

Guidance on Applying Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments

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Section 1 Introduction to Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

1.1 Overview

As detailed in our Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments policy, there are two ways in which access to fair assessment can be achieved, these are through:

- **Access Arrangements** – allows learners with specific needs, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an Access Arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual learner without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- **Reasonable Adjustments** – NCFE is required to make Reasonable Adjustments where a learner, who is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. NCFE are required to take all reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

Access Arrangements and/or Reasonable Adjustments to assessments must:

- not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification
- not give the learner an unfair advantage
- reflect the learner's normal way of working
- be based on the individual need of the learner.

Access Arrangements and/or Reasonable Adjustments will not be approved if they:

- involve unreasonable cost
- involve unreasonable timeframes; or
- affect the security and integrity of the assessment.

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments to an assessment.

All Awarding Organisations and centres have a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the learner to show what they know and can do without compromising the assessment criteria.

This document must be used in conjunction with the **NCFE CACHE Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy** available in the Policies & Documents section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

1.2 What to consider

When considering whether an adjustment to an assessment is appropriate, Awarding Organisations and centres need to consider the following:

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- Learners should potentially be able to achieve the assessment requirements. Any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments should not compensate the learner for lack of knowledge and skills. The learner must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
 - Any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification/award or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards should not be altered. While Awarding Organisations should take all reasonable steps to ensure that learners with a disability or difficulty are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in terms of access to assessment, there is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice which is defined as a competence standard. All learner performance will be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered, but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each learner has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.
 - Any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage nor should it disadvantage the learner. The qualification of a learner who has had an Access Arrangement or Reasonable Adjustment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. Vocational qualifications may lead to employment. Achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to potential employers of what the holder of the qualification can do.
 - Any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments must be based on the individual needs of the learner. Decisions about adjustments to assessment should be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual learner, the assessment requirements of the qualification, and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. Centres should not assume that the same Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessment can make different demands on the learner. Learners should be consulted throughout the process.

1.3 Centre responsibilities

All centre staff must work together to ensure that appropriate and/or approved Access Arrangements are put in place for all internal/controlled assessments, mock/sample assessments and external assessments.

Centres should bear in mind that they will have duties towards disabled learners, including a duty to make Access Arrangements to the service they provide to learners.

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) or suitably qualified assessor must undertake the necessary and appropriate steps to gather and present a picture of need and demonstrate normal way of working for a learner.

This includes distance learners and home educated students. The centre, where required, must lead on the assessment process.

NCFE staff cannot determine whether a learner has a disability or a learning difficulty.

Section 2 Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments available for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties

2.1 Managing the needs of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties

Some learners with disabilities and learning difficulties are likely to have a number of the needs set out below. They may require a range of Access Arrangements. The examples given are therefore not exhaustive and are illustrative only.

- **Cognition and learning needs e.g. general and/or specific learning difficulties (such as Dyscalculia and Dyslexia)**

Learners with learning difficulties may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- to read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a prompter
- a practical assistant
- coloured overlays
- coloured/enlarged papers
- modified language papers.

- **Communication and interaction needs e.g. Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)**

Learners with communication and interaction difficulties may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- to read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- modified language papers.

- **Sensory and physical needs e.g. Hearing Impairment (HI), Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI), Physical Disability (PD), Vision Impairment (VI)**

Learners with sensory and physical needs may require for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time

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- a computer reader or a reader
 - to read aloud or an examination reading pen
 - a scribe
 - a word processor
 - a live speaker
 - a Communication Professional
 - a practical assistant
 - Braille papers, modified enlarged and/or modified language papers.

- **Social, mental and emotional needs e.g. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Mental Health Conditions**

Learners with social, mental and emotional needs may require, for example:

- supervised rest breaks
- extra time
- a computer reader or a reader
- to read aloud or an examination reading pen
- a scribe
- a word processor
- a prompter
- an alternative site arrangement
- separate invigilation within the centre.

2.2 Centre delegated adjustments (no prior notification to NCFE required)

2.2.1 Supervised rest breaks

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for supervised rest breaks for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Centres are permitted to provide a supervised rest break during any NCFE internal or external assessment to a learner where it is their normal way of working within the centre.

Supervised rest breaks must always be considered before making an application for extra time.

The timing of the assessment should be paused and re-started when the learner is ready to continue and this must be recorded on the Invigilator/External Assessment Register. During the rest break the learner must not have access to the question paper/answer booklet. The supervised rest break is not included in any extra time allowance.

If the learner needs to leave the examination room, an invigilator must accompany them. There is no maximum time set for supervised rest breaks. The decision must be made by the centre based on their knowledge of the learner's needs and normal way of working when placed under timed examination conditions. It may be helpful to consider in advance of the examination(s) how many breaks a learner might require and the approximate duration of

any supervised rest breaks. This will allow sufficient staff to be available to facilitate any rest breaks

Centres must seek medical advice in cases of serious illness on whether the learner is fit to take the assessment.

2.2.2 Separate supervision or invigilation

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for separate supervision or invigilation for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Arrangements for the separate supervision of any learner may be made at a centres discretion. Any invigilation arrangements for such learners should not advantage or disadvantage these learners over other learners.

