

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

October 2018

**NCRQ reasonable adjustments
and special consideration
policy and procedure**

Purpose

NCRQ has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or understanding to the level of attainment required within each qualification, and to remove barriers to entry where possible. For that reason, NCRQ assessments have been designed to be accessible by all - using assignments to be completed in the student's preferred environment rather than examinations.

All students will undertake an initial assessment to ensure that the qualification will meet their needs. NCRQ will assess the suitability of each potential student and make appropriate professional judgments about the student's potential to successfully complete the assessments and achieve the qualification.

Reasonable adjustments

Students may be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their ability to access an assessment is likely to be substantially affected by a particular impairment. The nature of any reasonable adjustment depends on the students' particular requirements.

Adjustments to the assessment process will typically be made where:

1. A student has a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under equalities legislation, students are deemed to have such impairment if they can show that the condition:

- is more than minor or trivial
- has an effect that has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months
- affects everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

Supporting evidence will be required in all cases. Evidence could include medical reports from doctors, psychiatrists, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, or funding agencies.

Providing the adjustment required is the same for each assessment, students do not need to resubmit evidence with subsequent applications for reasonable adjustment; however they must complete a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form for each qualification enrolled upon.

2. A student has a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment.

Students are deemed to have a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment if the condition is under one year's duration and is likely to improve. Examples of temporary disability could include broken limbs or injury to hands which could impair students' ability to write. Supporting evidence will be required in all cases.

If a student applies for an adjustment due to a temporary physical, sensory or mental disability, evidence must be re-submitted with a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form for each assessment.

Types of reasonable adjustments

Due to the nature of NCRQ assessments, most impairments will not require any adjustments to be made. This is because NCRQ assessments are designed to simulate the work environment, and so should be accessible to all.

All assessments and stimulus material are provided to students in a .pdf format which has been specially created to facilitate the use of screen readers. As students will be completing assessments in their own home or work environment, they are free to use any software or technology to assist with reading the assessments or associated material.

Assessments are to be submitted by the student in a word-processed format. However, students are free to use any dictation or other software to assist with this process that they may have available in their home or work environment.

No request for reasonable adjustments is required in the above circumstances.

Other reasonable adjustments may include:

- extra time
- provision of a written explanation of any stimulus material that consists of a picture, chart, or other image.

Procedure for applying for a reasonable adjustment

All students must submit a request for a reasonable adjustment on or before the enrolment date for a unit or qualification.

Students should request a Reasonable Adjustments Request Form and submit it to NCRQ before requesting the first assessment with documentary evidence to support the request attached.

Process for approving requests

A Student Support Officer will initially review requests for Reasonable Adjustments. Where the request is for an extension of time, and this is supported by adequate evidence, then an extension of 25% will be granted.

Requests for provision of written descriptions of image-based stimulus materials will also be granted by the Student Support Officer where evidence is provided.

Other requests will be referred to the Head of Qualifications for a decision.

When making a decision, the Head of Qualifications will review the request and consider:

- Can the request be accommodated without unreasonable cost and effort?
- Would the request give the student an unfair advantage over others?
- Is the request proportionate to the impairment of the student?
- Is there adequate evidence to support the impairment?

A decision on reasonable adjustments will be provided to the student within five working days. Where a request is declined, written reasons for the refusal will be given.

Please note that NCRQ must grant approval for all reasonable adjustments and reserves the right to refuse requests. If an adjustment is made without written approval from NCRQ, this could constitute malpractice. Once a reasonable adjustment has been agreed and implemented, no further adjustment will be made to the assessment or marking process.

Special consideration

Special consideration may be given to students in instances that could not have been predicted, or were outside the student's control, which may have impacted on their performance. This ensures that students who have a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the assessment are treated fairly.

Examples include influenza, bereavement of a close family member, and disturbances during the assessment. Special consideration must be applied for no later than five days after the assessment, and supporting evidence must be provided, e.g. letter from doctor/ hospital/ authorised person, etc. Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

Types of special consideration

As NCRQ assessments are assignment-based, and several weeks are often given for completion, it is unlikely that a disruption of one day would have a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate their level of attainment. As it is not appropriate to award a qualification where evidence of competence in each learning outcome is not demonstrated, a request for special consideration will not change the pass / fail boundary for an assessment.

Outcomes for a request for special consideration include:

- the unmarked assessment returned to the student with additional time for completion
- the student is given an opportunity to complete a new assessment, free of charge.

Procedure for applying for special consideration

Students must advise NCRQ in writing within five days of the end of the assessment of the circumstances which caused the request for special consideration.

Process for approving requests

The Head of Qualifications will take the full circumstances of the incident into account prior to the release of results to the student. Requests will be dealt with sympathetically, taking into account:

- the full circumstances
- the most appropriate option to compensate for the incident, taking into account the duration of the incident and when this occurred during the assessment period
- the fairness of any special consideration on the student and other students
- the evidence to support the incident.

A decision on reasonable adjustments will be provided to the student within five working days. Where a request is declined, written reasons for the refusal will be given.

Review and Appeal

Wherever possible, NCRQ will deal sympathetically with requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration. In cases where a request is turned down the candidate has the right to request a review of the decision.

Review

Students may request a review of the decision made following the above process. The review is conducted by the Head of Qualifications, who will re-examine the initial decision. Requests for a review of a reasonable adjustment decision should be made as quickly as possible following the initial decision, and will be reviewed equally swiftly to allow the outcome to be notified before the assessment takes place.

Appeal

If the student does not agree with the outcome of the review, they have the right to take the process to an appeal. Details of this process can be found in the NCRQ Re-marking and Appeals Policy, which is available on request or from the NCRQ website.

For further information, please contact enquiries@ncrq.org.uk