

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

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1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Definition

2. Reasonable adjustments are alterations to the assessment procedures in order that a candidate with a disability has the same access to the assessment as any other candidate.

Basic philosophy

3. Consistent with the Equal Opportunities Policy, the Reasonable Adjustments Policy is intended to enable access to certification of anyone who can perform to the intended standards using any reasonable aids that could be adopted in the place of work. All qualifications are designed to be accessible by stating the assessment criteria and encouraging the candidates to use them as part of the learning process. By targeting the assessment as closely as possible to the required output, the output is not determined by some intermediate means that might in fact be a limiting factor. Eg a written exam testing how to save a file might block a candidate who can save a file simply because they lacked the written communication skills to describe the process.

4. Directly observing the candidate saving the file is both more valid and less likely to provide a barrier to participation. The assessment requirement is to meet the criteria. The overarching purpose of the awards is to recognise competence in working in an office environment using computers and appreciating issues relating to open systems. As long as these principles are maintained, reasonable adjustments will not affect the reliability and comparability of the assessment.

Consultation

5. The web site forum allows users of the qualifications to freely discuss them and to provide feedback to The Learning Machine about any issues related to particular requirements. The Learning Machine takes all such views into account when designing new qualifications and making modifications to existing qualifications. By making the handbook and assessment criteria freely available under Creative Commons licensing we make it accessible to a very wide global audience and we respond to suggestions arising from this openness. All qualifications are put through trials with a large sample of people in a range of cultures. The Learning Machine also consults with a member of the British Computer society's disabilities group to bring added expertise into the process.

Meeting the assessment requirements

6. The assessment requirement is to meet the criteria. The over-arching purposes of the awards are to recognise competence in working in an office environment using computers and appreciating issues related to open systems. As long as the criteria can be met supporting the over-arching purpose, there is no need to withhold a certificate. Where a specific disability such as blindness or dyslexia prevent the candidate from reading the criteria these should be read to the candidate. The aim is not to specifically test the ability to read as there are other qualifications designed for this purpose. The over-riding principle in assessment is to ask the question Can the candidate perform to the criteria in such a way that is consistent with the operational requirements of the work place described in the criteria? If a candidate would normally operate a computer through an input device

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other than a keyboard the criteria that relate to keyboards can be substituted for an appropriate input method.

7. The Learning Machine expects comparable good practice in any alternative methods employed. The Learning Machine will treat individual cases on their own merit and it encourages Centres to discuss specific difficulties with its representatives in order to resolve any problems arising in individual cases. The outcomes of these cases will be made available on the web site for the benefit of others as and when they arise. The need for reasonable adjustments are most likely to be related to physical limitations. In so far as these limitations can be overcome using technological means that would enable the candidate to function in an office environment there is no particular advantage likely to be gained since in general, those who do not need the technological assistance don't in practice employ it. It is likely that the standard ways of doing things will be more efficient for those without a need for an adjustment eg using a keyboard rather than a pressure sensitive tube for input. The adjustments in principle will be to enable practical access to demonstrating the capabilities required to work self-sufficiently in the target environment.

Procedures for making reasonable adjustments

8. The Centre should E-mail their Account Manager with any proposed adjustments giving details of the proposals and the reasons for them. **The request will be considered and a reply provided within a reasonable time. A final decision might take a little longer if more information is required. The Chief Assessor will provide written E-mail confirmation of the action to be taken and the details of the correspondence and decision will be stored in the database linked to the Centre.** The Centre can appeal the decision at any time and provide additional evidence to support the appeal. This appeal will go to the Governing Body who will provide a collective judgement within 2 weeks of the appeal.

9. The Centre has authority to present the criteria to the students in any form without reference to the Awarding Body as long as the assessment is against the criteria in the form written in the handbook and supported by the teachers guides and assessor training. The Centre has the authority to allow any substitute input device for candidates with a physical impairment that makes the use of a keyboard impractical but should E-mail The Learning Machine to enable it to monitor the extent of such circumstances.