All details of any such arrangements must be recorded on the external assessment paperwork.

2.2.3 Change in the organisation of the assessment room

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for a change in the organisation of the assessment room and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.

For example:

- visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting
- hearing impaired learners may benefit from being seated near the front of the room or removing visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, from the room.

2.2.4 Word processor

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for the use of a word processor for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Centres are permitted to provide a word processor (e.g. laptop, computer) with the spelling and grammar check facility disabled where it is the learner's normal way of working within the centre and is appropriate to the learner's needs.

Where provided by a centre, a word processor:

- must have been cleared of any previously stored data, as must any portable storage medium used in the external assessment
- must be in good working order at the time of the external assessment
- must be accommodated in such a way that other learners are not disturbed and cannot read the screen

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- must either be connected to a printer so that their work can be printed off, or have the facility to print from a portable storage medium. This must be done after the external assessment is complete. The learner must be present to verify that the work printed is his or her own. Word processed scripts must be securely attached to any answer booklet containing some of the answers
 - must not be connected to an internet/intranet or any other means of communication, unless permitted as part of the external assessment, for example Functional Skills ICT
 - must not give the learner access to other applications such as a calculator (where prohibited in the examination), spreadsheets etc.
 - must not be used on the learner's behalf by a third party unless the learner has permission to use a scribe.

The battery capacity of a laptop or a tablet must be checked before any external assessment. The centre must ensure that the battery is sufficiently charged for the entire duration of the assessment. The use of a fully charged laptop or tablet will allow a centre to seat a learner within the external assessment room without the need for separate invigilation and power points.

Further information on the use of a word processor, can be found in the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments available on our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

2.2.5 Read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for read aloud and/or the use of an examination reading pen for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Learners are permitted to read aloud during assessments, so long as this reflects their normal way of working within the centre. Centres must ensure that where this adjustment is implemented, learners are accommodated separately.

The use of an examination reading pen may benefit those learners who wish to work independently and do not qualify for a reader/computer reader. It must be established as the learner's normal way of working within the centre. Examination reading pens must not have an in-built dictionary, thesaurus or a data storage facility.

2.2.6 Prompter

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for the use of a prompter for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Where a need is established, a prompter may assist the learner in keeping focussed on the assessment by appropriate interventions. A prompter is **not** a reader or scribe.

A prompter:

- **may** tap on the desk in order to remind the learner to focus on the assessment
- **may** use the learner's name as an appropriate prompt during the assessment in order to bring the learner's attention back to the question paper
- **may** use a written prompt such as a flashcard

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- must abide by the regulations since failure to do so could lead to the disqualification of the learner
 - must not advise the learner regarding which questions to do, or on the order in which questions should be answered
 - must not give factual help or offer any suggestions

Any prompt to be used in an assessment must be agreed with the learner in advance of the assessment, consistent with the learner's normal way of working.

For support when administering this Access Arrangement and acting as a prompter, see **Appendix A**.

2.2.7 Communication professional (for learners using sign language)

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for the use of a communication professional for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

Centres are allowed to provide a communication professional to a learner where it is their usual way of working in the centre.

The communication professional may have access to assessment papers **one hour** prior to the scheduled start time of the assessment. Upon request an additional copy of the assessment paper may be provided by NCFE for the communication professional to allow them to prepare, though the content of the assessment must not be shared with any other person.

A communication professional will work 'live' in the presence of the learner during the examination in order to allow for the learner's regional variations in BSL/ISL signs.

Consequently, this cannot be checked by NCFE for accuracy. Great care must be taken not to disadvantage or advantage the learner.

Centres must record the signing of the communication professional to demonstrate accuracy.

For the rules associated with implementing a communication professional please refer to *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

For support when administering this Access Arrangement and acting as a communication professional, see **Appendix A**.

2.2.8 Bilingual translation dictionaries with 10% extra time

There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for the use of a bilingual dictionary with 10% extra time for a learner during an assessment and no supporting evidence is required for inspection purposes.

The use of a bilingual translation dictionary with up to 10% extra time must reflect the learner's normal way of working. It is only to be used in assessments by learners whose first language is **not** English, Irish or Welsh, and who entered the UK less than 3 years ago (including holiday periods).

Extra time must not be awarded to a learner using a bilingual translation dictionary who does not meet the above criteria or in order to compensate for difficulties in reading and writing in English.

The translation of assessment materials or the learner's answers into or from the learner's first language is **not** allowed.

2.2.9 Other arrangements for learners with disabilities

Please see below for a list of other centre delegated Access Arrangements, which a learner may require, in order to access an assessment. There is no requirement to submit a notification to NCFE for any of the arrangements listed below and no supporting evidence of need is required for inspection purposes.

- Amplification equipment
- Braille
- Closed circuit television (CCTV)
- Colour naming by the invigilator for learners who are Colour Blind
- Coloured overlays (this would also include reading rulers, virtual overlays and virtual reading rulers)
- Low vision aid/magnifier
- Optical Character Reader (OCR) scanners

2.3 Non-centre delegated adjustments (prior notification to NCFE required)

2.3.1 Extra time up to 25%

A notification to NCFE for extra time up to 25% for a learner during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Extra time will not be allowed if a learner's literacy difficulties are primarily caused by English, Irish or Welsh not being their first language.

