# Adult Community Learning

# Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedure

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#### 1 Definition

Awarding organisations must have in place the necessary systems and procedures to allow the provision of access arrangements, including reasonable adjustments. These should reflect the needs of individual learners and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable, and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of all learning outcomes against the stated assessment criteria.

The awarding organisation must also arrange for special consideration to be given to learners who experience temporary illness, injury, or indisposition at the time of an assessment. This should allow them to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of for the units that are subject to special consideration.

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#### 2 Introduction

Islington Adult Community Learning intends that all learners should have fair and equal access to assessment. We will do this by:

* Providing clear ways for learners to highlight any specific needs which may affect their access to assessment
* By making reasonable adjustments to meet those needs
* Having a standardisation and moderation process to ensure valid, reliable, and consistent internal assessment judgements.

Islington Adult Community Learning intends to ensure the rights of individual learners are upheld to access qualifications, units, and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs. Disability and equal opportunity legislation and the regulatory criteria give support and guidance to awarding organisations and Islington Adult Community Learning in creating an inclusive assessment process.

Where the terms ‘access-related needs’ or ‘access-related issues’ are used, they refer to any entitlement to access the assessment process resulting from legislation, regulation, or good practice, provided that the standards of the assessment are maintained.

Islington Adult Community Learning delivers qualifications and units that are Regulated Qualifications with National Standards of knowledge, skills, and competences. These are defined in the units of assessment as learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Awarding Bodies determine whether a Regulated Qualification is internally assessed or whether it is externally assessed/examined. Islington Adult Community Learning delivery both internal assessment and external assessments are carried out in a way that ensures that the required standards are met.

#### 3 Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes, but may involve:

* Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example allowing a learner extra time to complete the assessment activity.
* Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in large typeface, Braille or on audio.
* Providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader.
* Re-organising the assessment room if applicable- such as removing visual stimuli for a learner with autism.
* Changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the units and qualification. The work produced by the learner will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners.

Islington Adult Community Learning is required by law to do what is ‘reasonable’ in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence should be taken into consideration.

#### 4 Types of Assessment and Reasonable Adjustments

**General guidance**

Different types of assessment make different demands on the learner and will influence whether reasonable adjustments are needed and the kind of reasonable adjustment which may be put in place.

The adjustments that are appropriate for a particular assessment will depend upon:

* The specific assessment requirements of the units and/or qualification as detailed in the awarding body guidance and requirements.
* The type of assessment.
* The needs and circumstances of the individual learner.

#### 5 Assessments not taken under examination conditions

With these types of assessments, Islington Adult Community Learning has greater flexibility to be responsive to an individual learner’s needs and choose an assessment activity and method that will allow the learner to demonstrate attainment. However, Awarding Bodies have different ways of working and the degree of flexibility an Awarding Body allows to Islington Adult Community Learning must be checked with the individual Awarding Body prior to the first time an adjustment is made. Guidance from the Awarding Body should then be followed for future adjustments.

These types of assessments may include, for example, coursework, set assignments researched in the learner’s own time, assessment activities devised by Islington Adult Community Learning or the Awarding Body, assessments where the learner must collect evidence to demonstrate competence. The assessment requirements for most vocationally related units and qualifications fall into this group.

In these types of assessments, the learner may meet the specified assessment criteria in any way that is valid. To facilitate access where there is evidence of need, Islington Adult Community Learning may allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic, or other aids to demonstrate achievement if the aids:

* Are commercially available.
* Reflect the learner’s normal way of working.
* Enable the learner to meet the specified criteria.
* Do not give the learner an unfair advantage.

Islington Adult Community Learning may present assessment materials or documents in a way that reflects the learner’s normal way of working and enables him or her to meet the specified assessment criteria, for example, materials do not have to be in written format, unless specified by the assessment requirements.

Islington Adult Community Learning can allow the learner to present their answers or evidence in any format if it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria. For example, a learner may present their evidence through the medium of Braille, on audio cassette or on video. Alternatively, oral questioning or witness statements may replace written responses. Where evidence is produced in Braille or signed on to video, it is the Curriculum Manager’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 verifier or external verifier if this is required.

