

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Summary of Principles

The Graded Qualifications Alliance will take reasonable care to:

- provide valid alternative arrangements for access to examination and assessment;
- give special consideration to the performance in assessment where specific circumstances have arisen at or near to the time of assessment that were not provided for by prior reasonable adjustments;
- ensure that neither a reasonable adjustment nor special consideration gives an unfair advantage over other candidates;
- ensure that reasonable adjustments do not reduce the validity or reliability of the examination or assessment;
- ensure that the provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration does not mislead the users of the qualification about the candidate's attainment;
- ensure that the provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration does not compromise the integrity or credibility of the qualification;
- determine reasonable adjustments and special consideration in relation to the defined needs of individual candidates;
- consider the candidate's usual methods of learning and producing work when making decisions on reasonable adjustments.

Summary of Principles for people entering candidates for GQAL Awards

A person entering a candidate for examination should:

- choose the examination – or the option(s) within a qualification – which is most appropriate for the candidate with a known long-term or permanent disability or learning difficulty;
- diagnose the requirements of each candidate individually making use of specialist advice from external sources, as appropriate;
- ensure that the adjustments requested will assist the candidate to demonstrate his/her attainment without affecting or circumventing assessment requirements;
- consider the candidate's normal way of learning and producing work as a basis for reasonable adjustments provided that this would not give the candidate an unfair advantage or compromise the integrity of the examination or assessment;
- ensure that the candidate has experience of and practice in the use of the adjustments requested;
- consult GQAL at the earliest opportunity in order to plan adjustments for a candidate with particular needs;
- contact GQAL if there is any doubt surrounding the acceptability of proposed adjustments for a particular candidate;
- ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments and special consideration have been agreed with GQAL in advance of an entry being made.

Guidance for people entering candidates with Particular Needs for GQAL Awards

- It should be noted that a candidate with a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not qualify automatically for reasonable adjustments.
- Failure to comply with the Regulations contained in this document may lead to a candidate's result being withheld.
- Send all specific enquiries, requests for advice and completed application forms directly to the Graded Qualifications Alliance, Garden Street Leicester LE1 3UA.

The Regulations and Guidance contained in this document follow those that have been commonly agreed by the Joint Council for General Qualifications setting out the Regulations and Guidance agreed jointly by the awarding bodies for GNVQ courses starting from September 2000 onwards, GCE, VCE and GCSE qualifications.

Reasonable Adjustments

General Regulations on Reasonable Adjustments

1. Reasonable adjustments apply to both permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, and to temporary disabilities, illness and indispositions. In the case of temporary conditions, GQAL should be contacted as soon as possible after the situation arises. If a temporary condition arises during the examination, the advice of GQAL should be sought, wherever possible, especially if the circumstances are unusual or distressing.
2. Avoid making assumptions, on the basis of previous experience or hearsay, about the adjustments that may or may not be made. Judgements are made by GQAL according to the circumstances and needs of the individual candidate.
3. In respect of permanent or long-term conditions, the most appropriate syllabus should be chosen. Whenever possible, the syllabuses and options available should be investigated and the one most suitable to meet the needs of the candidate chosen.
4. Multiple disabilities - Many students with physical disabilities also have sensory difficulties or problems. If candidates have multiple disabilities, all the possibilities for meeting the assessment needs of the candidate should be considered.
5. Before making an application for reasonable adjustments:
 - consult any specialist LEA or other external advisory services available;
 - consider whether the severity or effect of the particular disability is likely to change before the time of the examination;
6. The impact of reasonable adjustments on other candidates should be taken into account and assistance to GQAL should be given to ensure that these do not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates or compromise the integrity of the examination.

7. For some candidates, it may be permissible to use alternative forms of communication to give direction or instruction, or a hearing loop, although these should be kept to a minimum in accordance with examination regulations. Examples of alternative communication could be the use of British Sign Language to give instruction or direction, but only where this does not compromise a candidate's ability to perform the requirements of the examination. Where BSL is the primary means of communication for a deaf candidate, these candidates may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the instructions or directions to them, which are being given by the examiner/assessor. The teacher/centre is responsible for providing this. The BSL interpreter should be recruited with integrity by the centre/teacher and hold an appropriate qualification in sign language, have a good working knowledge of the content of the examination and must not be related to the candidate. A candidate should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during their classes.

