

BIIAB Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

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Purpose of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to set out BIIAB Qualifications' requirements on the use of reasonable adjustments and special consideration.

It explains how and when a centre should apply for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration for one or more of its learners, sets out the process by which BIIAB Qualifications will decide on any requests made, and specifies how decisions will be communicated.

1. The policy can be downloaded from our website or requested from Customer Support whose details are given at the end of this policy.

It is important that personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of BIIAB Qualifications' products, as well as learners, are fully aware of the contents of this policy.

At the centre approval stage and at subsequent quality assurance activities, the allocated External Quality Assurer (EQA) will check that the centre is aware of its contents and purpose, and that learners are aware of their right to request reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration.

BIIAB Qualifications is committed to achieving an environment that provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination of any kind. Our qualifications will be explicit about what is to be assessed and will allow for a variety of forms of evidence to be used, wherever possible, within fit-for-purpose assessments that are free from any unjustifiable barriers. Our qualification development systems ensure that no hidden or additional elements form part of the assessment.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that BIIAB Qualifications has in place clear arrangements to make reasonable adjustments that ensure that any learner with a disability, as defined by the Act, is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with learner who is not disabled.

Assessment must be a fair test of learner's knowledge, skills and understanding, but for some learners the usual form of assessment may not be suitable. BIIAB Qualifications must ensure that the qualifications and assessment that we develop do not prevent learners from taking our qualifications.

To ensure that access to fair assessment can be maintained, BIIAB Qualifications puts provision in place for reasonable adjustments and special considerations so that learners can receive the recognition they deserve providing achievements are valid, reliable and can be assured.

Applying for reasonable adjustments and special consideration

Reasonable Adjustments

BIIAB Qualifications endeavours to ensure that the assessment requirements and methods used within its qualifications are sufficiently flexible to enable the widest range of learners fairly and reliably to demonstrate competence and meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualifications.

However, we must also ensure that the arrangements we allow will be valid and reliable, designed to accurately reflect learner competence to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualifications. We must also ensure that learners are not given either a real, or a perceived, unfair advantage.

A reasonable adjustment may be needed to provide access to assessment where a learner has a permanent or temporary disability or difficulty and is approved, and/or agreed, before the assessment takes place.

A reasonable adjustment helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that puts learners at a disadvantage in terms of assessment. However, reasonable adjustments must not affect or compromise the integrity of what is being assessed.

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 assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

BIIAB Qualifications and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access to assessment. 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 standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

Centre Initial Assessment of Learners

The centre must provide information and advice about a learner's chosen qualification and explain the assessment criteria and the requirements of the qualification. The centre should assess the suitability of a learner's potential to complete the assessments and achieve the qualifications at the level chosen.

As part of this induction and initial assessment process, the centre should identify if learners will need support or reasonable adjustments to enable them to be assessed fairly and discuss this with them. Learners may believe there are reasons they might find it difficult to show competence through the methods proposed and they should discuss what alternatives might be available with their tutor/assessor.

Making Reasonable Adjustments

Some reasonable adjustments can be agreed by the centre and notified to BIIAB Qualifications; others will need agreement from BIIAB Qualifications Quality Assurance Department. A table of possible reasonable adjustments and the responsibility for agreeing them is included at Appendix 1.

Examples of reasonable adjustments may include those given below, although this list is not exhaustive:

- 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 colour 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 must:

- Not give a learner an unfair advantage
- Not compromise or invalidate the assessment requirements of a qualification
- Be based on the individual need of a learner
- Reflect the learner's normal way of working

Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy or alter the competence standards. All learners' performance will be assessed against set standards and although they cannot be altered, it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows and what can do.

Learners should be able to achieve the assessment requirements and any adjustments made 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.

The qualification of a learner who has had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner; for example, the achievement of vocational qualifications provides a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the certificate holder can do.

Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of a learner, the assessment requirements of a qualification and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice.

Special Consideration

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason why the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who has temporarily experienced an illness or injury, or another event outside of the learner's control.

Special consideration should not be granted solely on the grounds of disability, and learners must declare their needs prior to assessment, and any reasonable adjustments implemented before the assessment takes place.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may lead to a small post-assessment adjustment to the learner's results, but not necessarily so. 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 must be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a Licence to Practice, it may not be possible to apply special consideration
- If there were an instance where a learner temporarily experiences an illness or injury, or other event outside of the learner's control in the type of assessments described, and it would be more appropriate to offer the opportunity to take that type of assessment later, the centre would need to contact BIIAB Qualifications on the day of the scheduled assessment to ask for approval prior to rescheduling the assessments.

