

FDQ Arrangements for reasonable adjustments

Introduction

1. FDQ will take all reasonable steps to ensure that none of its assessment products contain language or stimulus materials which could lead a group of learners/apprentices who share a common attribute or circumstance to experience, because of that attribute or circumstance, an unreasonable disadvantage in the level of attainment that they are able to demonstrate in the assessment.
2. Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification or apprenticeship end-point assessment to enable learners/apprentices with particular requirements to access assessment and to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification or end-point assessment.
3. Access arrangements described here can be granted for the following particular requirements:
 - a) Learners/Apprentices with permanent or long-term disabilities, medical conditions or illness or learning difficulties (such as sight impairment, hearing impairment, dyslexia, diabetes)
 - b) Learners/Apprentices with temporary medical conditions or injuries (such as a broken arm, or chronic pain)
4. To comply with Equalities Law, FDQ recognises the need to provide a range of flexible and responsive assessment strategies for learners/apprentices with particular requirements.
5. In doing so FDQ aims to remove any barriers, which place some learners/apprentices with particular requirements at a disadvantage without giving them an unfair advantage over other learners/apprentices.
6. It is important that this removal of barriers does not affect the validity or reliability of the assessment process. Arrangements agreed depend upon each specific qualification/apprenticeship end-point assessment and the methods of assessment specified for them.
7. FDQ will not allow a reasonable adjustment if it affects the direct attributes that are the focus of the assessment or challenges the integrity of the qualification/apprenticeship end-point assessment.

8. FDQ requires supporting evidence for all requests for reasonable adjustments. Depending on the reason for the request, evidence may include medical records or letters from a doctor or healthcare professional.
9. In making a reasonable adjustment for learners/apprentices the following principles must be taken into account:
 - a) The Learner/Apprentice must not be given an unfair advantage, e.g. invalidating assessment requirements
 - b) Any arrangements made will be determined according to the individual learner's/apprentice's particular requirements
 - c) Any arrangements which have been made must not in any way mislead users of the qualification certificate / end-point assessment results record about what the learner/apprentice has achieved
 - d) Any reasonable adjustments made must not compromise the assessment's integrity and must maintain the relevance, validity, reliability and comparability of assessment
 - e) The Learner's/Apprentice's normal method of working must be taken into account.

Requests for reasonable adjustments for qualifications

10. Requests for reasonable adjustments must be agreed before the assessment. For FDQ qualifications requests should be made at least 15 days before any qualification assessments, and in accordance with any additional specific requirements in the qualification handbook.
11. FDQ recognises there in some circumstances (such as injury or sudden onset of illness) which will require requests for reasonable adjustments to be made in a shorter period of time.

Reasonable adjustments that can be made by centres for qualifications

12. Centres must have policies and procedures in place for identifying and allowing relevant reasonable adjustments. This is confirmed at time of centre approval. The on-going effectiveness of the centre's procedures is monitored by FDQ's external quality assurance arrangements.
13. FDQ permits centres to make reasonable adjustments for learners for the following activities, without the need for application to or permission from FDQ:

- a) questioning of learners for assessments other than externally set and marked tests
 - i. Use of oral tests with the answers recorded by the assessor
 - ii. Use of tape recorder/dictaphone/typescript and additional time (which would normally be an additional 15 minutes in every hour)
 - iii. Reading of questions if other means cannot be used (eg a reader for the apprentice/learner)
 - iv. Adapting the visual presentation of questions, e.g. enlarging the print or using coloured paper and bold fonts
 - v. Modification of the language used (not including technical terms) for learners/apprentices where vocabulary and understanding has been limited by severe hearing impairment
 - b) Internal independent assessment
 - i. Use of a reader and/or scribe. A scribe is someone to whom learners/apprentices dictate their answers during an assessment. The scribe may also read the questions aloud to a learner, if necessary. The reader and/or scribe should have little or no knowledge of the subject being assessed and scribes must record the learner's answers exactly as dictated. The assessment documentation must state that a reader and/or scribe have been used. Extra time would also normally be granted when a scribe is used and learners must be accommodated in a separate room with an invigilator also present
 - ii. Examinations may be completed orally, for example using a tape recorder or Dictaphone - the assessment documentation must state the method that has been used and be signed by the invigilator. Again, learners must be accommodated in a separate room.
14. The centre must maintain a record of the reasons for granting reasonable adjustments, including any medical evidence that has been taken into account, which must be retained for monitoring at external quality assurance visits.
15. There may be some types of qualifications (such as Licences to Practise) for which FDQ will not accept requests for reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments requiring FDQ permission for qualifications

16. Reasonable adjustments for externally set and marked tests and any variation to assessment/examination arrangements, other than those permitted above, must be agreed by FDQ prior to the assessment/examination taking place.