8. Candidates with Statements of Special Educational Needs do not necessarily qualify for reasonable adjustments. Where candidates have Statements, action should be taken to ensure their possible needs are considered before the candidate commences the Programme of Study.

9. In all cases, when consideration is being given to a candidate with Particular Needs (whether stated or not), the Parents or Guardians of the candidate must be consulted about, and kept informed of the appropriateness of the award, the demands of a Programme of Study and the nature of the examination requirements before the candidate commences the Programme of Study.

10. Careful consideration must be given to the resourcing implications of any reasonable adjustments which may be agreed.

11. The candidate must have had experience of, and practice in, the use of any reasonable adjustments which are requested.

12. If there is any doubt about the acceptability of the adjustments proposed, the awarding body should be consulted at the earliest opportunity and preferably before the Programme of Study is started.

13. In the case of learning difficulties, there must be evidence of need and a history of provision during the Programme of Study. The evidence must take the form of **one** of the following:

- a Statement of Special Educational Needs;

or

- a relevant diagnostic report confirming learning disability produced by an educational psychologist or other appropriately qualified and competent person.

The evidence must be held by the centre and made available to GQAL on request.

How to apply for Reasonable Adjustments

Evidence Requirements

Historical evidence of the candidate's needs and an indication of how these needs have been met during the Programme of Study must be provided to the awarding body. Centres will be expected to establish that the candidate's needs have been recognised over the duration of the Programme of Study and that the adjustments requested for the examination reflect past and present requirements.

In the case of learning difficulties, evidence of need should be confirmed by a history of provision during the Programme of Study within the school/college, supported by *Current* medical/psychological evidence from a competent person to support the application. (A competent person is defined as a Medical Doctor, Chartered Psychologist or a Full/Affiliated Member of the Association of Educational Psychologists or person of similar professional and relevant standing.)

Submitting Applications

Applications for reasonable adjustments for graded examination must be submitted to the Graded Qualifications Alliance, Garden Street, Leicester, LE1 3UA at least 12 weeks before intended date of examination.

Candidates with Physical or Other Disabilities

You should read this guidance in conjunction with the General Regulations section on reasonable adjustments.

The guiding principle in practical assessments must be safety at all times. Candidates must neither endanger other candidates nor endanger themselves.

In every case centres must ensure that the Programme of Study and an Examination is suitable for the candidate and not beyond his or her physical capabilities. This requires that the candidate's needs should have been recognised over a period of time and the adjustments proposed for the Programme of Study and Examination should reflect past and present need. If no previous adjustments have been made, centres must consider very carefully whether arrangements are justified. Where any doubt exists centres must contact GQAL before a candidate commences work on a Programme of Study leading to an examination. The centre must avoid misleading the parents, students and other interested parties about the candidate's likely acceptance for the examination and the level of attainment possible.

Where an examiner/assessor has reasonable grounds for believing that candidates might either endanger other candidates or endanger themselves the examiner/assessor is required by GQAL not to proceed with the examination and to inform GQAL immediately that this is the case.

Reasonable adjustments are intended to enable the candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment but the centre must ensure and the examiner/assessor must be satisfied that they do not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates in the same examination.

Special Consideration

Eligibility for Special Consideration

1. A candidate who is fully prepared for assessment will be eligible for special consideration if:

- (a) Performance in a component is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate, e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the examination (but see paragraphs 3(a) below);
- (b) Reasonable adjustments which were made in respect of a permanent or long-term disability proved inappropriate or inadequate.

2. A candidate will **not** be eligible for special consideration if:

- (a) Any part of the examination is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence from any examination component;
- (b) No evidence is supplied by the centre that the candidate had been affected at the time of the examination by a particular condition e.g. chronic hay fever.

3. Candidates, either individually or as groups, will **not** be eligible for special consideration if:

- (a) Preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course of study e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, industrial disputes;
- (b) The effect on the final assessment cannot be reliably quantified by the awarding body.

Following an application for special consideration GQAL may make an exceptional circumstance award, provided that additional appropriate pre-existing evidence of attainment is available.

How to apply for Special Consideration

The centre is responsible for discussing the possible need for special consideration with the examiner/assessor before the examination starts. The examiner/assessor and centre must be satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that the case of an individual candidate is genuine. The examiner/assessor will notify GQAL (if possible before the examination starts) the examiner/assessor will send GQAL a confidential written report about the circumstances. The centre must submit a letter requesting special consideration to GQAL as soon as possible after the examination and not later than 2 days after the date of the examination. This letter must provide medical or other appropriate evidence to support the request.

