

NOCN Guidance to Centres

in regard to

**Reasonable Adjustment and Special
Considerations**

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Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

Introduction

NOCN has a duty to ensure that the integrity of their qualifications and assessment is maintained at all times. At the same time 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. Equality legislation and the regulatory criteria give support and guidance to awarding organisations and their Centres in creating an inclusive assessment process.

The Equality Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person.

If a person is disabled or has a difficulty and would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with someone who does not, during an assessment or examination, NOCN and a Centre are required to take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage by making reasonable adjustments. It is important however, to understand that there is no duty on NOCN or a Centre to make an adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment. Adjustments which involve excessive/unreasonable cost or timeframes or that could affect security/integrity may not be considered reasonable.

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 assessment or 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.

NOCN process and procedure in regard to Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration are available to a Centre via the NOCN website. This booklet has been developed to support the process and procedure and aims to provide clear guidance to Centres about what to do if they believe a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration is appropriate in an assessment situation.

Reasonable Adjustment is addressed in Part 1 and Special Consideration is addressed in Part 2 of this guidance.

If any Centre does not find the information they need within the process, procedure or this 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.

What Is Ofqual And What Does It Do?

Ofqual is the independent regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and of vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. It has stated that awarding organisations (NOCN, OCNs and Delivery Partners) must take all reasonable steps to remove any

disadvantage which is unjustifiable and maintain records of any disadvantage which it believes to be justifiable, setting out the reasons why in its opinion the disadvantage is justifiable.

Ofqual has produced the General Conditions of Recognition to which an awarding organisation's recognition is subject.

The General Conditions of Recognition, Condition C2 –Centre Arrangements - state that awarding organisations are required to have in place a written enforceable agreement with each of their Centres. Part of this agreement must 'require the centre to undertake the delivery of the qualification required by the awarding organisation in accordance with Equalities Law'. Centres will therefore be bound by that agreement and required to ensure that they operate in line with Equalities Law.

Reference to Accessibility of Qualifications can be found in the General Conditions of Recognition Condition D2.

Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustment are in Condition G6 and Arrangements for Special Considerations in Condition G7. Other conditions that refer to Equality of Opportunity include E4, G2, G3, G8, H1, H5 and I1. Centre staff should familiarise themselves with the relevant conditions.

PART 1

Reasonable Adjustment

Section 1

Why Does NOCN Need To Be Told About Reasonable Adjustment?

Awarding organisations have a duty to ensure that the integrity of their qualifications and assessment is maintained at all times. At the same time they and their 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 Equality Act 2010 sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person. The Act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace, when providing goods, facilities and services, when exercising public functions, in the disposal and management of premises, in education and by associations (such as private clubs). The Act requires awarding organisations to make reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements which place disabled learners at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to learners who are not disabled.

The Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition May 2011 make a number of references to Equalities Law and states a number of requirements for awarding organisations.

In order to meet the requirements of the conditions NOCN must:

- Comply with Equalities Law
- Monitor qualifications which it makes available for any feature which could disadvantage a group of Learners who share a particular Characteristic.
- Ensure that the assessment permits Reasonable Adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.
- Ensure a Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by NOCN for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment.
- Make Reasonable Adjustments to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.
- Have in place clear arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments in relation to qualifications which it makes available.
- Publish details of its arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments, which must include details as to – (a) how a Learner qualifies for a Reasonable Adjustment, and (b) what Reasonable Adjustment will be made.

In order to fulfil these requirements NOCN has developed and published a process, procedure and documentation that a Centre should use if a Reasonable Adjustment is required. This

includes the requirement that all Centres have available the information NOCN might need to fulfil their legal obligations. These documents are all available via the NOCN website. These processes and procedures must be followed in all circumstances.

Why Does A Centre Need To Know About Reasonable Adjustment?

Centres need to know about and understand their responsibilities in regard to Reasonable Adjustment because they are required to meet:

- Equality Law
- The specific requirements laid out by Ofqual in the General Conditions of Recognition
- The requirements of NOCN in regard to Reasonable Adjustment.

Centres must ensure that the application of any Reasonable Adjustment is both necessary and fair. In some circumstances the Centre must seek approval to apply a Reasonable Adjustment prior to an assessment or qualification taking place. On other occasions the Centre is required to keep records of all Reasonable Adjustments they have made, so that NOCN representatives can review them during monitoring activities and to ensure that they are accessible in the future should they be required. Information about the types of Reasonable Adjustment and the requirement for prior permission are laid out in Section 5 and an easy reference look up table is provided in section 10.

Section 2

Roles And Responsibilities

NOCN are responsible, as far as practicable, for:

- Meeting their responsibilities to individual learners.
- Developing a policy to prevent discrimination in the assessment of skills and knowledge. The NOCN policy conforms to the requirements of the Equality Act and is subject to regular review. NOCN has communicated this policy to all their approved Centres.
- Having effective systems in place to approve Reasonable Adjustments including Centre visits, collation of learner feedback, comparisons of outcomes of cases where Reasonable Adjustments have/have not been applied, which are regularly reviewed.
- Monitoring and evaluating the use of Reasonable Adjustments.
- Providing clear and comprehensive guidance to approved Centres on the procedures for making adjustments to assessment. This guidance booklet includes information about when a Centre is permitted to allow adjustments to assessments and when it has to apply to NOCN for permission and the timescales for this. The guidance specifies the requirements for supporting evidence and record keeping.
- Ensuring Centres have policies and procedures in place to prevent discrimination against learners with access-related assessment needs.
- Ensuring that Centres have effective internal systems to record where they permit Reasonable Adjustments. NOCN will monitor these systems to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of the awarding body.
- Requiring that Centres undertake that buildings used as assessment venues are accessible to all learners.
- Considering the needs of all potential learners when developing qualifications. NOCN take steps to ensure that the needs of all learners are considered when qualifications are being developed and reviewed and that inclusive assessment methods are incorporated. Assessment requirements are clearly expressed so that any modifications to the assessment method or delivery may be made without compromising standards.
- Continually reviewing competence standards of qualifications or contributing appropriately to the review of national occupational standards to ensure that such standards can be objectively justified.
- Considering the needs of all potential learners when developing assessment material.
- Designing assessment material, as far as possible, in such a way that it can be used successfully with assistive technology such as screen reading software.
- Ensuring that they have an effective appeals policy so that Centres can appeal against decisions involving assessment arrangements for learners with access-related needs.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and NOCN will take all possible practical steps to apply Reasonable Adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.

