

Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment Policy

Purpose and Scope

City of London College aims to facilitate open access to all 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. [B5: Indicator 2]

QAA Context

The UK Quality Code seeks to ensure that all learners are afforded equal opportunities to pursue their studies. This may mean that adjustments have to be made to the learning and teaching (B3) or to assessment (B6) without compromising quality. The focus in this Policy is the need to ensure equity in the provision of learning opportunities.

Chapter B6: Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning

The Expectation: Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Indicator 7: Students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice

Indicator 8: The volume, timing and nature of assessment enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.

Indicator 10: Through inclusive design wherever possible, and through individual reasonable adjustments wherever required, assessment tasks provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.

Context

Reasonable Adjustment – This is agreed at the pre-assessment planning stage and 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 affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes, nor must this 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 cannot 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 “license to practice” units within a qualification, or to “license to practice” qualifications.

Guidance on Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations

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.

The College understands that 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. [B6: Indicator 8]

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 the College may involve:

- Changes to Assessment Conditions
- The use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Modifications to the presentation of assessment material
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Use of access facilitators.

[B6: Indicator 10]

College Recruitment

The College takes measures to ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualifications and that the qualifications will meet their needs. The recruitment process shall include the College assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification. [B5: Indicator 5]

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.

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 DDA) to qualify for reasonable adjustment; nor will every learner who is disabled be entitled to reasonable adjustment see "REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT FOR DISABLED STUDENTS POLICY". Allowing reasonable adjustment is dependent upon how it will facilitate access for the learner. [B6: Indicator 10] The College applies reasonable adjustment in a transparent and unbiased manner. All reasonable adjustments made must be recorded using the College reasonable adjustment form. Once completed, these would be held by the College in the learner's file and shall be available at all times for scrutiny by the awarding body, if so requested.

All reasonable adjustments implemented by the College are subject to meeting the requirements of the appropriate assessment strategy and assessment criteria for each qualification and awarding body.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (or designated nominee) to ensure that any access arrangement implemented by the College on behalf of the learner, is based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment.

Assessing Achievement

The College will 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. [B6: Indicator 7]

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 illness, injury or adverse circumstances at, or near the time of, the assessment;
- misses part of the assessment due to circumstances beyond their control.

It may not be possible to apply special consideration in cases where:

- assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence;
- criteria have to be met fully;
- the qualifications confer a 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 take 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.

The awarding body'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).

Unlike reasonable adjustment, there are no circumstances whereby a College can apply its own special consideration. Applications must be made to the awarding body.

Applying for Special Consideration

The College has 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 a list of learners affected should be attached to the application.

Applications for special consideration should be submitted to the awarding body:

- Application Form
- The learner's Student Report Form
- 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 Chief Executive Officer shall authorise all applications for special consideration. Applications must be submitted to the awarding body within seven days of the assessment having taken place. Following receipt, the awarding body will usually give a decision within a further ten working days. Where a case

is complex, the awarding body will usually inform the College if a decision cannot be made within the time scale specified.

During the processing of an application, the awarding body will only liaise with the College who are considered to be acting on the learner's behalf and not with the learner or their designated third party. Special consideration applications will not be considered where learner achievement has been claimed and certificated.

Lost or Damaged Work

When work has been lost or damaged, the awarding body may consider accepting a grade for which there is no available evidence. In all cases, the College shall be able to verify that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress.

Complying with Policy

The College understands 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.

Right to appeal

If the College fails to agree with the awarding body decision made in respect of this policy, then the centre has the right of appeal.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the awarding body will usually acknowledge receipt within two working days and adjudicate within a further ten working days.

Document Custodian: Senior Management Team
Review Cycle: Annually, or as required in response to regulatory or strategic changes
Last Reviewed: August 2025
Effective Date: August 2025
Review Date: August 2026
Version: 1.8.25
Circulation: Public: (Web Publication)
Sensitivity: Unclassified