



Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy

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Policy authorised by Responsible Officer

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1.0 Introduction

The key role of OTHM is to secure standards for those qualifications we certificate. As part of our commitment to quality assuring standards we aim to provide guidance and support to help Centres and their learners to achieve learning and development goals. We also ensure that any regulatory requirements are met, and in turn we support Centres to meet those requirements.

We review all our policies annually or in response to regulatory changes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

This policy document provides guidance on reasonable adjustment and special consideration in vocational internally assessed units and should be read in conjunction with the JCQ Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration guidance.

OTHM complies with the Equality Act (2010) and this guidance aims to exceed the requirements of the Equality Act to allow fair access to vocational qualifications and ensure learners are not disadvantaged. OTHM aims to facilitate open access to vocational qualifications 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.

2.0 Scope of policy

This policy applies to all stakeholders involved in delivering any Ofqual's regulated qualifications offered by OTHM and related products and services.

3.0 Policy statement

Ofqual requires all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to OTHM's status as an Awarding Organisations will reference the particular conditions and criteria that they address.

These guidance notes are designed to assist learners who are registered at an OTHM Centre and who require additional support during the examinations (pre-assessment special considerations) or whose performance is affected by extenuating circumstances (post-assessment special considerations) such as illness during, or immediately prior to, the examination.

4.0 Reasonable adjustment

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
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Using assistive technology

Reasonable adjustments for internally assessed units can be approved internally by the Centre, in line with the JCQ guidance and this OTHM supplementary guidance. As each learner's circumstances are likely to be different, each case should be reviewed by the Centre separately.

Reasonable adjustments should be set in place prior to the learner's assessment commencing.

The work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other learners and be available for external quality assurance, where required. The key to reasonable adjustment is that it 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.

For all application of reasonable adjustment that has been made, Centres must ensure that these are appropriately recorded and be made available for scrutiny by OTHM External Quality Assurer (EQA) or the regulator, as appropriate.

Where a Centre is unsure about a learner's ability to achieve the assessment criteria or it is felt that the proposed reasonable adjustment may affect the validity or reliability of assessment, the Centre may wish to contact OTHM assigned EQA for guidance and support.

5.0 Special consideration policy

Special consideration is a post-assessment allowance to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. 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 grade or outcome.

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
- Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate.

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, e.g. disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

It is also 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 license to practice.

Centres are not able to apply their own special consideration and certification claims should not be made until the outcome of the application has been received.

Given the nature of internally assessed units within vocational qualifications, where there is no single fixed assessment date, OTHM would expect learners to be given the opportunity to complete the assessment at a later date. Where circumstances have led to a learner not being able to complete a significant amount of evidence it may be more appropriate for the learner to be certificated on a smaller sized qualification within the same level.

OTHM's decision regarding special consideration 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, et cetera).

Normally, where evidence of extenuating circumstances is provided by the learner, he/she will have the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date as if for the first time and with no cap on their marks, since to preserve the integrity of awards learners must demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. An application for post-assessment special consideration will therefore rarely result in an adjustment to the marks given and will not change the assessment criteria applied by the examiner for the examination in question.

OTHM expects a Centre to 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. Applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis; separate applications must be made for each learner.

6.0 Applying special consideration for internally assessed work

Centres will be expected to have in place appropriate arrangements in place to enable learners to apply for special consideration should warrant. Learners will therefore be given an opportunity complete the assessment at a later stage, if this is feasible, and thus achieve the unit/qualification in question, without jeopardising the integrity of the qualification.

Applications for special consideration can only be made on a case-by-case basis and thus, separate applications must be made for each learner and for each unit affected. OTHM will review the circumstances surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage. Learners need to submit evidence in support of the special consideration. This may include medical evidence or any other appropriate information.

7.0 Recruiting with integrity

It is vital that Centres recruit with integrity onto OTHM vocational qualifications. Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on qualifications they may wish to follow 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, checking the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of mandatory units as well as selecting the most appropriate route of optional units, where applicable.

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 should 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
- Any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes.

8.0 OTHM and Centre responsibilities

OTHM and the OTHM Centres have a responsibility to ensure that all its learners have equal opportunities to reach their full potential. In some instances, learners may require adjustments to the assessment process to give them an equal opportunity.

In making such adjustments, OTHM must be satisfied that over-compensation does not occur which gives a learner who has an adjusted assessment process an unfair advantage over other learners.

9.0 Regulatory references

This policy addresses the following Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (GCR).

GCR Reference	GCR section title
G6	Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments
G7	Arrangements for Special Consideration.

10.0 Policy review date

July 2020

11.0 Useful contacts

For more information on our qualifications and services visit: www.othm.org.uk.
Alternatively, call at: +44(0)20 7118 4243 or email at: info@othm.org.uk

End of policy