

Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration Procedures Policy

It is intended that this procedure is 'fair to all'. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

1 Scope and Purpose

The Park has a duty to uphold the rights of individual learners to have access to qualification assessments (either exams or coursework-based assessments) in a way most appropriate for their individual needs.

The duty for an Awarding Organisation to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where an assessment/examination arrangement would put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the Awarding Organisation, via the college, is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

The Park ensures that individual candidates can access qualifications and assessments in two ways:

- by recognising the diverse needs of learners when qualifications and assessments are designed;
- by making appropriate **access arrangements** or **reasonable adjustments** to standard assessments, wherever this is required to enable access. These learners have to be assessed by qualified specialist assessors via Weston College.

The Park, via the relevant Awarding Organisation, will also give **special consideration** to assessment results.

This procedure applies to all access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration concerning qualifications taken by all Park learners.

2 Definitions

2.1 Disability

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

2.2 Access Arrangements

Access arrangements are pre-agreed and put in place **before an assessment/examination**. They allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment. Access arrangements allow candidates/learners to show what they know and can do without changing the demands

of the assessment: for example, a reader, a scribe or 25% extra time. Only learners that have been assessed by a qualified specialist assessor as being eligible for these arrangements may be permitted to use/have them.

The intention behind many access arrangements is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment. In this way awarding bodies will comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' (See also Section 2.3). Access Arrangements last for a 2 year period and then re-assessment will be required.

2.3 Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable Adjustments are pre-agreed and put in place **before an assessment/examination**. 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. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- adapting assessment materials, e.g., in Braille
- providing assistance such as a sign language interpreter
- Separate room requests for learners with high anxiety
- using assistive technology such as screen reading or voice activated software

Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence (a) whether Reasonable Adjustments will be needed and (b) the kind of Reasonable Adjustment which may be put in place. Reasonable Adjustments are generally not appropriate where the learner's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the attributes to be assessed.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need/Specific learning or physical difficulty does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustments.

These learners have to be assessed by qualified specialist assessors (via Weston College) to determine if they are eligible for reasonable adjustments/access arrangements. The demands of the units and qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

2.4 Special Consideration

A learners' examination performance can sometimes be affected by circumstances out of their control. Special consideration is a **post-examination adjustment** that compensates learners who were suffering from a temporary illness/condition or who were otherwise **disadvantaged at the time of the assessment/examination**. Exams officers may apply for special consideration on behalf of a learner.

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Special consideration if awarded may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the candidate. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the candidate. Special consideration cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate and only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardise the standard of the assessment. See Awarding Organisation guidelines for breakdown of adjustments that can be made.

Special consideration should not give the candidate an unfair advantage; neither should its use cause any person to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. The candidate's result must reflect his or her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his or her potential ability.

2.4.1 A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment, and is fully aware of the assessment requirements, **may be eligible for Special Consideration if:**

- performance is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner:

For example, recent personal illness (e.g. severe asthma attack, severe migraine or broken limb), accident, emotional distress (e.g. recent bereavement of a close family member, severe domestic crisis at the time of the assessment), serious disturbance during the assessment (e.g., fire or accidental event);

- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment prove inappropriate or inadequate;
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner;
- alternative assessment arrangements prove 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 qualifications that have been achieved, to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

2.4.2 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;
- s/he is suffering from a minor illness or subject to a minor disturbance;
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, for example disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

- In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner, or when a permanent health condition and/or 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.
- It is not possible to allow time extensions for all Qualifications and Units, most particularly in cases where the extension would be beyond the qualification end date.
- In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to allow the learner to take the assessment at a later date.
- Special Consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage and the result must reflect learner achievement and not potential ability.
- Centres should note that it may not be possible to apply Special Consideration 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

3 Accountability

3.1 Students

3.1.1 Students should be fully involved in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations. This will ensure that individual needs can be met, whilst still bearing in mind the specified assessment criteria for a particular qualification.

3.1.2 Students should disclose in confidence to their tutor/assessor and/or Additional Learning Support any disability, impairment or learning difficulty they are aware of which could adversely impact on their performance during internal unit assessment(s)

3.1.3 Students should notify their tutor/assessor and/or the Programme Coordinator about any temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred during assessment and which has or is likely to have adversely impacted on the same and warrants special consideration.