Centres/Centre Staff Responsibilities

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

- Have an access to assessment policy and communicate this to all staff and learners. The Centre must cultivate an atmosphere in which learners feel free to disclose their access-related needs. It should be noted that the duty to make Reasonable Adjustments has an 'anticipatory' aspect. This means that the Centre should consider what adjustments future learners with disabilities or difficulties may need, and make appropriate provision in advance.
- Identify as early as possible, preferably before registering a learner for a qualification, any difficulties the learner may have in accessing assessment. To assist with this the Centre must ensure that all staff that recruit, advise, or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. If clarification is required, early contact with an NOCN representative is advised, in order to determine whether Reasonable Adjustments to the assessment process are possible.
- Select an appropriate qualification for the learner, based upon his / her particular circumstances. The Centre must explain to the learner the assessment requirements of the qualification and the planned programme of study. It must be made clear at the outset if the learner will not be able to meet all the assessment criteria. The learner may still decide to proceed with the qualification but enter only for part, or none, of the assessment. In this case the Centre must explain to the learner any restriction on progression to other qualifications as a result of not achieving all the criteria.
- Select an appropriate adjustment to make the assessment accessible to the learner. In order to decide whether an adjustment is appropriate, the Centre must consider the nature of the skills that are being assessed and the implications for assessment of the learner's difficulties. The Centre must involve the learner in making any decisions about appropriate adjustments to assessment. In cases of doubt, the Centre should contact an NOCN representative for advice on suitable and appropriate adjustments.
- 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, British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, etc.
- Follow NOCN procedures for requesting adjustments to assessment. The Centre should apply for Reasonable Adjustments on behalf of the learner, where necessary. The Head of Centre or other member of staff with designated responsibility must support all applications for adjustments to assessment.
- Follow NOCN procedures for implementing adjustments to assessment. The Centre will be required to implement the adjustments to assessment in accordance with this guidance, see section 8 and the Permissions Table in section 10.

- 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, as explained in Part 3 of this booklet.
- Ensure that it has effective internal appeals procedures so that the learner can query any decision taken by the Centre not to allow an adjustment to assessment. These procedures must be made available to the learner on request and must include details of the grounds for appeal and the timescales associated with investigations of appeals.
- Design centre-set assessment activities or material in an inclusive way so that they are accessible to learners with access-related needs. The Centre must ensure that the language of the assessment is clear, unambiguous and free from jargon.
- Ensure that buildings used for assessment are accessible to all learners, as far as is practicable.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and a Centre must take all possible practical steps to apply Reasonable Adjustments, so as to promote equality of access for learners who are placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person without disability or difficulty.

Section 3

In the first instance it is important to understand what is meant by the term Reasonable Adjustment in the context of assessment and examination of NOCN qualifications and units.

What Is Reasonable Adjustment?

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.

Reasonable Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

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 qualification.

Where Reasonable Adjustments have been applied, the work produced by the learner will be marked to the same standard as the work of other assessed learners.

Awarding organisations and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will be taken into consideration.

Types Of Assessment And Reasonable Adjustment

Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence whether Reasonable Adjustments will be needed and the kind of Reasonable Adjustment which may be put in place. The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

- The specific assessment requirements of the qualification.
- The type of assessment.
- The particular needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

Health and Safety

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised in the name of assessment. In a practical activity, if there is a concern that the effects of a person's disability or difficulty may have health and safety implications for him/herself and for others, a suitably qualified person in the Centre must carry out a risk assessment related to the learner's particular circumstances. The risk assessment must identify the risks associated with the particular activity, but must also take account of any Reasonable Adjustments put in place for the learner which may remove or reduce the risk. The risk assessment may reveal that it is not possible for the learner to fulfil all the requirements of the assessment. In this case it may be appropriate to substitute another task. The Centre should contact NOCN to discuss individual cases where further clarification is necessary. Assumptions must not be made about a disability or difficulty posing a health and safety risk, but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

Assessments That Are Not Taken Under Examination Conditions

These types of assessment form the basis of the majority of NOCN assessment activity. With these types of assessments, the Centre has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner's needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment. These types of assessments may include, for example, coursework, set assignments which are researched in the learner's own time, assessment activities devised by the Centre or NOCN, assessments where the learner has to collect evidence in order to demonstrate competence. The assessment requirements for the majority of vocational qualifications fall into this group. In these types of assessments the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, the Centre may:

- Allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids:
 - are generally commercially available;
 - reflect the learner's normal way of working;
 - enable the learner to meet the specified criteria;
 - do not give the learner an unfair advantage.
- Present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner's normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified assessment criteria, for example, materials do not have to be in written format, unless specified by the assessment requirements.
- Allow the learner to present their answers or evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria, for example, answers or evidence do not have to be in written format unless specified by the assessment criteria.

The Centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements. The Centre is advised to contact an NOCN representative to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used.
- Be assessable.

- Be able to be moderated or verified.

In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition/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. A Centre should note that it will not be possible to allow time extensions for all qualifications.

Where Reasonable Adjustments are put in place for the types of assessments listed above, the Centre must establish whether or not permission needs to be obtained from NOCN or its representative beforehand. Please see section 8 and the Permissions Table in section 10 of this guidance booklet. The Centre must also ensure that they adhere to NOCN requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

Assessments for Externally Verified Qualifications

Vocational qualification learners are often required to compile a portfolio of evidence which can consist of a mixture of work products, observation reports, witness statements, knowledge tests, etc. Making appropriate access arrangements in qualifications of this type can be more straightforward than in qualifications where the mode of assessment is more firmly fixed.

