

NOCN Guidance to Centres

in regard to

**Reasonable Adjustment and Special
Considerations**

ESOL International Qualifications

Introduction

NOCN and its Centres have a duty to ensure that the rights of individual learners to access qualifications and assessment, in a way most appropriate for their individual needs, are upheld. The aim of this guide is to provide information and advice for all existing and potential centres offering NOCN International ESOL examinations.

In every case it is for NOCN and its approved Centres to determine on a case-by-case basis whether reasonable adjustments are necessary and what reasonable adjustments will be effective. The adjustment required will depend upon a number of aspects, including the needs of each individual learner, and may well be unique to the individual involved.

Reasonable Adjustments must be arranged prior to the examination. The work produced by the learner will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners. Special Considerations however are adjustments made to a learner's mark/grade at the time of assessment because of temporary injury, indisposition or illness. This guide lists the criteria that a centre needs to adhere to when administering the International ESOL examination.

If any Centre does not find the information they need within the booklet they should send their written questions to compliance@nocn.org.uk by read receipt email. NOCN aims to respond to your questions within two working days.

PART 1

Reasonable Adjustment

Centres/Centre Staff Responsibilities

To meet their responsibilities to individual learners, a Centre must, as far as is practicable:

- Identify as early as possible any difficulties the learner may have in accessing assessment.
- Select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible to the learner.
- Ensure that it can resource the selected adjustment to assessment. It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange any assistance for the learner, such as a reader, scribe, additional invigilator, etc.
- Follow NOCN procedures for requesting adjustments to assessment. The Head of Centre or other member of staff with designated responsibility must support all applications for adjustments to assessment.
- Follow NOCN ESOL International Regulations Regarding Reasonable Adjustments procedures for implementing adjustments to assessment within ESOL International qualifications.
- Ensure that the learner only uses the appropriate adjustments. The Centre must keep records of these Reasonable Adjustments for audit purposes. If the Centre exceeds the level of assistance and type of assistance as set out in these sections, it may lead to malpractice investigations.

Reasonable Adjustment Permissions Table

The Permissions Table lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in a template which Centres can use when considering where the decisions on applying different Reasonable Adjustments need to be applied. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and a Centre is advised to contact NOCN for advice on alternative ways of accessing assessment for particular situations where they do not consider that they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a Reasonable Adjustment is needed, and/or how it should be applied.

KEY:

A - Reasonable Adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre

C - Apply to NOCN for permission

Reasonable Adjustment	Definition	Externally set exam
Extra time	The amount of extra time will vary according to the length of examination and reason for the adjustment	C*
Supervised Rest Breaks	The candidate must remain under exam conditions	C
Separate accommodation within the centre	To meet individual learner needs	C
Alternative venue	To meet individual learner needs	C
Use of coloured overlays and tinted spectacles	Assigned colour technology to aid with dyslexia and other requirements	A
Use of assistive technology, such as low vision aids	Assistive technology	C
Use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries	NOT ALLOWED	N/A
Braille or Modified question papers	A range of formats are available, including large print	C
Sign Language Interpreter	To sign the questions. Must be in English	C
Assessment material on coloured paper	Assessments printed on coloured paper	A
Assessment material in audio format	Audio recordings of assessments	C
Use of ICT to present responses	Computer or similar device to record answers	C
Responses using electronic recording devices	Voice recorder or similar device to record answers	C
Reader	Someone who reads the questions to the candidate - NOT PERMITTED IN A READING EXAM	C
Scribe	Someone who writes down the candidate's dictated answers - NOT PERMITTED IN A WRITING EXAM	C
Prompter	To keep learner on task	C
Practical assistant	To assist with physical needs	C
Live Speaker	A transcript of the recording can be provided - LISTENING EXAM ONLY	C

* The amount of extra time allowed will vary according to length of examination.

For detailed information about the regulations regarding the use of reasonable adjustments, please refer to the NOCN Regulations regarding Reasonable Adjustment.

Requirements for Record Keeping Within the Centre

The Centre are required to retain a record of Reasonable Adjustment requests and approval. Retaining the original additional paperwork that supports the Reasonable Adjustment request for External Verification and audit purposes.

The Centre must retain a copy of the application form Request for Reasonable Adjustments (Form 1) along with any supporting evidence and relevant documentation sent to and received from NOCN for at least seven years for audit purposes.

The form must be sent to compliance@nocn.org.uk within the required timeframe.

PART 2

Special Considerations

What is a Special Consideration?

Special Considerations are procedures implemented at the time of an examination to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a learner who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances.

Each request for Special Consideration will be unique to that learner or examination. These guidelines offer some broad principles for the Centre to follow. Further information, if required, should be sought from NOCN.