10. The Centre can use speech synthesis or other aural technologies to support visually impaired candidates but the candidates should show capability to the output specification as described in the criteria and explained in the assessors' guide.

Internal procedures for dealing with requests for reasonable adjustments

11. Anyone receiving a request for reasonable adjustments from a Centre should immediately contact the Chief Assessor providing him with the full details. Under normal circumstances Centres should make requests for Reasonable Adjustments via E-mail to their Account Manager. The Chief Assessor will read the request and discuss it with the Principal Moderator taking account of The Learning Machine's policy on reasonable adjustments. This will result in one of the following actions:

1. Approval that the adjustment is reasonable and should be allowed
2. Request for further information from the Centre
3. Denial with an explanation of why the adjustment should not be made

12. If the Chief Assessor and Principal Moderator do not agree a consensus will be sought from the Governing Body. The Centre will be informed of any delay and in any case the matter will be resolved within 2 weeks of the request being made. The Chief Assessor will record the request and the decision in the Centre's file on the web site together with any additional correspondence.

Monitoring Reasonable Adjustments

13. All reasonable adjustments have to be registered with the Awarding Body by E-mail before

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){(i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m)})(window,document,'script','//www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-46896377-2', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

awards are made and a record of this correspondence will be stored in The Learning Machine's files together with the decisions made. Account Managers will visit the centres and verify that any use of reasonable adjustments are within the agreed parameters. The Awarding Body provides a forum for discussion of the awards on its web site. This forum is open to students as well as assessors and so any issues related to special considerations can be discussed. The Learning Machine can determine whether or not there are perceptions of unfairness from these discussions and there is then input from grass roots to decision making in this respect. The Learning Machine also provides a complaints channel where students can complain if they believe that a Centre is treating them unfairly in any matter including equality of opportunity. Such complaints will be recorded and followed up.

14. The Awarding Body requires its Centres to tell the students that there is a complaints procedure and how to use it. The Awarding Body will provide the regulatory authorities with any relevant information that they request from the sources outlined here. The Awarding Body will provide an annual report to the Governing Body summarising all issues related to Reasonable Adjustments with recommendations for improvements to the procedures.

15. It will be the responsibility of the Governing Body to approve these recommendations or to ask for revisions of its own. If revisions are required, The Learning Machine will provide these within one month for approval.

Special Considerations

16. The assessment simply requires the candidate to demonstrate competence against the criteria. This can be done at any time and all Centre students are eligible to be assessed so there are no restrictions on the Centre that are time limited by The Learning Machine. The Centre will sign a declaration that it will make all reasonable efforts to provide assessment opportunities for any candidate that has carried out a self-assessment against the criteria and genuinely believes that he or she can meet the criteria for a particular award. This is irrespective of whether the candidate has completed formal courses in the Centre or elsewhere. What matters is whether or not the candidate meets the criteria and can demonstrate this to a trained assessor at the appropriate level. **With this in mind, any candidate that feels that they can not cope with a specific test or task at a specific time because of some unusual circumstance, will be given the opportunity to take an equivalent test or task as soon as practically possible and not longer than two months from the time of the original event.** Centres requiring further guidance should E-mail their Account Manager.

Aegrotat Awards

17. The methods used mitigate against the need for a specific policy on Aegrotat Awards. Learners can achieve unit certificates at any time and will be certificated when there is sufficient evidence that they meet the criteria for that unit, backed by any verification tests or tasks. If all the necessary units are not completed, the learner will achieve unit certificates in those that are complete but will be ineligible for the full award. In a case where an assessor can demonstrate compelling evidence that a candidate can match the criteria but for reasons of ill-health, death or comparable circumstances will be unable to take a verification test or task in the future, consideration of a full award will be made subject to the agreement of the Chief Assessor and the Principal Moderator on their review of the evidence.

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Links

[1] http://theingots.org/community/ofqual_policies