



# **Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures**

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## Introduction

Access arrangements allow candidates with specific needs such as special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access an assessment without changing the demands of the assessment.

ECITB Awarding Organisation (ECITB) is committed to ensuring:

- The rights of individual candidates to access our qualifications, units and assessments in a way most appropriate for their individual needs and to enable them to demonstrate their achievements.
- Access to fair assessment for all candidates.
- That the integrity of our qualifications and units is maintained at all times, without compromising the reliability or validity of the assessment outcomes, or giving any candidate an unfair advantage or disadvantage over other candidates undertaking the same qualifications, units or assessments.

This policy is for use by:

- ECITB approved Centres (Centres) delivering ECITB's qualifications / units.
- Candidates registered on an ECITB qualification by an approved Centre.
- ECITB staff to ensure that all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests are dealt with in a consistent manner.

The policy sets out the principles which should be followed when making decisions about adjustments to assessments, and outlines ECITB's arrangements to ensure it avoids disadvantaging candidates either directly, or indirectly.

## Regulatory authorities

ECITB is regulated by Ofqual, SQA Accreditation and Qualifications Wales (the Regulators). We are required to comply with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition, SQA Accreditation's Regulatory Principles and Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition.

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the contents of this policy are consistent with the requirements of the Regulators. Where regulatory requirements are amended and require change, such changes will be made as soon as practicable.

## Policy overview

Awarding Organisations have a duty under The Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled candidate would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment.

In order to comply with equalities law, ECITB must have in place clear arrangements to make reasonable adjustments in relation to its qualifications, so that a candidate with any disability or special education needs is able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the qualification.

In addition, the ECITB is required to give special consideration to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury, or some other event outside their control which may affect the outcome of an assessment.

Reasonable adjustments or special consideration may therefore be required where:

- candidates have a permanent disability or special educational needs
- candidates have a temporary disability or medical condition
- candidates are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

Decisions relating to Special Consideration are made by the ECITB team and are based on individual circumstances and the evidence provided.

The health and safety of all candidates is paramount, health and safety risks within the engineering construction industry mean that some qualifications cannot be attempted by candidates with certain disabilities e.g. blindness. Reasonable adjustments cannot be made in circumstances where, to do so would jeopardise the safety of the candidate or others.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration is made to ensure that candidates receive recognition of their achievement, so long as the comparability, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured and its application must not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any candidate, or group of candidates. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for candidates and should not give unfair advantage to the candidate, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. The candidate's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not his / her potential ability.

Where an assessment requires the candidate to demonstrate practical competence, where criteria must be fully met, 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 (Knowledge Tests), it may be more appropriate to offer the candidate the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

## **Definition of Reasonable Adjustment**

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment to enable the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability, integrity or validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

- changing the usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a candidate extra time to complete the assessment;
- adapting assessment materials, such as providing large print or materials in Braille;
- changing the assessment method, for example from an oral assessment to a written assessment or vice versa;
- providing assistance during an assessment, such as a reader, scribe or interpreter;

- using assistive technology, such as screen reading, or voice activated software;
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments;
- allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers.

Reasonable adjustments must be approved and agreed with the candidate at the pre-assessment planning stage. They constitute an arrangement to give the candidate access to the assessment, arrangements should reflect the candidate's 'normal' way of working within the centre or workplace setting.

When considering reasonable adjustments, the Centre should check whether permission is required from ECITB in the first instance (please refer to Appendix 1).

The use of a reasonable adjustment is not taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work, the work produced by the candidate will be assessed in the same way as all other candidates.

## **Definition of Special Consideration**

Special Considerations are access arrangements which are applied when the assessment performance of a candidate is affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control.

Special consideration can be applied before or after an assessment has taken place, it compensates candidates who are suffering from a temporary illness, or if they have encountered exceptional circumstances that may have disadvantaged them during the assessment.

Special consideration adjustments will only be permitted prior to the assessment where it is not possible to reschedule the assessment without disadvantaging the candidate.

A candidate may be eligible for a special consideration if their performance in an assessment has been, or is likely to be affected by mitigating, or adverse circumstances beyond their control, for example:

- illness or injury, or
- another event outside of their control, which has, or is reasonably likely to have, a material effect on the candidate's ability to take the assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment.

A special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the candidate's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence.

## Centre guidance and responsibilities

The Head of Centre must appoint a SENCo/assessor(s), or equivalent member of staff (referred to as SENCo in this document), to coordinate the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations process within the Centre.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre (accountable person), members of the senior management team and SENCo/assessor(s), to familiarise themselves with this policy.

Centres are required to have their own Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy and procedures in place. It is important that Centre staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of ECITB qualifications, are fully aware and comply with the contents of the Centres and ECITB's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy and Procedures.