Special consideration may be given following a scheduled examination to a learner:

- who is present for the examination but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which arose at or near the time of examination.
- who misses part of the examination due to circumstances outside their control.

Special Consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the examination and not necessarily his / her potential ability.

Special Consideration, if successful, may result at our discretion in a small post-assessment adjustment, no more than 10% maximum, to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres must ensure that the application of any Special Consideration is both necessary and fair. The Centre is required to keep records of all Special Consideration requests and outcomes for at least seven years so that NOCN representatives can review them during monitoring activities and to ensure that they are accessible in the future should they be required.

Centre Responsibilities

To meet their responsibilities to individual learners, and in terms of current equality legislation and regulatory requirements, a Centre should, as far as is practicable:

- Have an access to assessment policy and communicate this to all staff and learners. The Centre should cultivate an atmosphere in which learners feel free to disclose their requirement for Special Consideration.
- Ensure that all members of staff who advise, or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of Special Consideration issues. If clarification is required, early contact with an NOCN representative is advised, in order to determine whether a Special Consideration can be granted.

- Consider the nature of the skills that are being assessed and the implications for assessment of the learner's difficulties. The Centre should involve the learner in making any decisions about the application for Special Consideration. In cases of doubt, the Centre should contact an NOCN representative for advice.
- Follow NOCN procedures for requesting a Special Consideration. The Centre should apply for Special Consideration on behalf of the learner, where necessary. The Head of Centre or other member of staff with designated responsibility must support all applications for Special Consideration.
- Keep records of these Special Considerations for audit purposes. If the Centre exceeds the level of Special Consideration set out in these sections it may lead to malpractice investigations.
- Ensure that it has effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner can query any decision taken by the Centre not to allow a Special Consideration. These procedures should be made available to the learner and should include details of the grounds for appeal and the timescales associated with investigations of appeals.
- Ensure that buildings used for examination are accessible to all learners, as far as is practicable.

Eligibility Criteria

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment **may** be eligible for Special Consideration if:

- Performance in an examination is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the examination.
- Alternative examination arrangements that were agreed in advance of the examination proved inappropriate or inadequate.
- Part of an examination has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.
- There is a sufficient difference between the part of the examination to which Special Consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the examination.

A learner will **not** be eligible for Special Consideration if:

- The Centre does not supply any evidence that the learner has been affected at the time of the examination by a particular condition.
- Any part of the examination is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence.

- Preparations for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

Applying For Special Consideration

A Centre should apply for Special Consideration using the form supplied by NOCN; Request for the application of special considerations in ESOL International Qualifications (Form 2).

A separate form should normally be completed for each learner for each qualification. However, in cases where a group of learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event (eg fire alarm) a single form may be submitted. A list of learners affected must be attached to the form.

The Centre needs to submit evidence in support of Special Consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information.

The application must be signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority by the Head of Centre. The signatory must declare that the information given is accurate.

The application for Special Consideration must be submitted by read receipt email to: compliance@nocn.org.uk as soon as possible after the assessment but not later than 7 working days after the examination.

Requests for Special Consideration may only be accepted after the results of the examination 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 examination, even though the problem revealed itself only after the examination.

If the application for Special Consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of Special Consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result and the maximum increase that will be allowed is 10%.

PART 3

MALPRACTICE

A Centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to examinations set out by NOCN has the potential to constitute malpractice and may lead NOCN to withhold the learner's result. Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- Putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from NOCN, where this is required.
- Exceeding the allowances agreed with NOCN.
- Agreeing delegated adjustments that are not supported by evidence;
- Failing to maintain records of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for audit.
- Failing to report delegated adjustments to NOCN, where this is required.

**FORM 1 - REQUEST FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS
ESOL INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**



Centre Name:			Centre No:
Candidate name	Paper Ref	Date of Examination	Description of reasonable adjustment requested (including, where appropriate, % of extra time permitted/ name of reader or scribe)

Signed: **Centre Contact** **Date**

For NOCN Use Only	
The above arrangements are approved: YES/NO	Supportive evidence:
Comments	
Signed:	Date:

**FORM 2 – REQUEST FOR THE APPLICATION OF
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
In ESOL INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**



Centre Name:			Centre No:
Candidate name	Date of Examination	Special Considerations requested	Reasons for request & evidence to support it

Declaration

I confirm that the above special considerations are requested and I am attaching copies of authentic evidence supporting the request

Signed: _____ **Centre Contact** _____ **Date** _____

For NOCN Use Only	
The above arrangements are approved: YES/NO	Supportive evidence:
Comments	
Signed:	Date: