Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

General Principles

Gecko Programmes aims to facilitate open access for learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration in assessments, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured. This will be achieved through:

Reasonable Adjustment

This is agreed at the pre-assessment planning stage and is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the learner an assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

Special Consideration

This is a post-assessment allowance to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. Any special consideration granted should not remove the difficulty the learner faced at the time of assessment and can only be a relatively small adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised. Special consideration **cannot** apply to “licence to practice” units within a qualification, or to “licence to practice” qualifications.

Gecko Programmes will only consider requests for Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration for learners that have been assessed by Gecko Programmes with their assessment methods and deemed to be in need of such consideration and adjustments.

Introduction

Gecko Programmes recognises disabilities are of a diverse nature and Gecko Programmes does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of disability. Gecko Programmes complies with the Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

This policy exceeds the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to allow fair access to qualifications. The policy:

- explains how the centre should manage/request reasonable adjustment and/or request special consideration
- identifies roles and responsibilities
- describes the practice for dealing with lost or damaged work

Guidance on Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

1. Reasonable adjustment

1.1 Explanation of reasonable adjustment

A reasonable adjustment 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 validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- changing usual assessment arrangements
- adapting assessment materials
- providing assistance during assessment
- re-organising the assessment physical environment
- changing or adapting the assessment method
- using assistive technology. Reasonable adjustments must be approved (internally or externally) and set in place prior to assessment commencing. It is an arrangement to give a learner access to a qualification.

The work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other learners.

Below are examples of reasonable adjustment. It is important to note that not all adjustments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. The learner may not need, nor be allowed the same adjustment for all assessments.

Reasonable adjustments permitted by Gecko Programmes may fall into the following categories:

- changes to assessment conditions
- the use of mechanical and electronic aids
- modification to the presentation of assessment material
- alternative ways of presenting responses
- use of access facilitators.

Please note that a reasonable adjustment must never affect the validity or reliability of assessment, influence the outcome of assessment or give the learner(s) in question an unfair assessment advantage.

Examples of reasonable adjustments as defined by the above categories are listed below.

- Allowing extra time, e.g. assignment extensions
- Using a different assessment location
- Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, CCTV
- Use of assistive software
- Assessment material in large format or Braille
- Readers/scribes
- Practical assistants/transcribers/prompters
- Assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format
- Language-modified assessment material
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- Use of ICT/responses using electronic devices

1.2 Centre recruitment

Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice of their selected qualifications and that the qualifications will meet their needs. The recruitment process should include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgments about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification.

Such assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the assessment.

Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all parts of assessment for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner may still decide to proceed with studying a particular qualification and not be entered for all or part of the assessment.

The centre is advised to ensure that learners are aware of:

- the range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all required assessment; and
- any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes.

1.3 Applying reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustments are approved before an assessment and are intended to allow attainment to be demonstrated. A learner does not have to be disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) to qualify for reasonable adjustment; nor will every learner who is disabled be entitled to reasonable adjustment. Allowing reasonable adjustment is dependent upon how it will facilitate access for the learner. A reasonable adjustment is intended to allow access to assessment but can only be granted where the adjustment does not:

- affect the validity or reliability of the assessment
- give the learner(s) in question an unfair advantage over other learners taking the same or similar assessment
- influence the final outcome of the assessment decision.

Gecko Programmes will apply all adjustments in a transparent and unbiased manner. All reasonable adjustments made will be recorded using the appropriate form. Once completed, it will be held by the centre in the learner's file and will be available at all times for scrutiny by awarding bodies if so requested.

All reasonable adjustments implemented by centres are subject to meeting the requirements of the appropriate assessment strategy of the qualification specification and assessment criteria.

It is the responsibility of the Quality Manager to ensure that any access arrangement implemented by the centre on behalf of the learner, is based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment.

For qualifications that are internally assessed the centre will not need to apply to the awarding body to implement a reasonable adjustment, but it must:

- only make reasonable adjustments that are in line with this policy
- record all reasonable adjustments made on the appropriate form
- keep all forms in the appropriate learner's record / portfolio

1.4 Requesting reasonable adjustment from an Awarding Body
Reasonable adjustment requests must be submitted to and authorised by the appropriate awarding body prior to implementation of the adjustment. Such requests must be submitted to the awarding body, using the appropriate method, within the stated time deadlines. It is the responsibility of the Quality Manager to ensure that reasonable adjustment requests are submitted and recorded in the appropriate manner.

1.5 Assessing achievement
Centres must ensure that for all internal assessment, achievement is given only for the skills demonstrated by the learner and that reasonable adjustments do not compromise the outcomes of assessment (as identified in 1.3 above).