The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when the learner is first accepted onto a programme.

Where there is an identified need, the learner may present their evidence in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audiocassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed onto video, it is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that a person who is suitably qualified in Braille or Sign Language is available to translate the material for the Internal and External Verifier if this is required.

Where the learner uses alternative means of providing evidence, the method must have equal rigour to those used for other learners.

The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a period of time, regardless of method used to obtain the evidence. The assessment criteria may not be amended, re-worded or omitted.

The learner may use any mechanical or electronic aids which are available in the workplace or which are commercially available in order to demonstrate competence. For example, these may include specially adapted equipment or assistive technology. The Centre is required to provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs to produce evidence of developing the portfolio.

All adjustments should be consistent with the learner's normal way of working and must not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.

While Assessors, Internal and External Verifiers normally prefer to see a portfolio made up of evidence that is varied, the Centre should be prepared to accept a more restricted variety of evidence as a means of enabling access. It is sensible, however, for the Centre representatives to discuss this matter with the Internal and/or External Verifier at an early stage.

The learner must achieve all the required units to gain a qualification. It may sometimes be the case that some full qualifications are inaccessible because of a learner's inability to demonstrate competence in all parts of the qualification. In these cases, unit certification should be available.

Where Reasonable Adjustments are put in place for assessments that are externally verified, the Centre must check whether permission needs to be obtained from NOCN or its representative. Please see section 10. The Centre should ensure that they adhere to NOCN requirements for record keeping and supporting evidence.

Assessments That Are Taken Under Examination Conditions

Where the method of assessment is more rigidly determined, such as for assessments taken under specified conditions, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements in order to give access.

SECTION 4

Identifying Learners Who Are Eligible for Reasonable Adjustments

Learners are only eligible for Reasonable Adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a disadvantage in the assessment situation, in comparison to a person who is not disabled.

Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

Communication and Interaction Needs

A learner with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with reading or writing, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a reader, word processor, scribe, BSL/English interpreter, screen reading software or voice activated software. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Cognition and Learning Needs

A learner with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained examinations. They may also need assistance with reading and writing.

Sensory and Physical Needs

A learner may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader and scribe. In addition they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and extra time to complete assessments.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Needs

The learner may benefit from supervised rest breaks and separate accommodation, either within the Centre or at an alternative venue. A learner with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter.

Learners For Whom English Is an Additional Language

A learner may benefit from extra time during assessments that are time constrained or the use of bilingual dictionaries, where allowed by the qualification.

Particular Impairment

The learner will be eligible for Reasonable Adjustments if their performance during an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. Many of these learners will be defined as being disabled under the Equality Act.

An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, the Centre should assist the learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.

A learner does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Equality Act) to be entitled to Reasonable Adjustments to assessment. Every learner who is disabled will also not necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner may have developed coping mechanisms that minimise or remove the need for Reasonable Adjustments.

SECTION 5

Identifying Learners' Needs

Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment. The Centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of equality legislation.

A Centre should ensure that it can:

- **Identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment.**
 - A learner should be encouraged to make any access-related assessment needs known to the Centre at the earliest opportunity, and before they are registered or entered for an assessment. To assist with the early identification of learners with access-related assessment needs, the Centre must ensure that all staff who recruit, advise or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. Once the learner's need has been identified, it must be documented for audit purposes.
- **Identify whether Reasonable Adjustments may be needed.**
 - Relevant centre staff must decide, in conjunction with the learner, whether he or she will be able to meet the requirements of the assessment or whether adjustments will be required. It is important that the learner is involved in this discussion as he or she knows best what the effect of their particular disability or difficulty is on how they do things. Where the implications of a particular difficulty are unclear, the Centre should make use of specialist advice in order to determine how the difficulty will affect the learner's performance in the assessment. The Centre must avoid making assumptions, on the basis of previous experience, about whether adjustments may be necessary. Judgments must be made on the basis of individual need. If an adjustment will be needed, it must be documented for audit purposes.
- **Identify the appropriate adjustment.**
 - When identifying which adjustments the learner will need in the assessment, centre staff must take into consideration the learner's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during informal assessments and the assessment requirements of the qualification. Certain simple adjustments may be all that is required, e.g. adjusting seat height or providing an arm rest. The same learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Different qualifications make different demands. For example, a dyslexic learner may need extra time to complete a written test, but may not need extra time for a purely practical activity. Once the adjustment has been identified, it must be documented for audit purposes.
- **Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with NOCN guidelines.**
 - The Centre must ensure that the adjustment will not impair the ability to assess the learner's performance, skill or knowledge fairly in each assessment.

SECTION 6

Identifying and Obtaining Supporting Evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence that is valid, sufficient and reliable.

Extent to which the learner is affected

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, the Centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where the implications are clear

Where the Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted, the Centre does not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications are less clear

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties, or mental health difficulties, the Centre will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner's performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. The Centre should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner's situation:

- Evidence of assessment of the learner's needs in relation to the particular assessment, made within the Centre by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area; staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This evidence must include an indication of how the Centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence must be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous Centres attended by the learner may also be included.
- History of provision within the Centre. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner's needs are being met during the learning programme must be documented for audit purposes.
- Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports must state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report must set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for Reasonable Adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for Reasonable Adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid. A Centre must maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the Reasonable Adjustments that have been made.

Section 7

Making Reasonable Adjustments

Principles for Making Reasonable Adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for Reasonable Adjustments to assessment. Adjustments to assessments:

- Must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification.
- Must not give the learner an unfair advantage.
- Must reflect the learner's normal way of working.
- Must be based on the individual needs of the learner.

NOCN has a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner to show what they know and can do without circumventing the assessment criteria. When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, NOCN and Centres must bear in mind the following:

- Adjustments to assessment must 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.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards must not be altered. While NOCN has to take all reasonable steps to ensure that a learner with a disability or difficulty is not placed at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled, in terms of access to assessment, there is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice which is defined as a competence standard. All learners' performance will be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered, but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage the learner. The qualification of a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. As vocational qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of the learner. Decisions about adjustments to assessment must be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual learner, the assessment requirements of the qualification and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. A Centre should not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. The learner should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment must reflect the learner's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment.

- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.
- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by the Head of Centre or a member of staff with delegated authority.
- All adjustments to assessment must be implemented in accordance with the guidance given by NOCN.

The Process for Making the Adjustment

There are three routes through which a learner may be granted adjustments to assessment. These routes are to:

- Use Reasonable Adjustments permitted at the discretion of the Centre.
- Consult the External Verifier for permission.
- Apply to NOCN for permission.

Applying for Reasonable Adjustments

In the case of Reasonable Adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre the person designated by the Centre must complete a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form at least 15 days prior to the assessment.

In all cases of Reasonable Adjustment where the Centre has to seek permission from elsewhere, the person designated by the Centre must complete a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form at least 45 days prior to the assessment.

A separate form should be completed for each learner.

The appropriate form can be found with the Reasonable Adjustment process, procedure and documentation on the NOCN website.

Adjustments Permitted By the Centre

In some cases NOCN may permit the Centre to implement Reasonable Adjustments without seeking prior permission. If so the form must be:

- Completed 15 working days prior to the assessment or examination. The Centre must sign the declaration that the information provided for NOCN is accurate and that the adjustments to assessment have been made in accordance with NOCN guidance. The declaration must be signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Centre.
- Forwarded to NOCN for analysis purposes within 2 working days after the assessment or examination.
- Presented to the NOCN representative at the next monitoring visit.

The documents must be kept on file as directed by the NOCN procedure.

Adjustments Agreed With OCNs and Delivery Partners

For externally verified qualifications, the Centre may have to consult and inform the external verifier if Reasonable Adjustments have to be implemented. Please see section 8 below and the Permissions Table in section 10.

Adjustments Permitted By NOCN

The Centre has to apply for adjustments to assessments on behalf of the learner. A separate form must be completed for each learner and submitted 45 working days prior to the assessment or examination; applications received after the deadline may not be processed in time for the learner to take the assessment. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The application must be signed and dated by a member of the centre staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this by the Head of Centre and must include the following declaration:

- The information in the application is accurate.
- The Centre will be able to provide the arrangements requested if their use is approved by NOCN.
- The Reasonable Adjustment will be implemented in accordance with the guidance given by NOCN.
- The Centre will not exceed the allowances given.

A Centre must keep records for audit purposes where they are permitted to agree Reasonable Adjustments, where they apply to NOCN for permission or where they agree adjustments to assessment with the External Verifier. Please see the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment Procedure, accessible via the NOCN website for further details.

SECTION 8

Range of Reasonable Adjustments

The Permissions Table (Section 10) 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.

The following sections provide guidance for Centres on how various types of Reasonable Adjustments should be implemented. Centres should note that:

- Not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the Centre is advised to contact NOCN for advice. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to select an alternative assessment task for the learner.
- The learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments;
- Adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions.

The list of Reasonable Adjustments is organised under the following headings:

1. Changes to assessment conditions.
2. Use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids.
3. Modifications to presentation of assessment material.
4. Alternative ways of presenting responses.
5. Use of access facilitators.

1 Changes to Assessment Conditions

1a Extra time

Where assessment activities are time constrained, a learner may be allowed extra time during an assessment if he/she has a condition which affects the speed of processing. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the learner's difficulty. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be

allowed. It is the Centre's responsibility to specify the amount of extra time the learner will need, using as a guide the extra time required during formative assessments in the Centre.

Extra time will not be allowed for computer based assessments testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as keyboarding speed tests. Extra time may, however, be available for those computer based assessments where the manipulation of software, and not processing speed, is the primary aim of the assessment.

Extra time for online assessments will have to be customised on the ExoD system for each learner. In these cases the Centre is advised to contact NOCN for further assistance, where necessary.

Before the Centre allows extra time for the learner, the Centre should be satisfied that the learner can cope with the content of the qualification and that the learner is medically fit to undertake the extended assessment.

Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or in group activities where the learner's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

1b Supervised rest breaks

Where assessment activities are time constrained, a learner may, if there is a demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room. The duration of the breaks will not be deducted from the assessment time. The Centre must be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the learner is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing conduct of assessments will apply during this time.

Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, supervised rest breaks can be allowed.

For online assessments, the Centre needs to check with NOCN whether the time for rest breaks must be built into the extra time requested for the assessment. This will be necessary if the test runs continuously on the system. The system must also be supervised during the break to ensure that no one else can interfere with the learner's test during the break.

1c Change in the organisation of the assessment room

Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

Visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.

Deaf learners may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good light.

Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.

Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

1d Separate accommodation within the Centre

It may be necessary to accommodate the learner separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL/English interpreters, or word processing equipment that may disturb other learners.

1e Taking the assessment at an alternative venue

In certain circumstances the learner may be permitted to take an assessment at an alternative venue, for example at home or in hospital. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The Centre should ensure that the learner is medically fit to take the assessment.

2 Use of Mechanical, Electronic and Technological Aids

Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners:

- The Centre should ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.
- For assessments taken under examination conditions, the learner should be accommodated separately with separate invigilation if the use of any of these aids will disturb other learners. In these cases the invigilator must be fully informed of the learner's support.

A Centre should contact NOCN if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

2a Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice activated software

Some learners may benefit from the use of software that reads the assessment material to them and records their spoken responses.

- Speech software may not be allowed for qualifications where reading is the competence being assessed. Centres should check the qualification guide or contact NOCN for further guidance. Elsewhere, and especially in vocational areas, such software may be

used to allow learners to have access to assessments that are appropriate for them and enable them to show their proficiency.

- The Centre must ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the learner an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, the Centre should seek advice from NOCN if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.
- It should be noted that the use of such software may introduce a hidden assessment agenda, in that the learner has to master the use of the software in addition to mastering the assessment criteria. Some learners may need extra time if they use such software.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

2b Use of bilingual dictionaries or bilingual translation dictionaries (manual or electronic)

The use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries (including BSL/English dictionaries/glossaries) can be allowed in all vocational assessments unless its use is expressly forbidden by the assessment requirements.