Centre staff:

- Must support the SENCo in identifying and implementing appropriate access arrangements.
- Have a duty to ensure individual candidates have the right to access qualifications, units and assessments in the most appropriate way for their individual needs.
- Should ensure that buildings and resources used for assessment are accessible to all candidates as far as practicable.
- Are responsible for ensuring candidates are aware of their entitlement to request Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations under equalities law and must be able to advise candidates appropriately.

Centre staff that provide advice to candidates must have had training to make them aware of the impact of a learning difficulty, disability, or other concerns in relation to Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations.

Centres should establish any disability prior to registration for the qualification and must agree the appropriate method of obtaining evidence when a candidate is first accepted onto a programme.

Centres should note that, unless otherwise stated in the qualification documentation, candidate evidence can be presented in different formats, in any way that is valid as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the specified assessment criteria. ECITB's qualifications provide flexibility, allowing the Centre to be responsive to individual candidates needs and to choose assessment methods that allow the candidate to evidence their knowledge, skills and understanding. If a Centre has any doubt regarding making an adjustment, this must be discussed with their EQA prior to use.

The ECITB and Centres are required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access to assessment and **must not charge any additional fee** in relation to the adjustment or aid.

What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain standards and health and safety, should also be taken into consideration. The adjustments will vary widely from qualification to qualification. For example, the adjustments that could be made for a qualification in installing engineering construction plant and systems, would be very different from those that might be appropriate for a management qualification.

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 quality assurance process if this is required.

Reasonable adjustments must be approved prior to an assessment taking place. Appendix 1 outlines what adjustments require approval by ECITB and those that can be approved by the Centre. If the Centre has any doubt as to whether permission is required, they should contact ECITB for advice.

## **Record keeping and monitoring**

Centres must retain records for all cases where they have approved candidates to have Reasonable Adjustments, these should be made available to ECITB for the purpose of external quality assurance.

The following documents must be retained by the Centre:

- evidence of the candidate's needs (including risk assessments where appropriate)
- history of provision within the Centre (normal way of working)
- medical certificate
- psychological or other professional assessment / report
- assessment evidence produced by the candidate
- modified assessment materials
- internal quality assurance records of the assessment decision
- evidence that the outcomes of the adjusted assessment have been subject to internal quality assurance and included in any standardisation activities relating to the unit

Your EQA will monitor Reasonable Adjustments approved by the Centre to confirm that the adjustments were made in line with this Policy and that:

- evidence of need has been retained
- the modification to the assessment has not presented any unfair advantage for the candidate
- the modifications and assessment decisions have been subjected to internal verification processes, including standardisation

Where ECITB have approved a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration, the following should be retained by the Centre:

- all supporting evidence submitted to ECITB (as outlined above)
- all relevant documentation received from ECITB

All records are classed as assessment records, therefore should be retained by the Centre for a minimum of three years from the end of the year to which they relate.



## Process for requesting Reasonable Adjustments

Where Reasonable Adjustment decisions are permitted at the discretion of the Centre, (please refer to Appendix 1), no application to the ECITB is required, however the Centre should ensure the details of any adjustment are retained with the candidate assessment records (please refer to the record keeping and monitoring section).

A Centre making a request for Reasonable Adjustments to the ECITB on behalf of a candidate must complete a *Reasonable Adjustments Request Form (VQ011)*, attaching relevant supporting evidence that provides an understanding of the disability and its impact on the candidate (e.g. medical evidence, learning needs analysis, or a statement from the candidate's Assessor). The application should also state the specific adjustment required. Form VQ011 is available to be downloaded within the MSP.

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted to [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) no later than **30 working days** before the planned date of assessment.

## Process for requesting Special Considerations

Where assessment is offered on-demand, it is unlikely that Centres will need to request special consideration for their candidates, as assessment could be carried out at an alternative, appropriate time.

A Centre making a request for Special Considerations to the ECITB on behalf of a candidate must complete a *Special Consideration Request Form (VQ012)*, providing relevant supporting information that provides an understanding of the circumstances and its impact on the candidate, for example medical evidence or invigilator report. Form VQ012 is available to be downloaded within the MSP.

Requests for Special Consideration should be submitted to [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) as soon as possible, but no more than **5 working days** after the assessment.

## Process for sending correspondence with personal or sensitive data

Before sending any information or data to ECITB that contains staff (including contractors) and/or candidate personal details that could be attributed to an individual, and/or information that includes sensitive data about an individual, you are required to request a ShareFile link from [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk).

ECITB will respond by sending an email from [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk) containing the wording '[Click here](#) to upload files'. This enables you to upload your files to the ECITB secure ShareFile system.

No personal or sensitive data should be sent via email as this method of transferring data is less secure than ShareFile.