1.6 Special Educational Needs
Centres should note that a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) does not automatically qualify the learner for reasonable adjustment to assessment, as:

- the SEN statement may not contain a recent assessment of the needs; and
- the reasonable adjustment may compromise assessment (as identified in 1.3 above).

The Quality Manager must check the latest policy details of the relevant awarding body at the time of making an application for a Reasonable Adjustment.

2. Special Considerations

2.1 What is special consideration?

A special consideration is consideration given following a period of assessment for a learner who:

- was prepared for and present at an assessment but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances that have arisen at or near to the time of assessment
- misses part of the assessment due to circumstances outside their control.

It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration in instances where:

- assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence
- criteria have to be met fully
- units/qualifications confer licence to practice.

Where assessment is in the form of on demand assessment, such as electronic tests set and marked by computer, then it is probably more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date.

A special consideration cannot give the learner an unfair advantage, nor must its use cause the user of a certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievement. The learner's results must reflect real achievement in assessment and not potential ability. To this end, special considerations can only be a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark or outcome.

Gecko Programmes's decision will be based on various factors, which may vary from learner to learner, and from one subject to another. These factors may include the severity of the circumstances, the date of the assessment, the nature of the assessment (e.g. practical, oral presentation, etc).

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 which 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.

A learner will **not** be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, eg disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

The following are examples of circumstances that might be eligible for special consideration (this list is not exhaustive):

- terminal illness of the learner
- terminal illness of a parent
- recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family
- serious and disruptive domestic crises leading to acute anxiety about the family
- incapacitating illness of the learner
- severe car accident
- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative
- flare-up of severe congenital conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack
- recent domestic crisis
- recent physical assault trauma
- broken limb on the mend.

Unlike reasonable adjustment, there are no circumstances whereby a centre can apply its own special consideration.

2.2 Applying for special consideration

Gecko Programmes has put arrangements in place to enable a learner, in extenuating circumstances, to complete assessment and thus achieve the qualification. Only when this is unsuccessful should an application for special consideration be made. All applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis and thus separate applications must be made for each learner. The only exception to this is where a group of learners has been affected by a similar circumstance such as a fire alarm during an assessment; in this case a group application is permissible. In this situation, however, a list of learners affected should be attached to the application.

Applications for special consideration should be submitted to the Quality Manager. To ensure effective processing of the application the centre should submit:

- a tutor/assessor report of the learner,
- evidence to support the application such as a medical certificate, a doctor's letter, a statement from the invigilator (if relevant), or any other appropriate information.

The Quality Manager must authorise all applications for special consideration. Applications must be submitted to the Awarding Body within seven days of the assessment having taken place. Following notification of awarding body outcome, Gecko Programmes will inform the learner within 3 working days.

During the processing of an application, the awarding body will liaise with the Quality Manager/Gecko Programmes Quality Team member making the claim on the learner's behalf and not with the learner or their designated third party.
It is important to note that special consideration applications will not be considered where learner achievement has been claimed and certificated.

2.3 Lost or damaged work

When a learner's work has been lost or damaged, an awarding body may consider accepting a grade for which there is no available evidence. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the Quality Manager to obtain and provide verification that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress.

Applications to accept grades, for which there is no available evidence will be submitted to the appropriate awarding body. Applications must include evidence of learner achievement (e.g., tutor assessment/IQA records) and include a signed learner report.

3. Complying with policy
Gecko Programmes acknowledges that failure to comply with the requirements contained within this policy document could lead to assessment malpractice, which will impact on the learner's result.

4. Right to appeal
Where an awarding body fails to agree with an application submitted by Gecko Programmes in respect of this policy, then Gecko Programmes has the right of appeal.

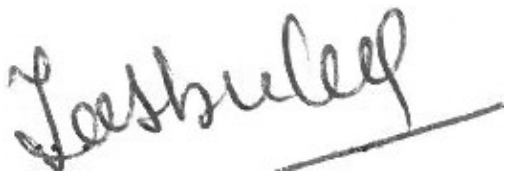
Appeals must be submitted to the Awarding Body within x working days/the time specified within their policy.

The Quality Manager must check the latest policy details of the relevant awarding body at the time of making an application for a Special Consideration.

Responsibility
Overall responsibility for ensuring Gecko Programmes complies with the Awarding Body regulations concerning the control of the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy is delegated to the Quality Manager.

The Senior Management Team will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy. It is, however, the duty and responsibility of all employees working for Gecko Programmes, in whatever capacity, to promote the Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments Policy within their own spheres of responsibility.

Declaration: I will review and revise this policy as necessary and at regular intervals:



Signature of Jasbir Behal, Managing Director, Gecko Programmes Ltd

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