The outcome produced by the learner must always:

* Meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used
* Be as rigorous as assessment methods used with other learners
* Be assessable
* Be able to be moderated or verified.

In the case of long-term illness of an individual learner or when a permanent health condition/disability means a learner’s completion of assessment takes additional time it may be possible to permit an extension to the deadline for the submission of work for certification. This should always be with the written agreement of the Awarding Body.

Where adjustments are in place full records together with any evidence that supports the decision for any adjustments must be retained.

The benefits of being able to vary the assessment evidence and choose the most appropriate method of obtaining evidence should be considered when a learner’s needs in relation to assessment are first identified, on the Enrolment Form, at initial assessment or by the tutor.

The learner must fulfil the demands of the criteria consistently over a set period, regardless of method used to obtain the evidence. Guidance should be obtained from the Awarding Body as to whether the assessment criteria may be amended, re-worded or omitted to support access to fair assessment for a specific learner.

Curriculum Team Leaders are required to provide the necessary resources to enable a learner with access-related needs to produce evidence for any internal assessment the resources must be reasonable. Curriculum Managers should be consulted where there is any question about whether an identified resource is reasonable and further guidance is available from the Islington Adult Community Learning.

#### 6 Assessments taken under examination conditions

Where the method of assessment is more rigidly determined, such as for assessments taken under specified conditions, there may be a greater need for adjustments to standard assessment arrangements to give access.

Any adjustment to assessment will be based on what the learner needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of learner needs that may be adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive, and it should be noted that some learner needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

* Communication and interaction needs
* Cognition and learning needs
* Sensory and physical needs
* Behavioural, emotional, and social needs

The learner will be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their performance during an assessment is likely to be affected by a particular impairment. Many of these learners will be defined as being disabled. However, not every learner who is disabled will necessarily be entitled to or need an adjustment to assessment. The learner may have developed coping mechanisms which minimise or remove the need for assistance.

An adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the learner at a measurable disadvantage, in comparison to other learners who are not disabled. Where the difficulty is minor, curriculum staff should assist the learner by offering help with study and assessment skills.

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#### 7 Identifying Learners’ Needs

The Islington Adult Community Learning enrolment form allows learners to declare any learning difficulties and disabilities, and the type of difficulty or disability, and enrolling staff should alert curriculum staff where the learner identifies they require adjustments. If not picked up at enrolment, once on a course a learner may identify specific needs to their tutor, or any member of Islington Adult Community Learning staff and curriculum staff should be alerted. Tutors will identify when a learner is experiencing difficulties that are interfering, or could interfere, with learning or assessment and should investigate with the learner whether any adjustments are required and the nature of those adjustments.

All learners will be made aware that they can apply for reasonable adjustments for assessment directly with curriculum staff.

8 Identifying and Obtaining Supporting Evidence

To ensure that any adjustment to assessment will only provide the learner with the necessary assistance without giving him or her an unfair advantage over others, Islington Adult Community Learning must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty and must show evidence that any adjustment is proportionate. The evidence in support of the adjustment must be sufficient, reliable, and valid and satisfy the relevant Awarding Body requirements. The relevant curriculum team, with support from Quality and Exams Officer, will judge the type and level of adjustment that would be most appropriate.

Where Islington Adult Community Learning can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear - such as for a learner with physical difficulties, profound hearing impairment or who are registered as blind or partially sighted – Islington Adult Community Learning do not need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications of the difficulty are not obvious, such as for learning difficulties or mental health difficulties, Islington Adult Community Learning will have to provide additional evidence of the effect of the impairment on the learner’s performance in the assessment. Any of the following types of evidence would be acceptable. Islington Adult Community Learning should decide which of these will best assist understanding of the learner’s situation:

* Evidence of assessment of the learner’s needs in relation to the assessment, made by the relevant member of staff with competence and responsibility in this area (staff include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors, and other specialist staff). This evidence should include an indication of the plans to meet the learner’s needs and show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be recorded and passed to the Examinations Officer.