Should you be sending such data by post, please mark the correspondence 'Confidential – For the Attention of the Awarding Organisation'.

ECITB will ensure that such information is kept secure and used only for the purposes of the request.



## How ECITB will deal with requests

Applications will normally be acknowledged:

- no later than **5 working days** from receipt for correspondence sent via email to: [qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:qualifications@ecitb.org.uk);
- no later than **15 working days** from receipt for all correspondence sent via post. Note: Please mark all correspondence 'Confidential – For the Attention of the Awarding Organisation'.

The request will then be evaluated by a member of the ECITB's Awarding Organisation team. The decision-making process will include:

- consideration of the impact of the disability, its symptoms or the circumstances on the candidates ability to demonstrate attainment;
- an evaluation of any adjustment and whether this is reasonable, practicable and/or effective and does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage any candidate or group of candidates;

Additional dialogue may be entered into with the Centre if required.

The decision will usually be made within **15 working days** and communicated in writing to the Centre Coordinator, or relevant staff member. Some requests for reasonable adjustments may take longer to evaluate, particularly if there is a need to call on specialist advice. If a response is not possible within this timeframe, an estimated response date will be communicated.

The assessment should not take place, neither should adjustment be applied until ECITB's decision has been confirmed. It is the Centre's responsibility to ensure applications are made in a timely manner.

## Malpractice

A Centre's failure to conform with ECITB's guidance relating to reasonable adjustments and special considerations, could constitute malpractice and may result in ECITB withholding the candidate's result. Failure to comply is defined as any, or all of the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Agreeing adjustments that are not supported by evidence.
- Where required, putting in place arrangements without seeking prior approval from ECITB.
- Exceeding time allowances agreed with ECITB.
- Failure to maintain or retain, records of reasonable adjustments and special considerations.
- Failure to report adjustments made at Centre level to ECITB upon request.

## Appeals

Appeals against the outcome of an application for reasonable adjustments or special consideration can only be submitted by a Centre. It is the responsibility of the Centre to obtain written consent from the candidate prior to submitting an appeal.

For more information, please refer to the *ECITBs Appeals Policy and Procedures* available on our website.

## Review arrangements

To ensure this policy remains relevant, useful and fit for purpose, it will be reviewed along with associated procedures every three years, as part of our self-evaluation process. There may be instances however that trigger the need to review the policy earlier, such as, in response to customer, candidate or regulatory feedback, or trends that emerge from processing reasonable adjustments and special considerations, enquiries or instances of malpractice or maladministration.

ECITB will monitor requests for access arrangements. Where requests occur repeatedly, it may indicate that a qualification/unit needs to be reviewed, this will be undertaken through our qualification/unit review process.

## Contact us

If you have any queries about any aspect of this policy, please contact:

The Awarding Organisation

Engineering Construction Industry Training Board

Office F15, Kings House Business Centre, Home Park Estate, Station Road, Kings Langley, Herts, WD4 8LZ

Telephone: 01923 260 000

Email: [Qualifications@ecitb.org.uk](mailto:Qualifications@ecitb.org.uk)

Website: [www.ecitb.org.uk](http://www.ecitb.org.uk)

## Appendix 1 Reasonable Adjustments Permissions Table

This table outlines some of the decisions that can be made by both the Centre and ECITB. Centres have a duty to seek advice from ECITB in any instance where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed, or how it should be applied.

Strict regulations apply to assessments taken under controlled examination conditions, Centres should be aware of their responsibilities. If reasonable adjustments are required for a candidate taking an assessment assessed in this manner, for example Knowledge Tests, approval must be sought by ECITB in advance of the assessment.

Key:

- Centre – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the Centre
- ECITB – ECITB approval required

Reasonable Adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under controlled examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	Centre	ECITB
Extra time in excess of 25%	ECITB	ECITB
Supervised rest breaks	Centre	ECITB
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Centre	Centre
Separate accommodation within the centre	Centre	Centre
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Centre	Centre
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	Centre	ECITB
Use of assistive low vision aids, CCTV and OCR scanners	Centre	ECITB
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	Centre	ECITB
Assessment material in enlarged format	Centre	ECITB

Assessment material and responses in Braille	Centre	ECITB
Language modified assessment material	Centre	ECITB
Assessment material in BSL (British Sign Language)	Centre	ECITB
Assessment material on coloured paper	Centre	ECITB
Assessment material in audio format	Centre	ECITB
Use of ICT to present responses	Centre	ECITB
Oral responses using audio recording instead of written response	Centre	ECITB
Responses using electronic devices	Centre	ECITB
Reader	Centre	ECITB
Scribe	Centre	ECITB
BSL/English interpreter	Centre	ECITB
Prompter	Centre	ECITB
Practical assistant	ECITB	ECITB
Transcriber	Centre	ECITB
Other	ECITB	ECITB