Application for Reasonable Adjustments for Graded Qualifications Alliance Awards

Application is by letter to the Graded Qualifications Alliance, Garden Street Leicester LE1 3UA. The letter must include the following information:

- Title of the award as entered
- Date of Exam/Assessment
- A full description of the reasons why reasonable adjustments are being requested for an individual named candidate.

- *Current* medical/psychological evidence from a competent person to support the application.
- A description of all reasonable adjustments already made within the Centre or school for the Programme of Study
- The centres recommendations for reasonable adjustments and the ways that this will be provided by the Centre for the examination/assessment.
- A Declaration to say that the centre is satisfied that the information provided is accurate.

Application for Special Consideration for GQAL Award

Application is by letter to the Graded Qualifications Alliance, Garden Street Leicester LE1 3UA. The letter must include the following information:

- Title of the award as entered
- Date of Exam/Assessment
- A full description of the adverse circumstances on the date of examination/assessment.
- Where appropriate current medical/psychological evidence from a competent person to support the application.

Notes on applications for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Consideration

- State precisely the nature of the disability or indisposition and its effects in relation to assessment.
- Specify any information/evidence enclosed with the application which will assist understanding of the case.
- Specify your recommendations for the reasonable adjustments needed by the candidate. Be as precise as possible. Remember, it is the centres responsibility to recommend and subsequently provide the reasonable adjustments being requested.
- You are advised, wherever possible, to consult a specialist advisory service or other external service on the most appropriate adjustments for the candidates concerned.
- Provide details of all reasonable adjustments already made within the school or centre for the Programme of Study and indicate any support that is usually available to the candidate during teaching.
- Specify for how long such adjustments have been made for the candidate. If none have been made put '**NONE**'.
- Complete the declaration. It is the responsibility of the centre to verify the accuracy of the information required to support the request and subsequently provide the reasonable adjustments agreed.
- Enclose copies of **current** (e.g provided within the previous two years) medical/psychological evidence from a competent person to support the application. (A competent person is defined as a Medical Doctor, Chartered Psychologist or a Full/Affiliated Member of the Association of Educational Psychologists or person of similar professional and relevant standing.)
- The supporting evidence from a competent person must clearly indicate why the candidate has learning difficulties or particular needs severe enough to

warrant reasonable adjustments. The person must indicate whether, in their judgement, the examination is appropriate for the candidate. Any other information to be taken into account such as physical, perceptual, attentional or co-ordination difficulties and any relevant emotional factors must be commented on and the results of recognised tests relating to these supplied.

Aegrotat Awards

An Aegrotat award may be made to a candidate who is prevented by illness or other medical reasons or by circumstances that could not have been predicted or anticipated from completing an examination or final assessment. It is the responsibility of the Centre to immediately notify the General Secretary of GQAL of the likelihood of an Aegrotat award being applied for and to ensure that the reasons or circumstances are fully documented and supported by evidence which will be passed to the General Secretary of GQAL without undue delay. The General Secretary of GQAL, having considered the relevant facts (which should include satisfactory medical certification or other appropriate evidence) may recommend to the Member that an Aegrotat award be made.

In doing so, the General Secretary of GQAL should be satisfied that the candidate's prior performance shows beyond reasonable doubt that he/she would have passed but for the illness/event which occurred. The Member should be satisfied that the candidate is unlikely to be able to return to complete his/her examination or assessment at a later date within a reasonable period.

If the Member agrees that an Aegrotat award be made, the General Secretary of GQAL shall require the candidate to confirm in writing that s/he is willing to accept an Aegrotat award. Notification of the candidate's signed confirmation of willingness to accept an Aegrotat award shall be given to the Member before an Aegrotat award is made. Where the candidate is a minor the signature of the Parent or Guardian will also be required in confirmation that an Aegrotat award is to be accepted.

Where the candidate is unwilling to do so, the Member shall endeavour to make appropriate arrangements for the learner to complete or re-take the examinations/assessments concerned.

An Aegrotat award shall not state it to be a Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction but clearly state that it is an Aegrotat award. An Aegrotat award does not necessarily entitle the holder to any credits or exemptions which might otherwise be associated with the award concerned.