

Equality and Fair Access For Apprentices

Version 6 March 2025

Overview

Ensuring Equality and Fair Access is the principle around ensuring that all apprentices have an equal chance of success by putting in place appropriate reasonable adjustments. The adjustments must not advantage the candidate nor affect the integrity of the end point assessment.

This policy sets out the principles that Suffolk County Council follows in ensuring equality and fair access. We are committed to ensuring that we meet the needs of an individual apprentice without affecting the integrity of the end point assessment. Our access arrangements ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Under The Equality Act 2010 there are nine protected characteristics:

- age.
- disability.
- gender reassignment.
- marriage and civil partnership.
- pregnancy and maternity.
- race.
- religion or belief.
- sex.



[Suffolk County Council Equality and Inclusion](#)

Those handling any requests for reasonable adjustments should also refer to relevant quality assurance, assessment information and/or course documentation. (this may be provided by the training provider, qualification awarding organisation or other stakeholders such as the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education or Education and Skills Funding Agency).

This policy uses as its reference the [Institute of Apprenticeships and Technical Education's Reasonable Adjustments guidelines](#)

Policy

During the end-point assessment the types of adjustments offered may include, but not limited to, changes to elements such as:

- the location and timing of the assessment
- the format, wording or type of assessment activity
- the availability of support personnel for additional needs
- the availability of adaptive software or hardware, or specialist equipment
- extensions to assessment deadlines

These adjustments should mirror the types of reasonable adjustments and additional support that the apprentice has received from their employer and/or training provider *during their apprenticeship programme*.

It is important that reasonable adjustments do not affect the reliability or validity of assessment, and they should not give the apprentice an advantage over other apprentices undertaking the same assessment. More information on reasonable adjustments can be found on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Suffolk County Council will support apprentices by ensuring that:

- The reasonable adjustments provide apprentices with the opportunity to demonstrate attainment against occupational competence
- The assessment is reliable, and any person using the apprenticeship certificate to identify an individual's competence can have confidence in their skills and abilities
- The assessment process is rigorous and fair, and the assessment activity is valid
- The assessment is practically able to operate within available resources, following the application of any reasonable adjustments
- Facilities and time allow apprentices to use any commercially available mechanical, electronic or other aids to demonstrate achievement so long as they reflect the apprentice's normal ways of working and do not give the apprentice an unfair advantage.

Access Arrangements.

The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the needs of an apprentice without affecting the integrity of the assessment. Access arrangements are the principal way in which awarding bodies comply with the duty under the Equality Act 2010* to make reasonable adjustments.

We aim to involve apprentices and their employing organisation in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations. This will ensure that individual needs can be met, whilst still bearing in mind the specified assessment criteria for a particular standard.

As the needs and circumstances of each apprentice are different, a request for a reasonable adjustment is done on a case-by-case basis. We will ask the training provider and/or employer to provide evidence of need before we agree or take steps to make the necessary adjustments or modifications. This may be a formal assessment of a learning disability, or a self-declaration requesting adjustments to be made. This should be made as early as possible, ideally at Gateway stage.

Record of the evidence and the agreed adjustment are to be stored with the apprentice assessment data on the secure portal and will be made available to the External Quality Assurance body.

Reasonable adjustments may include the following, but others may be available depending upon the needs of the apprentice and the standard:

- Extra time
- Computer reader
- Scribe/Speech recognition technology
- Prompter
- Oral Language Modifier
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Alternative site for the conduct of the end point assessment

[Matrix for reasonable adjustments decisions](#)

How to request Reasonable Adjustments

Please submit your request for Reasonable Adjustments as soon as possible – ideally before the apprentice goes through Gateway via the ACE360 Portal. Please upload any evidence or notes to support your application. The centre manager and Lead IEPA will make decisions within 10 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. We will keep a record of all requests and decisions made.

If we reject the request, we will give you clear reasons for this decision and may suggest other alternatives. If you are not satisfied with the decision you can Appeal via the normal channels.

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is a post EPA adjustment to an apprentice's mark or grade to reflect temporary or unforeseen indisposition at the time of the assessment or for permitting adjustments to timescales during the EPA period.

This could include: (but not limited to)

- Recent bereavement of a close family member or friend.
- Illness at the time of the assessment
- Other health issues – including mental health episodes
- Work related issues – e.g. notice of redundancy, taking on increased workload due to other staffing issues.
- Other exceptional events outside the Apprentice's control.

Any information relating to this should be made within 48 hours. Requests will be treated on an individual basis. We will keep a record of all requests and decisions made.

For Special Consideration please email epa@suffolk.gov.uk. The centre manager and Lead IEPA will make decisions within 5 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we reject the request, we will give you clear reasons for this decision. If you are not satisfied with the decision you can Appeal via the normal channels.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or when legislation changes.

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