The additional time should only be granted to learners who have a disability or are at a significant disadvantage to other learners. The additional time should create a level playing field for learners and must not advantage one learner over another.

In order to award up to 25% extra time the centre must assess the needs of the learners based on their requirements. Suggested evidence requirements can be found below, however, please note this list is **not** exhaustive.

Learners with learning difficulties:

- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, or an Individual Development Plan, which confirms the learner's disability; or

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- an assessment carried out no earlier than the start of Year 9 by a suitably qualified assessor confirming a learning difficulty relating to secondary/further education.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the assessor's report must confirm that the learner has at least one below average standardised score of **84 or less** which relates to an assessment of:

- speed of reading; or
- speed of writing; or
- cognitive processing measures which have a substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working.

Learners with substantial impairments:

Where a learner has complex needs as outlined below, which may have a substantial and long term adverse effect on their speed of working, appropriate evidence of need must be made available by the centre upon request for inspection purposes.

- communication and interaction needs
- a learning difficulty with a current EHCP or Statement of Special Educational Needs
- sensory and/or physical needs
- social, mental and emotional needs

Evidence of need

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor must address both bullet points below, on centre headed paper, signed and dated:

- confirm that 25% extra time is the learner's normal way of working within the centre
- provide evidence from teaching staff that the learner has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning.

The SENCo's detailed information, as above, will be supported by confirmation of the learner's disability using one of the following:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service
- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the learner's disability.

Rare and exceptional circumstances

In exceptional circumstances NCFE may grant 25% extra time to a learner where the assessment confirms that he/she has at least two low average standardised scores (85-89) which relate to two different areas of speed of working.

Where there are a cluster of scores (at least three, relating to three different areas of speed of working) just within the average range (90 to 94), in rare and very exceptional circumstances NCFE may grant 25% extra time. The learner must have a diagnostic

assessment report, from no earlier than Year 9 (or Year 10 in Northern Ireland), confirming a significant learning difficulty or disability which has a clear, measurable and substantial long term adverse effect on performance and speed of working. This must have been undertaken by a specialist diagnostic assessor.

Factors the centre must take into account

- Where 25% extra time is to be made available to a learner in their assessment, the centre must ensure that appropriate invigilation and timetabling arrangements are in place.
- Extra time will not be permitted in assessments testing the time in which a skill is performed, such as expressive arts, a musical performance, or a sport, where timing is an explicit part of the assessment objective.
- Learners may not require extra time for every assessment and every subject. As subjects and the methods of assessment vary, so the demands on the learner will vary.
- Extra time may not be appropriate in practical assessments or non-examination assessments where the impairment has a minimal effect on the assessment.

Care must be taken within the centre to ensure that learners (whose normal way of working is to use extra time) are not placed at a disadvantage.

2.3.2 Extra time of up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time)

A notification to NCFE for extra time up to 50% (between 26% and 50% extra time) for a learner during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

Access Arrangements are determined on an individual basis, based on the assessment evidence, the learner's demonstrated needs within the centre and their normal way of working. If a learner with processing difficulties is able to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills with 25% extra time, then it would not be appropriate to award more than this. To do so would not create a level playing field. It would advantage the learner over their peers.

For the overwhelming majority of learners with cognition and learning needs who require extra time, 25% will be sufficient. If more than this is needed, there must be a strong justification as to why more than 25% extra time is required, including a substantial body of centre based evidence.

An application for extra time of more than 25% and up to 50% must only be processed in the following exceptional circumstances:

- (i) Learning Difficulties
Very substantial impairment - evidence of need

A learner working independently with a learning difficulty which has a very substantial and long term adverse effect on speed of working.

Results must be given as standardised scores.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, only very substantially below average standardised scores of 69 or less are acceptable.

The learner must have two very substantially below average standardised scores which relate to two different areas of speed of working from the following:

- speed of reading and speed of writing
- speed of reading and cognitive processing measures
- speed of writing and cognitive processing measures
- two different areas of cognitive processing.

The learner will have been assessed with current editions of nationally standardised tests being conducted within 26 months of the internal/external assessment being undertaken. This will be in addition to a compelling and substantial picture of need, indicating the learner's normal way of working.

(ii) A physical, sensory or multi-sensory impairment
Very substantial impairment – evidence of need

A learner who has a physical, a sensory or multi-sensory impairment that very substantially hinders their speed of working.

Extra time might be needed for various reasons. For example, it could take a learner with a very substantial multi-sensory impairment longer to read and process text, and to navigate a modified enlarged paper.

Where a learner is proficient in reading a Braille paper it would normally be appropriate to award no more than 50% extra time.

