

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 recognition technology (assistive technology) may be used in the Writing component of qualification where its use reflects the learner's normal way of writing.

The centre should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. A 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.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe. A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing or ICT.

A scribe should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the awarding body should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.

The centre should ensure that the learner and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role. The centre 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.

The learner using a scribe should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

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

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

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 him/herself 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 are 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 Step4Training 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

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

Summary:

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 him / her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used.

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

British Sign Language (BSL) / Irish Sign Language (ISL)

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

The regulatory criteria state: “A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment” (Ofqual’s General Conditions of Recognition September 2013)

Where BSL/ISL is the primary means of communication for a deaf learner, these learners may have the support of a BSL/ISL/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 competences being assessed, BSL /ISL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions. The centre should ensure that the BSL/ISL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment.

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

The centre 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.

The centre 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 the awarding body.

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 finger-spell 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/ISL/English interpreter should be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

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

The BSL interpreter:

Should have access to the assessment material in advance of the examination to prepare for the signing. Step4Training will advise how long before the assessment the BSL/ISL/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.

Summary:

The centre should check that the use of BSL/ISL interpreter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.

The centre should select a BSL/ISL interpreter and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a BSL/ISL interpreter is used.

A BSL interpreter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. The BSL/ISL interpreter should have an appropriate qualification in the sign language so as not to disadvantage the learner.

Prompter:

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

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.

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

A prompter should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it may be necessary to do so. In such cases Step4Training should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.

Prompters 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.

The prompter 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). 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 absenting, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.

The centre should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.

The centre 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. The centre should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.

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 prompter is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre 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 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.

Summary:

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 him / her 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 with which the practical assistant may assist are, turning the pages of the question paper or, guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.

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.

The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant. 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 to do so. In such cases,

Step4Training should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner

be used as a practical assistant.

A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out his/her instructions accurately.

The centre 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. The centre should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.

The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be 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.

During a practical 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 him / her
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

Summary:

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 him / her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a practical assistant is used. A practical assistant should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

Other languages and use of translators

Step4Training primarily offers its qualifications and units in the language of English. Nonetheless Step4Training will undertake to support the delivery of our qualifications in other languages, most notably Welsh, Irish (Gaeilge) and British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where appropriate and upon request and evidence of sufficient demand. For example 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 UK-based languages, Step4Training 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 required in the workplace for individuals to be deemed capable of carrying out the role (associated with the qualification). At all times requests from centres/learners for reasonable adjustments in relation to the use of other languages must be approved by Step4Training in advance so as to ensure that final assessments would be comparable to that offered in English (Welsh and/or Irish)

Summary:

Step4Training 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 prevent a learner carrying out the role that the unit/qualification relates. Step4Training may refuse to permit the use of an interpreter.

If the centre were to employ a translator themselves Step4Training reserves the right to quality assure the assessments and the centre must be able to produce evidence of the translator's credentials. Step4Training 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 your allocated External Verifier will include learners that have had the support of a translator within their monitoring sample.

Transcriber

This arrangement may be used by a learner in the following circumstances: Where the learner's handwriting is illegible, but he or she is unable to use a computer or dictate responses - 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/ISL

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/ISL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript).

The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a transcript will be an effective arrangement.

The centre should give the transcriber clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do after the assessment.

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

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.

The centre should not inform the assessor/marker of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

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.

Special Considerable Policy

Should indicate any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different coloured 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.

Summary:

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 him / her on their responsibilities.

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

Section 2 - Making special considerations

We will review 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.

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, 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

there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment

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

any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence

preparation for a component 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

Appendix 1 – Reasonable adjustments permissions table

This table outlines some of the decisions on reasonable adjustments that can be made. However, centres and external verifiers have a duty to seek advice from Step4Training in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

Permitted – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre

Apply – Apply to Step4Training for permission

Extra time up to 25%	Permitted	Permitted
Extra time in excess of 25%	Permitted	Apply
Supervised rest breaks	Permitted	Apply
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Permitted	Permitted
Separate accommodation within the centre	Permitted	Permitted
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Permitted	Permitted
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	Permitted	Apply
Use of assistive software	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	Permitted	Apply
Assessment Material in enlarged format	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in Braille	Apply	Apply
Language modified assessment material	Apply	Apply
Assessment material in BSL/ISL	Apply	Apply
Assessment material on coloured paper	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in audio format	Apply	Apply
Use of ICT	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Responses using electronic devices	Permitted	Apply
Responses in BSL/ISL	Permitted	Apply
Responses in Braille	Permitted	Apply



Special Considerable Policy

Reader	Permitted	Apply
Scribe	Permitted	Apply
BSL/ISL/English interpreter	Permitted	Apply
Prompter	Permitted	Apply
Practical assistant	Apply	Apply
Transcriber	Permitted	Apply
Other	Apply	Apply