All learners regardless of special consideration must meet the minimum requirements to achieve the award of a certificate.

Examples of the circumstances where a learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration include those given below, although this list is not exhaustive:

- alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of assessment are not adequate
- performance is affected by circumstances beyond a learner's control, e.g. bereavement, recent personal illness, or accident or serious disturbance whilst the assessment takes place
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstance beyond a learner's control

How to apply for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration

If a centre wishes to make an application for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration on behalf of one or more learners, it should complete the Reasonable Adjustments application form (RA2)

or the Special Consideration application form (RA3), either of which can be requested from Customer Support via the contact details on page 8.

RA2 asks for details of each learner's circumstances, evidence of any medical conditions and other relevant information. This should be sent to the BIIAB Qualifications' Quality Assurance Team for the attention of the Operations Manager depending on the nature of the reasonable adjustment required (see Appendix 1).

Where the centre can take the decision itself, it must record the award of the adjustment on form RA1. This form should be returned to BIIAB Qualifications' Quality Assurance Team for the attention of the Operations Manager at the end of each calendar month.

The form and all relevant documentation and evidence of need must be kept in centre files and produced on request to BIIAB Qualifications or the regulatory authorities. A centre EQA will review the use of reasonable adjustments during a quality assurance visit.

Requests for reasonable adjustments that must be approved by BIIAB Qualifications should be submitted not less than 30 working days before any assessment. BIIAB Qualifications will acknowledge receipt within 2 working days and will aim to provide a decision within 10 working days. It may not be possible to respond within this timeframe if we need to call on specialist advice. In such cases, we will inform the centre of the expected response time.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted not more than 5 working days after the planned or actual assessment date. BIIAB Qualifications will acknowledge receipt within 2 working days and will provide a decision within 5 working days.

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 Head of Centre
- 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

How BIIAB Qualifications will deal with requests

All requests for reasonable adjustments and special consideration are reviewed initially by the Operations Manager.

He/she will check the specific requirements of the assessment and qualification involved and use precedents, guidance published by the Federation of Awarding Bodies and specialist advice from others where appropriate.

The Operations Manager will communicate the decision to the centre according to the timetable stated above. If this is not possible and the review will take a little longer, he or she will contact the

centre. If the application for special consideration were successful, the learner's performance would be reviewed considering the available evidence.

The Operations Manager will share the details of the application and the outcome with the Centre's EQA.

The Management Team will review all decisions to ensure fairness, consistency and comparability.

Appeals

If a centre wishes to appeal against a decision taken by BIIAB Qualifications regarding reasonable adjustments or special consideration, it can do so using the process set out in our published Enquiry and Appeals Policy.

Further information

As a member of the Federation of Awarding Bodies, BIIAB Qualifications has access to the FAB guide "The Application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations in Vocational Qualifications".

Please contact our Customer Support team should you require access to this information.

Contact Details

Forms should be submitted in writing addressed to the address below, or by email to customersupport@bii.org

Quality Assurance Team
BIIAB Qualifications
Infor House
1 Lakeside Road
Farnborough
GU14 6XP

Policy Review Arrangements

This policy is subject to a three-year review cycle, or earlier, should any feedback or concern be brought to the attention of BIIAB Qualifications, to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and the process and its outcomes are deliverable.

It is also reviewed as part of BIIAB Qualifications' continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements.

Appendix 1 – Reasonable adjustments permissions table

This table outlines some possible reasonable adjustments that can be made and who should take the decision. However, centres have a duty to seek advice from BIIAB Qualifications in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

Key:

A – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre

B – Apply to BIIAB Qualifications for permission

Reasonable adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	A	A
Extra time in excess of 25%	B	B
Supervised rest breaks	A	B
Change in the organisation of assessment room	B	A
Separate accommodation within the centre	B	A
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	B	B
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	B	B
Use of assistive software	B	B
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	A	A
Assessment material in enlarged format	A	B
Assessment material in Braille	B	B
Language modified assessment material	B	B
Assessment material in BSL	B	B
Assessment material on coloured paper	B	B
Assessment material in audio format	B	B
Use of ICT	B	B
Responses using electronic devices	B	B
Responses in BSL	B	B
Responses in Braille	B	B
Reader	A	A
Scribe	A	A
BSL/English interpreter	B	B
Prompter	B	B
Practical assistant	A	B
Transcriber	B	B
Other	B	B

Functional Skills Qualifications Reasonable Adjustments

BIIAB Qualifications works in partnership with Skillsfirst Awards with regard to the delivery and award of Functional Skills qualifications.