Where a learner is proficient in using a modified enlarged paper, whether with a computer reader/reader and/or a scribe, it would normally be appropriate to award no more than 50% extra time.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor must:

- confirm that the learner has very persistent and significant difficulties when accessing and processing information, and is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- include evidence of the learner's current difficulties and how they very substantially impact on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- indicate the maximum amount of extra time required, e.g. 40%;
- provide evidence of how the amount of extra time required has been determined;
- show the involvement of teaching staff in determining the amount of extra time required;
- indicate whether the learner will be working independently with Braille or modified enlarged papers;
- indicate whether the learner will be using a computer reader/reader and/or a scribe and/or a word processor;
- confirm that without the application of extra time of up to 50% the learner would be at a very substantial disadvantage (compared with other, non-disabled learners undertaking the assessment).
- confirm that extra time of up to 50% is the learner's normal way of working within the centre as a direct consequence of their disability.

The SENCo's detailed information, as above, will be supported by confirmation of the learner's disability using one of the following:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT);
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service;
- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the learner's disability.

2.3.3 Extra time of over 50%

A notification to NCFE for extra time of over 50% for a learner during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

In very rare and exceptional circumstances, a learner may require more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment.

For example, a learner with a severe vision impairment who is very slow in reading a modified enlarged or Braille paper and cannot access an electronic paper.

Upon request detailed information must be provided, indicating the very substantial nature of the learner's impairment and why 50% extra time is insufficient.

The amount of extra time requested must be both reasonable and appropriate to the learner's needs.

2.3.4 Computer reader/Reader

A notification to NCFE for the use of a computer reader/reader during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

A computer reader/reader will not be allowed if a learner's literacy difficulties are primarily caused by English, Irish or Welsh not being their first language.

For a learner with a disability or a learning difficulty a computer reader may allow them to demonstrate their attainment more effectively and independently than would be possible with a reader. However, a computer reader must be appropriate to the learner's needs. There must be sufficient time and training to ensure the learner is able to use a computer reader effectively.

A computer reader

Computer software which accurately reads out text, (including synthetic speech software stored on a memory stick) but does not decode or interpret the paper, may be used as a computer reader.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the computer used does not contain any software that the learner can access and which might assist him/her during an assessment. Failure to do so may constitute malpractice.

A computer reader will be allowed in papers (or sections of papers) testing reading. This is because a computer reader and a reader do not interpret text in the same way. A reader can add a layer of vocal interpretation (nuance and meaning). This could affect a learner's response and therefore compromise the reliability of the qualification. A computer reader is an acceptable arrangement since it allows the learner to independently meet the requirements of the reading standards.

Where an application for a computer reader is approved, the centre is permitted to open the question paper packet in the secure room within 90 minutes of the published starting time for the external assessment. This is specifically to scan the hard copy question paper into PDF format. Any infringement has the potential to constitute malpractice.

However, where an application for a computer reader is approved, it is strongly recommended that the centre requests a non-interactive electronic question paper using the online request form available in the Delivery and Learner support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

A reader

A reader is a responsible adult who reads the instructions in the question paper and the questions to the learner during an assessment. This may involve reading the whole paper to the learner or the learner may request only some words to be read.

A reader **is not** permitted to read questions or text in papers assessing reading.

A learner who would normally be eligible for a reader but is not permitted this arrangement in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time. (Where a learner is using a computer reader or an examination reading pen the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor cannot grant up to a maximum of 50% extra time.)

In a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading a reader may read back, upon request, what the learner has written without any emphasis on errors.

Types of disability or access needs for computer reader/reader

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Learning difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs (HI, MSI, PD, VI)
- Social, mental and emotional needs (e.g. ADD, ADHD)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

Evidence of need for all types of disability

The SENCo or suitably qualified assessor must produce a short concise file note on centre headed paper, signed and dated, confirming the nature of the learner's impairment and that the use of a computer reader and/or a reader reflects their normal and current way of working within the centre.

For learners with learning difficulties assessment evidence is no longer required.

However, the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor must be satisfied that the learner has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant reading difficulties; and there is a genuine need for the arrangement.

A computer reader/reader will be awarded on account of:

- cognition and learning needs;
- communication and interaction needs;
- a medical condition;
- sensory and physical needs;
- social, mental and emotional needs.

The need for 25% extra time alongside the use of a computer reader/reader should always be considered. If the learner requires 25% extra time then he/she must meet the published criteria for 25% extra time. The required evidence must be available if requested for inspection purposes.

Factors the centre must take into account

- The centre is responsible for ensuring that the learner and reader cannot be overheard by, or distract, other learners. This will also apply if the learner uses a computer reader.
- Where the learner and reader are accommodated in another room, on a one to one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the reader.
- Readers may work with more than one learner, but must not read the paper to a group of learners at the same time, as this imposes the timing of the paper on the learners. Where learners only require occasional words or phrases to be read, three or four learners may share one reader. The learner will need to put their hand up or use a prompt card when he/she needs help with reading. If the group is accommodated in another room a separate invigilator will be required. Each learner in the group must meet the published criteria for a reader.

For support when administering and acting as a reader, see **Appendix A**.