For timed assessments, if the Centre is satisfied that the learner can cope with the subject content, but the learner's knowledge and comprehension of English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) impairs his/her ability to complete the assessment within the normal time allocated, an additional allowance of extra time may be permitted.

The Centre should note that the Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition state that:

G2.1 An awarding organisation must ensure that all Learners taking its qualifications are assessed in – (a) English in England, and (b) English or Irish in Northern Ireland, except to the extent that the use of another language is permitted by this condition.

G2.2 A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment.

G2.3 A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in any other language where it is one of the primary objectives of the qualification (a) for the Learner to gain knowledge of, skills in, and understanding of that language, or (b) to support a role in the workplace, providing that proficiency in English or Irish is not required for the role supported by the qualification.

G2.4 Where an awarding organisation makes available a qualification in more than one language, the awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that assessments in different languages ensure a consistent Level of Demand for Learners.

General Conditions of Recognition, May 2011, Condition G2

The Centre should check the dictionaries used by the learner to make sure they do not contain notes that would give the learner an unfair advantage. Where permission is given to use electronic dictionaries, the Centre must check that the equipment does not contain additional

functionality that will give the learner an unfair advantage. If such functionality is present, it must be disabled or the equipment disallowed.

3 Modifications to The Presentation of the Assessment Material

3a Assessment material in enlarged format

For paper-based assessments

Enlargements for paper-based assessments may be used. Examples of these include:

- Unmodified enlarged papers where the standard paper is photocopied from A4 to A3, thus enlarging the whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation.
- Modified enlarged paper where the paper is modified by simplifying the layout and where necessary reducing the content while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original paper.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

Where the Centre is permitted to make the enlargements to externally set assessment material, it must take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work that occur as a result of incomplete enlargement of the material.

Centres should note that assessment material containing scale diagrams cannot be enlarged.

It is the Centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/ resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

On-screen assessments

If the default font and text size used for an on-screen assessment is not suitable for the learner, screen magnification software programmes may provide an option to magnify the text to a suitable size. Advanced screen magnification software programmes provide options to change colours and fonts.

3b Assessment material in Braille

Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner.

The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailleing.

Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams.

In the case of externally set and either internally or externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

If Braille assessment material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the Centre should inform NOCN immediately as any costs incurred in producing such material may be passed to the Centre.

Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner, not all blind people are fluent in Braille.

It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the braille of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials. The Centre must also ensure that the braillist is available to assist the EV at the next monitoring visit.

3c Language modified assessment material

The carrier language in assessment material may be modified for a deaf learner whose first language is either English or British Sign Language (BSL). In either case, the learner's English may be limited and modified assessment material may be necessary. BSL is a language in its own right and has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary and written assessment material will have to be modified for most deaf learners for whom BSL is their first language.

Technical language may not be modified. The modified version of the assessment material must contain the same questions as the standard version and the same answers will be expected from the learner.

In listening tests, a transcript of the test may be provided, which can be read to the learner by a live speaker. This will enable the learner to lip-read the text.

In the case of externally set and either internally or externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will normally have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the modification of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

3d Assessment material in BSL (British Sign Language)

Where the Centre cannot provide a BSL/English interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL version of assessment material may be provided on videotape instead of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English. This facility may not be permitted for assessments where reading or listening is the competence being assessed.

In the case of externally set and either internally or externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

It is the Centre's responsibility to arrange for the translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL.

Centres should note that this adjustment will not be suitable for all assessments and that they need to contact NOCN for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.

Centres should read the guidance for BSL/English interpreters in 5c below in conjunction with this section.

3e Assessment material on coloured paper

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

Where the Centre is permitted to photocopy externally set assessment material onto coloured paper, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied.

The learner may be penalised for any errors in his / her script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.

It is the Centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/ resource or reference material on coloured paper, if required

3f On-screen assessments

It may be possible to provide a screen background in a colour that is suited to the learner's needs.

3g Assessment material in audio format

Where there is evidence of need, assessment material may be provided in audio format. This facility is not available if reading is the competence being assessed or if the assessment material has visual content that is crucial to the understanding of the questions, such as illustrations, tables, diagrams or sketches.

In the case of externally set and either internally or externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

It is the Centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/ resource or reference material in a suitable format for the learner.

4 Alternative Ways of Presenting Learner Responses

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment. The use of ICT is generally perceived to have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessment. The guidance given below relates to the use of ICT in written assessments. ICT can normally be used for centre-devised and portfolio work unless the use of ICT is expressly prohibited by the qualification specification.

4a Use of ICT to present responses

The use of ICT in this context should be taken to include word processors, personal computers (PCs) and other microprocessor controlled devices producing output in text or other forms such as graphics and diagrams.

For many learners with additional support needs, computers provide an effective means of independent communication. Consideration should be given to whether the learner can meet the assessment criteria using a computer.

A computer should only be used if it is appropriate to the learner's needs and if the learner is confident in its use, can use it effectively and if it reflects his / her normal way of working. The learner should be consulted before a decision is taken whether the use of ICT is an appropriate adjustment. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

When a computer is used, other than as a basic word processor, the Centre needs to consider the effect and appropriateness of facilities like spell-checkers, electronic dictionaries, thesauri, calculators, predictive software, etc that are available and check what is allowed by the qualification specification.

The use of the computer should not create a misleading impression of the learner's attainment or confer an unfair advantage over other learners.

The Centre should ensure that workstations are adapted for the needs of the learner, and that enabling technologies, (for example screen reading software, coloured background, adapted keyboard, large tracker ball mouse, sticky keys) are available.

Where it is apparent that assessment objectives cannot be met fully if a computer is used, the Centre should suggest alternative arrangements.

4b Spoken responses using electronic recording devices, for example CD Roms, memory sticks, audio cassettes

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be permitted to record their responses electronically.