* History of provision whilst on course. This should include information about the support received by the learner during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments. Evidence of the way in which the learner’s needs are being met during the learning programme should be documented for audit purposes.

* Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative, specialists. This could take the form of medical, psychological, or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who authored the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the learner is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the learner may be taking. In cases where it might be expected that there could be changes in the way the learner is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A learner with a Statement of Special Educational Need (S139) or Education and Health Care Plan does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be considered. The reasons for the plan or statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

9 Adjustments Permitted

In some cases, Awarding Bodies may permit Islington Adult Community Learning to implement reasonable adjustments without seeking prior permission. This should never be assumed and the records of the requirements of Awarding Bodies in relation to adjustments should always be checked.

10 Seeking Permission for Reasonable Adjustments

An application to an Awarding Body to make a reasonable adjustment should be made as far in advance as feasible from the assessment date and should use the procedures and documentation required by the Awarding Body.

11 The range of Reasonable Adjustments

Table 1 below lists the most requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements which can be used when considering different reasonable adjustments. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and Awarding Bodies can be contacted for advice on alternative ways of accessing assessment for a particular situation.

Islington Learning ACL have a duty to seek advice from the Awarding Body in any case where they do not consider that they have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is needed, and/or how it should be applied. Table 1 provides guidance on how different types of reasonable adjustments should be implemented.

Note that:

* Not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible, or practical in a particular situation. If in doubt, contact the Awarding Body for advice.
* The learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all units and qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
* Adjustments to assessments will most commonly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions. The list of reasonable adjustments is organised under the following headings:

Table 1

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| Extra Time | May be applied to examination-based assessment.  Extra time should not be allowed where its use will invalidate the assessment criteria.  Extra time should not give the learner an unfair advantage over others.  The amount of extra time must be realistic. |
| Supervised rest breaks | Curriculum Team Leaders should ensure that both the learner and his/her work is supervised during the break.  The duration of the break should not be deducted from the assessment time.  Rest breaks should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment criteria. |
| Changes in organisation of the assessment room | Curriculum Team Leaders should consider the needs of each individual learner and, where possible, arrange the assessment room to suit the learner. |
| Separate accommodation within a Centre | Curriculum Team Leaders should ensure that, where learners are accommodated separately for assessments taken under examination conditions, usual examination conditions apply, and separate invigilation is arranged. |
| Taking the assessment at an alternative venue | For assessments taken under examination conditions, standard examination conditions should be in place at the alternative venue and the standard procedures for security of assessment material and despatch of the learner’s work should be followed. |
| Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, cctv & ocr scanners | The learner should be familiar with how the aid works. The use of aids should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria. |
| Use of bilingual dictionaries/translation dictionaries | The use of a bilingual dictionary should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria. |
| Assessment material in enlarged format | Where appropriate, Curriculum Team Leaders should meet Awarding Body deadlines for requesting enlarged assessment material.  In cases where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted by an Awarding Body to enlarge assessment material, Curriculum Team Leaders should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is enlarged (including associated instructions). |
| Assessment material in Braille | Where appropriate, Curriculum Team Leaders should meet Awarding Body deadlines for requesting brailled assessment material.  In cases where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted by an Awarding Body to braille assessment material, Curriculum Team Leaders should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is brailled. |
| Assessment material in British Sign Language | Curriculum Team Leaders should meet Awarding Body deadlines for requesting assessment material in British Sign Language. In cases where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted to translate the assessment material into British Sign Language, it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for the accuracy of the translation. Curriculum Team Leaders should provide sufficient playback equipment that is in full working order |
| Assessment material on coloured paper | Where appropriate, Curriculum Team Leaders should meet Awarding Body deadlines for requesting externally set assessment material on coloured paper. Where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted to modify the assessment material, it should take responsibility for the security of the assessment material and for the accuracy of the modification. |
| Assessment material in audio format | Where appropriate, Curriculum Team Leaders should meet Awarding Body deadlines for requesting assessment material in audio format.  Where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted to produce an audio version of the assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is copied. Curriculum Team Leaders should ensure that sufficient playback equipment is provided in full working order. |
| Responses using electronic recording devices | Curriculum Team Leaders should check whether permission should be sought from Awarding Body to record the learner’s responses electronically.  Recording the learner’s responses electronically should not be allowed where it will invalidate the assessment requirements. Curriculum Team Leaders should ensure that the appropriate recording equipment is provided in full working order. The learner using recording equipment should be accommodated separately, with separate invigilation, where its use will disturb other learners. |
| Responses in BSL | Curriculum Team Leaders should check whether permission should be sought from Awarding Body to sign the learner’s responses on video. Signing of the learner’s responses on video should not be allowed where it will invalidate the assessment requirements. |
| Responses in Braille | A scribe should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. |
| Reader | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of a reader is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment. Curriculum Team Leaders should select an experienced reader and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a reader is used. A reader should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. |
| Use of ICT to present responses | Curriculum Team Leaders should ensure that:   * the computer is used solely by the learner and not by someone acting on the learner’s behalf unless the learner has permission to use a scribe  |  | | --- | | * the computer is working correctly at the time of an assessment. It is the centre’s responsibility to arrange the ICT provision for the learner * the learner is not able to gain access to existing files or documents. The learner must be supplied with a formatted memory stick containing only the * software required for the assessment the computer should be free-standing and not be connected to the Internet, unless this is required in the assessment * the learner may be accommodated separately if the use of a computer is likely to distract other learners. In this case separate invigilation should be arranged * the learner is present when his/her work is printed. It is normal practice for a printed version of the learner’s work to be submitted and authenticated for assessment, and not the disk * where a question/answer booklet is provided, the learner might need to answer some questions in the booklet and type other answers. * Answers should be clearly labelled and the printout must be attached to the question paper/answer booklet * the learner should be proficient in the use of the computer and its software * the learner’s work is saved frequently and, if possible, using an auto-save facility. | |
| Scribe | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of scribe is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.  Curriculum Team Leaders should select an experienced scribe and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a scribe is used. |
| British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of British Sign Language interpreter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.  Curriculum Team Leaders should select a British Sign Language interpreter and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a British Sign Language interpreter is used.  A British Sign Language interpreter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.  The British Sign Language interpreter should meet the person specification provided by an Awarding Body, or should have an appropriate qualification in the sign language so as not to disadvantage the learner |
| Prompter | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of a prompter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.  Adult Learning should select a prompter and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a prompter is used. A prompter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. |
| Practical assistant | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of a practical assistant is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment. Curriculum Team Leaders should select a practical assistant and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A separate invigilator should be present when a practical assistant is used.  A practical assistant should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. |
| Transcriber | Curriculum Team Leaders should check that the use of a transcriber is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.  Curriculum Team Leaders should select an experienced transcriber and fully brief him/her on their responsibilities. A transcriber should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements. |

12 Records

Records must be kept for audit purposes where Curriculum Team Leaders are permitted to agree reasonable adjustments, where Curriculum Team Leaders have applied to the Awarding Body for permission, or where Curriculum Team Leaders have agreed adjustments to assessment with the Awarding Body External Verifier/Quality Reviewer.

Records should be kept by the Examinations Officer in accordance with the awarding bodies’ requirements.

13 Special Consideration

Candidates will be eligible for special consideration by the Awarding Body if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but performance in the examination or in the production of controlled assessment/coursework is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. The request for special consideration should be sent to the Awarding Body in line with the Awarding Body requirements.

14. Examinations

Procedure and guidelines available in S drive under accreditation. Follow the Joint Council for Qualifications JCQ [Click here for JCQ](https://www.jcq.org.uk/) Guidelines and training for new tutors is provided by Curriculum Managers or Team Leaders.