2.3.5 Scribe/Speech recognition technology

A notification to NCFE for the use of a scribe/speech recognition technology during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

If a word processor (with the spelling and grammar check disabled) is the learner's normal way of working within the centre, then it should be used in assessments in order to encourage independent working and access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

A scribe must only be used where a learner is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility disabled (switched off).

A scribe or speech recognition technology software will not be allowed if a learner's literacy difficulties are primarily caused by English, Irish or Welsh not being their first language.

Learners must respond in English, Irish or Welsh as appropriate, so as to meet the assessment of written communication in English, Irish or Welsh.

A scribe

A scribe is a responsible adult who, in non-examination assessments and/or in an external assessments but not in a speaking test, writes or types a learner's dictated answers to the questions.

If a learner dictates answers on to a tape, a responsible adult must write down or word process the learner's dictated answers to the questions.

In subjects where quality of written communication is being assessed or where the learner's spelling, punctuation and grammar is specifically being assessed, a scribe will be allowed.

However, where a scribe is used in an assessment assessing quality of written communication or spelling, punctuation and grammar, marks can only be awarded if the learner can demonstrate that he/she has carried out the particular skills being assessed. This must be recorded on the external assessment paperwork. This also applies where a learner uses a scribe due to a temporary injury at the time of the assessment.

A learner who would normally be eligible for a scribe, but is not permitted this Access Arrangement because of qualification restrictions, may be granted up to a maximum of 50% extra time.

Speech recognition technology

Where the centre has approval for the use of a scribe and where it reflects the learner's normal way of working within the centre, as appropriate to their needs, the learner may alternatively use:

- a word processor with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled;
- a word processor with predictive text/spelling and grammar check facility enabled;
- speech recognition technology with predictive text when the learner dictates into a word processor. Software (a screen reader) may be used to read back and correct the learner's dictated answers;
- computer software, producing speech, which is used to dictate to a scribe.

However, the learner will not have access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and/or grammar unless he/she has independently dictated spelling, punctuation and/or grammar, and this has been recorded on the scribe cover sheet (Appendix D).

There must be sufficient time and training to ensure the learner is able to use any speech recognition technology effectively.

Types of disability or access needs for a scribe or speech recognition technology

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Learning difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs (HI, MSI, PD, VI)
- Social, mental and emotional Needs (e.g. ADD, ADHD)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

So as not to give an unfair advantage, a scribe will only be allowed where:

- an impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the learner's writing
- a learner cannot write, type or Braille independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed, as a result of a substantial and long term impairment.

The use of a scribe must reflect the learner's normal way of working within the centre in light of their substantial and long term impairment.

Communication and interaction needs, sensory and/or physical needs, social, mental and emotional needs

Where a learner has complex needs, i.e. communication and interaction needs, sensory and/or physical needs or social, mental and emotional needs it is not necessary to formally assess the learner's writing skills.

However, the SENCo must demonstrate that the learner has an impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their writing.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor must address the three bullet points below, on centre headed paper/template, signed and dated:

- confirm that a scribe is the learner's normal way of working within the centre;
- provide evidence from teaching staff that the learner has persistent and significant difficulties, and how these substantially impact on teaching and learning;
- confirm that the learner is not sufficiently competent or confident in using a word processor with the spelling and grammar check or predictive text facility disabled (switched off) in every subject.

The SENCo's or suitably qualified assessor's detailed information, as above, will be supported by confirmation of the learner's disability using one of the following:

- a letter from CAMHS, a HCPC registered psychologist, a hospital consultant, a psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)
- a letter from the Local Authority Specialist Service, Local Authority Sensory Impairment Service or Occupational Health Service

-
- a current Statement of Special Educational Needs, or an Education, Health and Care Plan, which confirms the learner's disability.

Learning Difficulties

Where a learner has learning difficulties and is not subject to a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan a formal assessment in relation to the learner's writing skills is required.

A scribe, word processor with the spell check enabled, or speech recognition technology will be allowed in certain subjects when a learner's impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect.

For assessment purposes, a substantial impairment is interpreted as the learner having:

- a below average standardised spelling accuracy score (**a standardised score of 84 or less**) with unrecognisable spelling attempts; **or**
- a below average standardised score for writing speed (**a standardised score of 84 or less**).

Factors the centre must take into account

- A scribe will not be permitted to perform tasks that are part of the assessment objectives, which might include application of skills in ICT or graphic design.
- In cases where a learner will be dictating to a scribe for the entire duration of the assessment 25% extra time should always be considered. The scribe will often require the learner to repeat their dictation whilst he/she catches up and to ensure the learner's response has been correctly recorded. There is not a requirement to process a separate application or show slow processing scores in order to award 25% extra time alongside a scribe. However, the SENCo or suitably qualified assessor working with the centre must explain the need for 25% extra time when using a scribe.
- Where a temporary injury at the time of the assessment gives rise to the need for a scribe the centre must:
 - submit an application for a scribe as a temporary Access Arrangement using the online notification form on our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).
 - ensure that appropriate documentation is on file to substantiate the arrangement.
- The centre is responsible for ensuring that the learner and scribe cannot be overheard by, or distract, other learners (This will also apply if the learner uses speech recognition technology). Normally the learner and the scribe will be accommodated in another room. Where the learner and scribe are accommodated in another room, on a one-to-one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the scribe.