3.2 Tutors/Assessors

3.2.1 Tutor/Assessor must familiarise themselves with this policy and the JCQ regulations and the relevant awarding organisation guidelines regarding application for and recording of requests for access arrangement, reasonable adjustment and/or special considerations.

3.2.2 Tutor/Assessor must inform Programme Coordinator as soon as possible of any disclosure or notification or apparent condition that could warrant access arrangements, reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration for their student;

3.2.3 Ensure that there is sufficient recording of any such reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration applied;

3.2.4 Liaise and co-operate with the programme Coordinator in relation to the above.

3.3 Additional Learning Support

3.3.1 The Park is a small team with minimal ALS staff. Learning Support and programme coordinator will provide guidance to tutors/assessors in relation to individual student information (if held), explain how to make referrals for assessment of needs where there is no record of previous support/adjustments in place.

3.3.2 Record and follow-up any reported requests for access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and forward relevant documentation to Programme Coordinator.

3.4 ALS Specialist Assessor

The Specialist Assessors at Weston College will perform the necessary assessments with learners to determine if access arrangements/reasonable adjustments are permitted in relation to their individual needs and the regulatory guidelines.

3.5 Programme Coordinator/Director Education

The Programme Coordinator/Director will provide general guidance on this policy and assist to make the appropriate request to Awarding Bodies and ensure that an audit trail is held and monitored centrally.

The Programme Coordinator/Director will make arrangements for Special Consideration requests to be forwarded to Weston College and Awarding Organisations where appropriate.

3.6 Awarding Organisations

Provide information on how to apply for and maintain records of requests for reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special considerations.

3.7 The Park as a provider in relation to Malpractice (see separate Malpractice policy)

It is the accredited course provider's responsibility to ensure that the candidate uses only appropriate adjustments and that they keep records of these adjustments for audit purposes.

If the accredited course provider exceeds the level of assistance and type of assistance it may lead to malpractice investigations

4 Access Arrangements Process

Due to time lines required to put access arrangements in place early requests are advisable as near to the start of a programme/course as possible.

For entry level and level 1 students refer to the Awarding Organisation guidelines in consultation with programme coordinator.

For Level 2 students including GCSE requesting access arrangements they are to be referred to and assessed by the ALS specialist assessor at Weston College.



If access arrangements are approved this will be documented and the request forwarded to Programme Coordinator to make the necessary arrangements.

If a student does not qualify for access arrangements they will be notified and informed they cannot re-apply for assessment during their time at The Park.

5 Reasonable Adjustment Process

Students are to be referred to and then assessed as required for Reasonable Adjustments by the ALS Specialist Assessor at Weston College. If students are assessed as requiring any form of reasonable adjustment this will be documented and the request forwarded to Programme Coordinator. If they fail to secure the reasonable adjustment general support guidance will be offered to tutor/assessors and/or the student may be offered further IAG for a more appropriate course. Records will be retained by the programme coordinator/Director Education. Awarding Organisation process and documentation will be followed.

6 Special Considerations Process

Unlike access arrangements, there are no circumstances whereby The Park may apply its own special consideration. Applications must be made to the Awarding Organisation on a case by case basis and thus separate applications must be made for each candidate. The only exception to this is where a group of candidates has been affected by a similar circumstance during an assessment, such as a fire alarm. A list of candidates affected must always be attached to the application and recorded on the Assessment Incident log.

Special consideration can be requested by staff, parents or candidates with appropriate evidence within seven days of the exam/assessment.

In most circumstances, relating to vocational qualifications, the student should request an extension to the assessment deadlines where special circumstances are known about prior to assessment taking place.

Any application will be considered on its individual merits. Applications will only be accepted where there is independent, supporting medical or other relevant evidence covering the appropriate period of time.

If the College supports the application the Programme Coordinator/Director will then forward a completed special consideration application to the relevant Awarding Organisation within the JCQ's recommended deadlines.

7 Associated Documents (Linked policies etc.)

Equality Opportunities and Equality and Diversity Policy

Awarding Organisation Guidance Notes

The Joint Council for Qualifications' Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policies

Malpractice Policy

Assessment Incident Log

Weston College Access Arrangements, Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment Policy

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8 Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

To be reviewed annually by the Director Education and The Park Board of Trustees

Date Policy created: June 2016

Signed

Date: June 2016

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Review date: July 2017

Review and amended July 2018

Reviewed July 2019

Reviewed July 2021

Reviewed July 2022

To be reviewed July 2023