In the case of externally set and internally marked assessments or examinations the Centre will have to apply to the External Verifier by the deadlines set by NOCN.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

This arrangement will only be available for assessments where there is no requirement for the learner to produce visual material.

Where the learner's responses are recorded electronically, the Centre should provide an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses.

It will be the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep this and the original recording as a record of the assessment.

4c Responses in BSL

Where there is evidence of need, the learner may be allowed to sign their responses to questions.

In the case of externally set and internally marked assessments or examinations the Centre will have to apply to the External Verifier by the deadlines set by NOCN.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

Signing of responses should not be permitted if the ability to write or speak English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) is being assessed unless specifically allowed by the qualification.

A learner can sign full responses in BSL. Where the learner is required to show knowledge of an expression / name in their response, this must be finger-spelt. This must all be videoed for quality assurance purposes. The Centre will provide a translation of the responses for assessment.

The Centre should ensure that the person doing the translation is appropriately qualified.

The Centre should ensure that sufficient recording equipment is available and that it is in good working order.

Where the Centre provides a transcript of the learner's response, the Centre must ensure that the transcript is authenticated and an accurate reflection of the learner's responses. The Centre must keep this as a record of the assessment.

4d Responses in Braille

Where there is evidence of need, a learner may be permitted to present their responses in Braille.

In the case of externally set and internally marked assessments or examinations the Centre will have to apply to the External Verifier by the deadlines set by NOCN.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

In these cases the Centre should provide an authenticated transcript of the learner's responses.

It will be the Centre's responsibility to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of the learner's responses and to keep the transcript for their records.

5 Use of Access Facilitators

5a Reader

A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the learner all or part of the assessment material and the learner's written responses.

Where there is evidence of need a reader may be allowed in all assessments where reading or understanding of the written word is not an assessment requirement or the competence being assessed.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a reader will be an effective arrangement. The learner may be more comfortable with:

- The use of speech/screen reading software that reads out the material without decoding or interpreting it.
- Accessing the assessment material in electronic format, in Braille or through sign language.

The Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a reader. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The reader should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, NOCN should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a reader.

The Centre should select the reader on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during the training programme leading up to the assessment.

The Centre must ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.

A separate invigilator must be present when a reader is used to ensure that the guidance regarding readers is followed.

The Centre must give the reader clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions must also be given to the invigilator.

For a learner requiring a reader and a scribe, the same person may act as both as long as permission has been given for both arrangements.

The learner using a reader must be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

Where a learner is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the learner to read the questions aloud. In these circumstances the learner must be accommodated in a separate room so that other learners are not disturbed. Separate invigilation must be arranged in these cases. The invigilator may not correct the reading of the learner.

The reader is responsible to, and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

The reader:

- Should read only as requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment him/herself.
- Should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing impaired learner, the reader should articulate clearly.
- Must only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything.
- Should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the learner.
- May consult a dictionary, where this is allowed, at the learner's request and read out entries.
- Should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proof-reader.
- Must not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- May enable a visually impaired learner to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question, but must neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestion
- Is permitted to help a visually impaired learner using diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted learner
- Should, if requested, give a visually impaired learner the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise spellings must not be given.
- Should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

5b Scribe (sometimes called amanuensis)

A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a learner's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a scribe is an appropriate adjustment. As the effective use of a scribe requires high level communication skills from the learner, the Centre is advised to consider whether the learner would be more comfortable with the use of a computer. The learner is also more likely to use a word processor rather than a scribe in the workplace.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

For a learner requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.

The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases the writing of answers by the learner may be the skill being assessed.

The Centre should select a scribe on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the learner. A scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the learner's responses, write legibly and/or word process at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly.

The Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a scribe.

A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring word processing.

A scribe should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, NOCN should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a scribe.

A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.

The Centre must ensure that the learner and scribe are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.

The Centre must give the scribe clear instructions regarding what he/she is required to do/what he/she is not allowed to do during the assessment. These instructions must also be given to the invigilator.

The learner using a scribe must be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

A separate invigilator must be present when a scribe is used to ensure that the guidance regarding scribes is followed.

The scribe is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During the assessment a scribe:

- Should check with the learner for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The learner may choose to write some responses him/herself.
- Must neither give factual help to the learner nor offer any suggestions.
- Must not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- Must write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the learner. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words.

- Must write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the learner.
- Must not assist the learner to produce any diagrammatical or graphical material. If assistance with this is needed, approval should be obtained from NOCN in advance of the assessment. Exceptions to this are Entry Level qualifications where the scribe is allowed to draw or add to diagrams in accordance with the learner's instructions.
- May, at the learner's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the learner's response.
- Should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

5c British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter

Although British Sign Language (BSL) is now recognised as an official language of the UK, it is not a statutory language, unlike English, Welsh and Irish (Gaelige). The regulatory criteria state: *"Awarding bodies may allow assessment in British Sign Language in accordance with criteria 14 to 20 in the section Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration."* (The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004 – Paragraph 41)

Where BSL is the primary means of communication for a deaf learner, these learners may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the questions (or part questions) where they are undertaking written assessments. For assessments where reading or speaking and listening are the competences being assessed, BSL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions.

In the case of externally set and either internally or externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The Centre should ensure that the BSL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment. A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during the learning programme leading up to the assessment.

The Centre must ensure that the learner and the person providing the interpretation is clear about the limitations of the latter's role in the assessment situation.

The Centre must ensure that the person providing the interpretation has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing. This arrangement should be agreed with NOCN.

The interpretation should not give the learner an unfair advantage and care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, where the learner's understanding of these words is inherent in the purpose of the question. The interpretation must not explain or clarify. In some instances it may be more appropriate to finger-spell a word.

Any words or phrases interpreted for the learner because a standard sign is not available or appropriate must be underlined on the assessment material, which, if separate from the answer book, must be attached to the learner's answer book. Amended versions of questions must be shown on the assessment material.

The learner using a BSL/English interpreter must be accommodated separately so as not to disturb other learners.