Centres should make a request on the FDQ centre management system and return it to FDQ at least 15 working days prior to the date of the assessment/examination for which the variation is requested. The application form should be emailed to fdq@fdq.org.uk

17. If, having exhausted these procedures, the centre remains dissatisfied with the outcome it has recourse to FDQ's appeals procedure.

18. The centre must record and retain the relevant evidence supporting the application, including relevant medical evidence, for monitoring during external quality assurance activity.

19. In the event that the centre is dissatisfied with a decision concerning reasonable adjustments, they should refer to FDQ's enquiry procedure in the first instance. If, having exhausted these procedures, the centre remains dissatisfied with the outcome it has recourse to FDQ's appeals procedure.

Monitoring the use of reasonable adjustments for learners

20. As part of FDQ's external quality assurance, External Quality Assurance Consultants (EQACs) will be required to investigate:

- a) How learners are inducted and any particular requirements identified
- b) How learners are made aware of the support available to them
- c) The nature of support provided to learners with particular requirements and any reasonable adjustments approval claimed
- d) Evidence in support of reasonable adjustment applications.

21. FDQ will also ensure that:

- a) Appropriate records are maintained of the numbers and types of reasonable adjustments made
- b) Operation of the arrangements is reported to the S&QG as part of its remit for monitoring assessment practice.
- c) Reports are made to the FDQ Governance Committee as part of the self-evaluation procedure

- d) Guidance from the regulators is reviewed and the policy is updated to comply with best practice
- e) Information from monitoring activities will be made available to regulators as part of the FDQ's self-evaluation procedure and on request.

Requests for reasonable adjustments for FDQ end-point assessments

- 22. Reasonable adjustments for all end-point assessments must be agreed by FDQ prior to the assessment taking place.
- 23. Requests should be made at the Gateway registration stage, or as far in advance of the Gateway as possible, to allow consideration and any arrangements for reasonable adjustments to be made before the end-point assessment period begins.

The apprentice's employer should make a request to FDQ using the Request for Reasonable Adjustment application form available on the FDQ website and, when completed, the form should be emailed to fdq@fdq.org.uk.
- 24. FDQ will comply with guidance from the Standard setting body and regulator when considering requests for special adjustments. In some cases, this guidance may not permit adjustments for some specified end-point assessments.
- 25. FDQ will respond to all applications for adjustments to apprenticeship end-point assessment, in writing, prior to the assessment. If the reasonable adjustment is not granted, FDQ will set out its reasons for this decision.
- 26. The employer must record and retain the relevant evidence supporting the application, including relevant medical evidence, for monitoring during external quality assurance activity.
- 27. In the event that the employer is dissatisfied with a decision concerning reasonable adjustments, they should refer to FDQ's enquiry procedure in the first instance. If, having exhausted these procedures, the employer remains dissatisfied with the outcome it has recourse to FDQ's appeals procedure.

Monitoring the use of reasonable adjustments for apprentices

- 28. As part of FDQ's quality assurance processes, it will investigate:
 - a) How apprentices are made aware of the support available to them
 - b) The nature of support provided to apprentices with particular requirements and any reasonable adjustments approval claimed

- c) Evidence in support of reasonable adjustment applications.

29. FDQ will also ensure that:

- a) Appropriate records are maintained of the numbers and types of reasonable adjustments made
- b) Operation of the arrangements is reported to the S&QG as part of its remit for monitoring assessment practice.
- c) Reports are made to the FDQ Governance Committee as part of the self-evaluation procedure
- d) Guidance from the regulators is reviewed and the policy is updated to comply with best practice
- e) Information from monitoring activities will be made available to regulators as part of the FDQ's self-evaluation procedure and on request.