2.3.6 Braille transcript

We recognise that in order to access the paper your learner is likely to require additional time. In line with *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustment policy*, please consider that where a learner is proficient in reading a Braille paper it would normally be appropriate to award no more than 50% extra time.

No supporting evidence of need is required for inspection purposes for this type of Access Arrangement.

2.3.7 Language Modifier

A notification to NCFE for the use of a language modifier during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

A Language Modifier is a responsible adult who may clarify the carrier language used in the assessment paper when requested to do so by a learner.

All requests for a Language Modifier will be considered in light of the learner's needs.

A Language Modifier must be seen as a rare and exceptional arrangement. It must only be considered for those learners whose disability has a very substantial and long term adverse effect resulting in very persistent and significant difficulties in accessing and processing information.

A Language Modifier is an adjustment of the last resort. An application must only be made once all other relevant Access Arrangements have been considered and found to be unsuitable or unworkable. There must be a very strong justification as to why a Language Modifier is required.

Supporting evidence must include an appropriate up to date test within **26 months** of the final assessment with a resulting standardised score of **69 or less in relation to reading comprehension and/or vocabulary**.

The extensive modification of language must reflect the learner's normal way of working within the centre

Factors the centre must take into account

- A Language Modifier must have:
 - successfully completed accredited training (this must be made available upon request for inspection purposes);
 - knowledge of the subject being assessed in order to recognise subject-specific vocabulary and technical terms;
 - a good working knowledge of English language grammatical structures;
 - an understanding of the impact of command words and an examiner's expectations of a learner's answer.
- A Language Modifier must not explain technical terms or subject-specific terms. The ability to understand these terms is part of the assessment. If such terms are explained to the learner then the demands of the question will have been compromised and may constitute malpractice.
- A Language Modifier will not be allowed to read questions or text in a paper (or a section of a paper) testing reading. A learner, who is normally eligible for a Language modifier, will be allowed up to a maximum of 50% extra time in a paper testing reading.

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- The learner and the Language Modifier should be accommodated separately.

Where available, modified language papers must always be ordered as part of the request for learners who are approved to use a Language modifier.

Use of a Language Modifier will allow the centre to open the question paper packet **one hour** before the published starting time for the assessment. Upon request an additional copy of the assessment paper may be provided by NCFE for the Language Modifier to enable him/her to:

- identify any highlighted technical or subject-specific terms and command words which cannot be modified;
- make notes on the copy if, for example, potentially problematic language is identified.

The Language Modifier must only modify in an assessment if the learner makes clear that he/she does not understand the wording of a specific question.

2.3.8 Practical assistant

A notification to NCFE for the use of a practical assistant during an assessment must be submitted using the *Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* request form available in the Delivery and Learner Support section of our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

Appropriate evidence of need must be available at the centre for inspection purposes.

A practical assistant is a responsible adult who may carry out practical tasks on the instruction of a learner during an assessment.

For example a learner with very poor motor co-ordination may need help in holding a ruler, placing a ruler in the correct place for a line to be drawn or turning the pages of the script.

Within the notification submitted to NCFE details must be provided by the centre that list the tasks that will be carried out by the practical assistant to ensure the assessment is not compromised. Invigilators must be made aware on the day the tasks that have been approved.

A practical assistant must not be allowed to carry out physical tasks or demonstrate physical abilities where they form part of the assessment objectives.

Factors the centre must take into account

- Learners using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated in another room.
- Where the learner and practical assistant are accommodated in another room, on a one to one basis, the invigilator may additionally act as the practical assistant.
- The practical assistant must be made aware, prior to the assessment, of the particular task(s) he/she will be performing as specifically approved by the awarding body.

For support when administering and acting as a practical assistant, see **Appendix A**.

Section 3 - Processing requests for modified papers

3.1 Timescales

In order to ensure that requests for modified assessment papers are processed in a timely manner, we require centres to submit requests in line with the timescales outlined below using the online form on our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

<u>Type of modification required</u>	<u>Timescales</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Enlarged papers❖ Coloured papers❖ Non-interactive electronic (PDF) question papers for use with computer reading/speech recognition software.	<p style="text-align: center;">15 working days' notice <i>(prior to the published date of assessment or start of assessment window)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Braille papers❖ Tactile diagrams❖ Modified language papers	<p style="text-align: center;">30 working days' notice <i>(prior to the published date of assessment or start of assessment window)</i></p>

Centres are responsible for ensuring paper-based exam bookings are scheduled prior to a modified paper request being submitted.

Centres are encouraged to submit requests as far in advance of any scheduled assessment as possible.

Any requests for paper modifications submitted in line with the timescales outlined above will be processed within **5 working days** of receipt, with centres sent an email to confirm their request has been processed.

Any modified papers will be dispatched **at least 5 working days** before the scheduled external assessment date or start of the assessment window.

Centres must submit requests for each assessment booking (including where there are different assessment components e.g. reading and writing assessments). This also includes resubmitting any requests for modified papers for any learners booked for a re-sit.