A separate invigilator must be present when a BSL/English interpreter is used to ensure that guidance regarding BSL/English interpreters is followed.

The BSL/English interpreter:

- Should have access to the assessment material in advance of the examination to prepare for the signing. NOCN will advise how long before the assessment the BSL/English interpreter can have access to the assessment material. Contact NOCN in each case.
- Must not interpret technical language or give additional explanations.
- May, at the learner's request, sign any labels or text connected with reference material such as maps, diagrams or graphs. The learner should, however, study the reference material independently.

5d Prompter

A learner with severe attention problems may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.

Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to allowing supervised rest breaks rather than a prompter.

A prompter should not normally be the learner's own tutor or assessor, except when it may be necessary to do so. In such cases the awarding body should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a prompter.

Prompters should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when his / her attention is no longer on the assessment task and that he or she is not, for example, looking away from the paper whilst thinking.

Under no circumstances may the prompter draw the attention of the learner to part of the question paper or the learner's answer paper.

The prompter should sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and draw his / her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The learner's attention may be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the learner's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, on the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper). Verbal prompting should not normally be used. The method used by the prompter to bring back the learner's attention should be agreed before the assessment between the learner and the prompter and should be acceptable to the Centre. It should be noted that some learners with emotional and behavioural sensitivity/vulnerability and/or mental health conditions may not be comfortable with a 'light tap' prompt. A form of verbal prompting should be considered and agreed for these learners.

In the case of an epileptic learner where the problem is one of temporary absencing, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.

The Centre must ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.

The Centre must give the prompter clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment. These instructions must also be given to the invigilator.

The Centre should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.

A separate invigilator must be present when a prompter is used to ensure that the guidance regarding prompters is followed. The invigilator must be fully informed of the strategies used to regain the learner's attention.

The prompter is responsible to and should be approved by the Head of Centre or the centre staff member with delegated responsibility.

During an assessment a prompter:

- Should draw the learner's attention back to the task in hand.
- Should use the method of prompting agreed with the learner.
- Must not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
- Must not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done. For Entry Level qualifications it may be appropriate for the prompter to direct the learner to where they were last.
- Should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the assessment, but must remain vigilant.
- Should immediately refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

5e Practical assistant

A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks with which the practical assistant may

assist are, turning the pages of the question paper or, guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant is an appropriate arrangement. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those qualifications where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.

In the case of both internally and externally set and internally marked assessments or examinations the Centre will have to apply to the External Verifier by the deadlines set by NOCN.

In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The Centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant.

The practical assistant should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment, but should not normally be the learner's own teacher/tutor/assessor except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, the awarding body should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.

A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out his/her instructions accurately.

The Centre must prepare clear written instructions for the practical assistant on the assistance they are able to give the learner. A copy of these instructions must also be given to the invigilator and learner. The Centre should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.

The use of a practical assistant must not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be the skill being assessed, the use of a practical assistant will not be permitted.

A learner using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated separately from other learners. In these cases a separate invigilator must be present to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed. During practical assessments, the assessor should be present in addition to the practical assistant.

During a practical assessment, a practical assistant:

- Must follow the instructions prepared by the Centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner.
- Must ensure the safety of the learner and those around him / her.
- Must not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions.
- Must not advise the learner which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be done.

- Must carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so would cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret the learner's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment.
- Should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment (there may be parts of the assessment which the learner can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills).
- Should immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor.

5f Transcriber

This arrangement may be used by a learner in the following circumstances:

- Where the learner's handwriting is illegible, but he or she is unable to use a computer or dictate responses - it may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competence being assessed.
- Where the learner's responses are produced in Braille or in BSL.

The transcriber will produce a transcript to assist the examiner/assessor in the assessment of a learner's work. The examiner/assessor will assess the learner's work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner's response(s). (For responses produced in Braille or BSL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript).

The Centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a transcript will be an effective arrangement. In the case of externally set and externally marked assessments or qualifications the Centre will have to apply to NOCN 45 working days in advance. In the case of short programmes the Centre must contact NOCN directly, as soon as they establish that an adjustment will be required, in order to agree the timescales required.

The Centre should give the transcriber clear instructions regarding what they are required to do after the assessment.

The transcript should be produced by a member of the centre's staff who is familiar with the learner's handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in Braille), or who has the required skills in BSL (where the transcription is for learner's responses produced in BSL).

The transcript(s) must be securely attached to the back of the learner's work and be included with the other work from the Centre for dispatch to the assessor in the normal way. The production of the transcript should not delay the dispatch of scripts to the assessor.

The Centre should not inform the assessor of the reason why a transcript was necessary.

The transcriber:

- Must produce the transcript in a separate copy of the question paper/answer booklet or on lined or unlined white paper as appropriate.

- May handwrite or word process the transcript. If handwritten, dark blue or black ink should be used. Pencil must never be used.
- Must, for examinations, produce the transcript immediately after the examination under secure conditions.
- Must not involve the learner in the production of the transcript.
- Should normally transcribe complete answers. In cases where only occasional words need to be transcribed, these may be written on a photocopy of the learner's script. On no account must the learner's original script be marked or annotated in any way.
- Must normally be a word-for-word transcription, i.e. an exact copy of what the learner has written. The transcriber may not insert or omit words or alter their order. In English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) or modern foreign language examinations any errors, including those of spelling, punctuation and grammar, must be transcribed as given by the learner and must not be corrected. In other qualifications, the transcriber may correct the spelling of non-technical words.
- Should indicate any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- Must not transcribe diagrammatical material. Assessment of such material will be based on the learner's own work.

Section 9

Requirements for Record Keeping Within the Centre

Requirements for recording adjustments to assessments agreed with the External Verifier or NOCN

The Centre must retain a copy of the application form and supporting evidence sent to the External verifier or to NOCN, and relevant documentation received from them for the period specified in the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment Procedure documents, which can be found on the NOCN website.

Requirements for recording adjustments to assessments permitted by the Centre

The Centre must send a copy of the completed Reasonable Adjustment Form to compliance@nocn.org by read receipt email, within two working days of the assessment or examination taking place.