Although Functional Skills qualifications are awarded by Skillsfirst Awards, BIIAB Qualifications is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the qualifications by its centres and for the application/approval of reasonable adjustment requests.

The tables on the following pages outline the reasonable adjustments that can be made for Functional Skills Qualifications. The Centre may grant the following adjustments:

Extra time up to 25%
 Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries
 Assessment material on coloured paper
 Change in the organisation of assessment room

In all other examples, Centres must apply to BIIAB Qualifications for permission.

Functional Skills English (Reading)

Access Arrangement	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Extra time	Yes	
Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries	Yes	The use of a dictionary or a bilingual dictionary is permitted for all Learners.
Reader	No	
Computer reader	Yes	
Sign Language Interpreter	No	
Scribe	Yes	
Speech recognition technology	Yes	
Word processor	Yes	
Practical Assistant	Yes	
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	
Models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales	Yes	
External device to load personal settings	Yes	Permitted as a reasonable adjustment providing it does not compromise the assessment or give the learner any advantage not available to other learners.

Functional Skills English - (Speaking, Listening and Communication)

Sign Language (i.e. BSL, SSE) is permissible in the Speaking, Listening and Communication component, provided this is made accessible to all participants in the discussion.

It is recognised that BSL is a language in its own right and not a form of English. BSL is, however, permitted as an alternative to English for the assessment of Speaking, Listening and Communication where BSL is the learner's normal way of communicating in the contexts described by the standards.

No other languages are permitted as alternatives to English. Similarly, access to augmentative speech equipment is permissible where it reflects the learner's normal way of working.

As a last resort, learners who are disabled under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, and have no accessible means of communication, may request an exemption from the Speaking, Listening and Communication component.

Functional Skills English (Writing)

Access Arrangement	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Extra time	Yes	
Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries	Yes	The use of a dictionary or a bilingual dictionary is permitted for all learners.
Reader	Yes	
Computer reader	Yes	
Sign Language Interpreter	Yes	
Scribe	No	
Speech recognition technology	Yes	
Word processor	Yes	
Practical Assistant	Yes	
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	
Models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales	Yes	
External device to load personal settings	Yes	Permitted as a reasonable adjustment provided it does not compromise the assessment or give the learner any advantage not available to other learners.

In Functional Skills Mathematics and Functional Skills ICT qualifications learners can have access to all forms of equipment, software and practical assistance, such as a reader or a scribe that reflect their normal way of working within the centre.

However, such adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes or give the learner an assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

Functional Skills Mathematics

Access Arrangement	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Extra time	Yes	
Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries	Yes	The use of a dictionary or a bilingual dictionary is permitted for all learners.
Reader	Yes	
Computer reader	Yes	
Sign Language Interpreter	Yes	
Scribe	Yes	
Word processor	Yes	
Practical Assistant	Yes	
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	
Models, visual/tactile aids, speaking scales	Yes	

Functional Skills ICT

Access Arrangement	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Extra time	Yes	
Dictionaries and bilingual dictionaries	Yes	The use of a dictionary or a bilingual dictionary is permitted for all learners.
Reader	Yes	
Computer reader	Yes	
Sign Language Interpreter	Yes	
Scribe	Yes	
Word processor	Yes	
Practical Assistant	Yes	A practical assistant may switch on the computer and insert a storage device at the learner's instruction but must not perform any skill for which marks will be credited. A practical assistant may be used in written examinations.
Modified question papers (including Braille)	Yes	
External device to load personal settings	Yes	Permitted as a reasonable adjustment provided it does not compromise the assessment or give the learner any advantage not available to other learners.

Learners sitting Functional Skills qualifications alongside GCSE/GCE qualifications

If a learner has been approved for an access arrangement via the Access arrangements online system for a GCSE or GCE qualification, BIIAB Qualifications will honour this approval for the Functional Skills qualifications.

However, the access arrangement must also be permitted for the Functional Skills qualification as outlined above. Evidence of approval must be kept in Centre files and produced on request to BIIAB Qualifications and the regulatory authorities.