Any requests submitted outside of our advertised timescales may be rejected.

3.2 Enlarged papers

Where a learner is unable to access the standard format of our assessment materials, we can offer enlarged versions. Centres must provide specific details of the requirements as part of their request.

All requests must be submitted in line with the notification timescales detailed above.

As standard, NCFE offer the modified paper options below for learners requiring Reasonable Adjustments:

Enlarged (Unmodified)	Standard assessment paper enlarged from A4 to A3; enlarging entire paper, retaining the original layout.
Modified	Standard assessment paper options: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A4 18 pt bold• A4 24 pt bold• A3 24 pt bold• A3 36 pt bold

If the options above do not meet the requirements of your learner, please include full details of the required modification in your request, which NCFE will review on a case-by-case basis.

Please note: Some modifications may not be available in all qualifications/assessments. In these cases NCFE would provide you with feedback as to why the modification could not be processed and will offer a suitable alternative where possible. Where modifications are processed, it may be necessary for NCFE to produce a page in a larger or non-modified format depending on the contents of the page.

3.3 Braille papers and/or tactile diagrams

On receipt of your application the standard assessment materials will be sent to a specialist Braille production company. Tactile diagrams and graphs will be provided, as appropriate. You will need to advise us of the Braille grade and type required. All requests must be submitted in line with our advertised timescales.

3.4 Coloured papers

We are able to provide external assessments on coloured paper. See **Appendix B** for our example coloured paper chart.

Please ensure when submitting a request that you specify the required colour shade in order for us to be able to meet the learner's needs.

In cases where a learner requires a very specific colour of paper, NCFE may be able to provide a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper, enabling centres to print the assessment onto the required shade of paper.

Centres are not permitted to photocopy or print external assessment papers on to coloured paper, unless authorised to do so by NCFE. For further information please refer to the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment available on our website (www.qualhub.co.uk).

3.5 Non-interactive electronic (PDF) question papers for use with computer reading/speech recognition software

NCFE are able to provide assessment materials electronically to allow learners to access their assessment using their usual computer reading/speech recognition technology software. Centres must state in their request the software they will be using during the assessment.

Centres are required to schedule paper-based assessments prior to submitting a request for a non-interactive electronic (PDF) question paper and all requests must be submitted in line with the notification timescales detailed above.

Please note: computer reader/speech recognition technology is **not** compatible with our online assessment platform, Secure Assess.

Section 4 Submitting notifications of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments requests

4.1 Process for notifying NCFE of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

In line with our policy, we require centres to notify us of any Access Arrangements or Reasonable Adjustments that their learners require prior to any NCFE assessment taking place.

Centres must submit our Notification of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments request form available on our website (www.qualhub.co.uk) **at least 10 working days** prior to any learner completing an NCFE assessment.

Please note: For all NCFE Entry Level qualifications, centres are not required to have each learner individually assessed by a specialist. The centre must determine the need for adjustments on the basis of how the learner normally works in the centre.

Please refer to the permissions table below which details which type of Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments we require prior notification on and whether or not supporting evidence of need may be required at a later date for inspection purposes.

<u>Type of Access Arrangement/Reasonable Adjustment</u>	<u>Prior notification to NCFE required?</u>	<u>Supporting evidence required for inspection purposes?</u>
Supervised rest breaks	No	No
Up to 25% extra time	Yes	Yes
Up to 50% extra time	Yes	Yes
Extra time over 50%	Yes	Yes
Read aloud / Examination reading pen	No	No
Reader / Computer reader	Yes	Yes
Word Processor	No	No
Scribe / Speech recognition technology	Yes	Yes
Braille transcript	No	No
Prompter	No	No
Language Modifier	Yes	Yes
Communication professional	No	No
Practical assistant	Yes	Yes
Bilingual dictionaries with 10% extra time	No	No
Coloured overlays	No	No
Separate supervision or invigilation	No	No

Section 5 Contact information

If you've any queries about the contents of the document, please contact our Customer Support Team:

Email: customersupport@ncfe.org.uk

Telephone*: 0191 239 8000

Fax: 0191 239 8001

Post: NCFE

Q6, Quorum Business Park

Benton Lane

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE12 8BT

*To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.

Appendices

Appendix A - Support for administering Access Arrangements

Centres must ensure that both Invigilators and those acting as any of the below roles, are appropriately trained and familiar with this document, the NCFE Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments policy and the Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment.

It is essential that the learner is made aware of what the reader/scribe/communication professional/practical assistant can and can't do in advance of their assessment.

Reader – support for acting as a reader

Do's	Don'ts
I'm here to read for you in your assessment.	I can't give you any help with answers.
You must make clear what you want to be read.	I can't tell you which questions to answer.
I can only read the instructions and the questions.	I can't tell you when to move on to the next question.
I can repeat instructions, but only if you make it clear which instructions you want me to read.	I can't tell you which questions to do first.
I can spell words if you ask me, but only words in the question paper.	
I can read back your answer, but only if you ask me.	