The Centre must keep records of their decisions to permit adjustments to assessments. These records must include any supporting evidence. These documents must be available to NOCN representatives during the next monitoring visit.

In addition all documentation must be retained by the Centre for the period specified in the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment Procedure documents, which can be found on the NOCN website.

For full information please see the Reasonable Adjustment Process, Procedure and supporting documentation on the NOCN website.

Section 10

Reasonable Adjustment Permissions Table

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 but must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes.

Reasonable Adjustments are usually made to the assessment to accommodate the needs of a single or small number of learners. Reasonable Adjustments should be **approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place.**

Reasonable Adjustments permitted at the discretion of the Centre should be agreed with the Internal Verifier and included in the sampling process for internal verification.

The Permissions Table lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and Centres have a duty to seek advice from NOCN in any case 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. This table should be read in conjunction with the Centre Guidance Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations document and the NOCN Reasonable Adjustment Process and Procedure.

The Table is provided overleaf.

Reasonable Adjustment Permissions Table

KEY:

A - Reasonable Adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre

B - Consult Quality Reviewer for permission

C - Apply to NOCN for permission

Reasonable Adjustment	Internally set and internally assessed	Externally set and internally assessed	Externally set and externally assessed	Externally set exam
Extra time	A	A	A	B/C*
Supervised rest breaks	A	A	C	C
Changes in organisation of the assessment room	A	A	C	C
Separate accommodation within the Centre	A	A	A	A
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	A	A	C	C
Use of coloured overlays and tinted spectacles,	A	A	C	C
Use of assistive technology low vision aids, cctv and OCR scanners	A	B	C	C
Use of bilingual dictionaries and bilingual translation dictionaries – where qualification allows	A#	A#	A#	A#
Assessment material in enlarged format	A	A	C	C
Assessment material in Braille	A	C	C	C
Language modified assessment material	A	C	C	C
Assessment material in BSL	A	C	C	C
Assessment material on coloured paper	A	A	C	C
Assessment material in audio format	A	C	C	C
Use of ICT to present responses	A	A	C	C
Responses using electronic recording devices	A	B	C	C
Responses in BSL	A	B	C	C
Reader – where qualification allows	A	B	C	C
Scribe - where qualification allows	A	A	C	C
BSL interpreter	A	C	C	C
Prompter	A	B	C	C
Practical Assistant	B	B	C	C
Transcriber	A	A	C	C

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

Use of bi-lingual dictionaries should be carefully considered to ensure that the validity of assessment outcomes are not compromised and the Centre should refer to specific guidance in the qualification guide.

PART 2

Special Considerations

Section 1

What is a Special Consideration?

In the first instance it is important to understand what is meant by the term Special Consideration in the context of assessment and examination of NOCN qualifications and units.

- 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 assessment. These guidelines offer some broad principles for the Centre to follow. Further information, if required, should be sought from NOCN.

The General Conditions of Recognition state that:

Condition G7-Arrangements for Special Consideration

G7.1 For the purposes of this condition, Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced – (a) an illness or injury, or (b) some other event outside of the Learner’s control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that Learner’s ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

G7.2 An awarding organisation must have in place clear arrangements for Special Consideration to be given to Learners in relation to qualifications which it makes available.

G7.3 An awarding organisation must publish details of its arrangements for giving Special Consideration, which must include details as to

- (a) *how a Learner qualifies for Special Consideration, and*
- (b) *what Special Consideration will be given. Special consideration may be given following a scheduled assessment to a candidate:*

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

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

Centres should note that, 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 Practise, it may not be possible to apply Special Consideration.

In some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

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 assessment 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.

Why Does A Centre Need To Know About Special Consideration?

Centres need to know about and understand their responsibilities in regard to Special Consideration because they are required to meet:

- Equality Law
- The specific requirements laid out by Ofqual in the General Conditions of Recognition
- The requirements of NOCN in regard to Special Considerations.

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 so that NOCN representatives can review them during monitoring activities and to ensure that they are accessible in the future should they be required.

Section 2

NOCN Roles and responsibilities:

NOCN are responsible, as far as practicable, for:

- Meeting their responsibilities to individual learners.
- Developing a policy to prevent discrimination in the assessment of skills and knowledge. The NOCN policy conforms to the requirements of the Equality Act and is subject to regular review. NOCN has communicated this policy to all their approved Centres.
- Having effective systems in place to approve Special Considerations including Centre visits, collation of learner feedback, comparisons of outcomes of cases where Special Consideration adjustments have/have not been applied, which are regularly reviewed.
- Monitoring and evaluating the use of Special Considerations.
- Providing clear and comprehensive guidance to approved Centres on the procedures for seeking Special Considerations. This guidance booklet includes information about when it has to apply to NOCN for permission and the timescales for this. The guidance specifies the requirements for supporting evidence and record keeping.
- Encouraging Centres to have policies and procedures in place to prevent discrimination against learners with access-related assessment needs.
- Ensuring that Centres have effective internal systems to record where they sought a Special Consideration. NOCN will monitor these systems to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of the awarding body.
- Requiring that Centres undertake that buildings used as assessment venues are accessible to all learners.
- Ensuring that they have an effective appeals policy so that Centres can appeal against decisions involving assessment arrangements for learners with access-related needs.

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 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. (See Part 3)
- 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 assessment are accessible to all learners, as far as is practicable.

Section 3

Eligibility Criteria

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

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment.
- Alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of the assessment proved 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 qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

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 assessment by a particular condition.
- Any part of the assessment 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.

Section 4

Applying For Special Consideration

A Centre should apply for Special Consideration using the form supplied by NOCN. The appropriate form can be found with the Special Considerations process, procedures and documentation on the NOCN website.

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 assessment.
- For on-screen assessments where results are immediately available.

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

Section 1

MALPRACTICE

A Centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding adjustments to assessments 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.

References:

FAB guide on the application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration in vocational qualifications. January 2012

General Conditions of recognition Ofqual 2011