Scribe – support for acting as a scribe

Do's	Don'ts
I'm here to write/type for you in your assessment.	I can't draw for you in a Design examination
I must write/type exactly what you say.	I can't give you any help with answers.
I can draw if required, but I can only draw exactly what you tell me.	I can't suggest when an answer is finished.
I can change what I have written/typed, but only if you ask me.	I can't tell you which questions to answer.
If we have problems communicating, I must tell the invigilator.	I can't tell you when to move onto the next question.
	I can't tell you which questions to do first.
	If you have rest breaks, I can't write/type in those breaks.

Communication professional – support for acting as a communication professional

Do's	Don'ts
I'm here to sign the questions in British Sign Language for you in your assessment.	I can't sign words or phrases that the qualification requires you to have learnt, but I can fingerspell them.
You can fingerspell answers, or sign an answer if it is one word only and I will write it for you.	I can't explain what the question expects you to write.
I can sign the questions more than once but I can't explain the questions.	

Practical assistant – support for acting as a practical assistant

Do's	Don'ts
I'm here to act as a practical assistant for you in your assessment.	I can't read any questions for you.
I must only assist you with any practical tasks within the assessment.	I can't write any responses for you.
	I can't give you any help with answers.

Prompter – support for acting as a prompter

Do's	Don'ts
I'm here to act as a prompt for you in your assessment.	I can't read any questions for you.
I must only assist you with staying focussed on the assessment.	I can't write any responses for you.
I will prompt you if I think you have become distracted or are losing track.	I can't give you any help with answers.

Appendix B - Coloured paper chart

Examples of coloured paper available for modified papers.

PALE IVORY
PALE YELLOW
PALE BEIGE
NEON YELLOW
DEEP YELLOW
DARK YELLOW
MED DEEP GOLD
NEON ORANGE
MID ORANGE
DEEP ORANGE
DARK RED
DEEP RED
PALE SALMON
PALE PINK
NEON PINK
MID LILAC
PALE BLUE
PALE ICY BLUE
MID BLUE
DEEP TURQUOISE
DEEP BLUE
PALE GREEN
PASTEL GREEN
NEON GREEN
DEEP GREEN
DARK GREEN
MID GREY

Appendix C - Guidelines for using a Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology

The Scribe should:

- consider applying up to 25% extra time (this does not need to be applied for)
- have legible handwriting and write on every other line to allow for corrections
- allow the learner to sit so they are able to check over work the Scribe has produced
- ensure details are correct and ensure that all information remains confidential
- be familiar with NCFE Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments
- notify the Invigilator/Exams Officer if they suspect a breach of the NCFE Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessments.

The Scribe should not:

- have any connection with and/or have a personal interest in the learner's success
- indicate if they think the learner has made a mistake
- prompt the learner
- explain elements of/words used in the assessment paper
- assist with answers
- direct the learner to answer questions in a certain order
- tell the learner to move on to a different question
- change/amend any answer, unless directed by the learner
- continue working if the learner takes a rest break
- give any indication as to the quality of an answer, including facial expressions and other body language
- speak unless spoken to, unless the scribe needs to indicate that they need the learner to repeat particular passages or to indicate the scribe cannot keep up with the speed of diction
- proofread any work.

Completing the Scribe Cover Sheet

In all cases when a Scribe is to be used in an NCFE External Assessment, Appendix D - Scribe Cover Sheet must be completed. This form must be signed by the Scribe and countersigned by the Head of Centre or Exams Officer and the learner in order for a learner's work to be accepted for marking.

The Scribe must ensure the Scribe Cover Sheet accurately reflects how the approved application for a Scribe was used by completing the appropriate sections.

The Scribe Cover Sheet must be securely attached to the front sheet of a learner's work which is to be returned to NCFE within 1 working day of the external assessment/completion of the assessment window.

In the box marked 'Comments' the Scribe must indicate whether any problems were experienced during the assessment, which should be drawn to the attention of the examiner.

Appendix D - Scribe cover sheet

Learner Name	Learner Number	Centre Name	Centre Number
Batch Number	Qualification Name	Qualification Code	Date of Assessment
<p>In order for the Examiner to apply the mark scheme correctly please place an 'X' in the appropriate box which accurately reflects how the approved application for a Scribe was used.</p> <p>1. The learner used a Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology but did not dictate spellings (letter by letter) and punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2. The learner used a Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology and dictated punctuation. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3. The learner used a Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology and dictated spellings letter by letter. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4. The learner used a Scribe/Speech Recognition Technology and dictated punctuation and spellings letter by letter. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>5. The learner used a Word Processor with the spell check enabled (switched on). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>6. The learner used a Word Processor with the spell check and grammar check enabled (switched on). <input type="checkbox"/></p>			
<p>Any other comments (if appropriate):</p>			
<p>Were diagrams/graphs completed by the learner or the Scribe?</p>			

Please sign below to confirm that the attached script/work of the above named learner was produced by a scribe during the assessment period in accordance with NCFE regulations.

<u>Head of Centre/Exams Officer</u>	Name (print):	Signature:	Date:
<u>Scribe</u>	Name (print):	Signature:	Date:
<u>Learner</u>	Name (print):	Signature:	Date: