

Fair Access to Assessment and Training Policy

This policy outlines Skills4Stem's requirements for equality of opportunity, diversity and considerations for special access and particular assessment requirements for candidates/apprentices. The policy details Skills4Stem's commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity and runs alongside the Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

As a training provider we 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 candidates/apprentices and must also ensure that assessment continues to enable a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about achievement of learning outcomes against all criteria and requirements.

Statement of Assessment

- We aim to provide a variety of qualifications and programmes of learning which supports all candidates/apprentices with the opportunity to achieve their full potential by the most appropriate and direct route.
- All of our delivery and people-policies are based on the concepts of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency, and openness. We endeavour to ensure that the assessment processes are implemented in a way which is fair and non-discriminatory.

Access arrangements allow candidates/apprentices to show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, using readers, scribes and braille question papers. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment. They allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access the assessment.

Access

Candidates/apprentices are made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it. It can be found on our website and in the Candidate/apprentice Handbook.

All tutors are made aware of the contents and purpose of this policy. This policy is reviewed annually and may be revised in response to feedback from candidates/apprentices, tutors, and external organisations.

What candidates/apprentices can expect from us:

- We aim to ensure that all assessment of work is carried out fairly and in keeping with the external governance requirements.
- All candidate/apprentice assessment work will be assessed fairly against the necessary standards and those involved in the delivery of learning will be fully trained.
- Internal assessments will be carried out fairly and according to external governance instructions.
- Externally marked assessments, tests and exams will be according to the requirements of the Awarding Organisation.

Candidate/apprentices can also expect:

- To be fully inducted onto a programme/qualification and given information that can be shared with employers, parents and carers if required.
- Learning outcomes, knowledge, skills and behaviours and other significant elements of learning and assessment to be made clear at the outset of the course and when assessments are set.
- To be given appropriate assessment opportunities during the course with feedback provided on the quality of the work.
- Where equivalents and exemptions can be applied, we will ensure this is pursued with the relevant Awarding Organisation, and where applicable RPL/APL to be applied, including QCF Credit Transfer.
- Trainers (anyone involved in the assessment of candidates/apprentices) must consider the follow points when determining suitable access arrangements:

- What arrangements are suitable for the qualification?
 - o The candidate/apprentice normal way of working (e.g. support normally given in lessons or the workplace),
 - o The details of how specific access arrangements would work in an assessment,
 - o Whether evidence or an application to the Awarding Organisation is required,
 - o Any assistance from the Awarding Organisation that may be required to put the arrangements in place.
 - o For specific vocational qualifications and programmes of learning (this will be explained in the candidate/apprentice induction onto the course), candidates/apprentices must achieve the required number of unit credits to gain the full qualification. They must meet all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. It may be possible to achieve a certificate of unit credit where the learner is not able to achieve the full qualification.

If there is any doubt about the acceptability or appropriateness of an access arrangement, then Skills4Stem will consult with the appropriate external body.

Language other than English/Welsh/Irish (Gaelic)

There is an implicit assumption that someone holding a certificate in England will have a competence in English at least to the level of the qualification. This is reflected in the regulations laid down by Ofqual and the other qualification regulators, as appropriate.

For candidates/apprentices whose first language is not English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelic), it is not sufficient for them to be competent to operate only in the context of their first language. The Ofqual document 'Regulatory Arrangements for the Qualifications and programmes of learning and Credit Framework (2008)' has regulations in place for the assessment being carried out in languages other than English; Welsh or Irish (paragraph 5.21, page 31). This document applies to all accredited qualifications and programmes of learning within the QCF. It has a further statement that it is the Awarding Organisations responsibility to ensure that '...lack of proficiency in English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelic) does not prevent the learner from properly carrying out the role that is supported by the qualification' (paragraph 5.21(b) page 31).

If assessment is carried out in a language other than English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelic), clear evidence must be provided that the learner is also competent in English, Welsh or Irish (Gaelic) to the standard required for competent performance throughout Great Britain.

Evidence of need

Skills4Stem must keep evidence on file for access arrangements. External bodies may ask to see copies of the evidence held for specific candidates/apprentices. Skills4Stem must also keep copies of access arrangements confirmations from any external body agreeing to arrangements.

Procedures

Skills4Stem must consider any access arrangements that may be required before a learner is enrolled on to a programme and must not use this as a reason for not enrolling them. Any arrangement must not invalidate the learning outcomes or assessment criteria and where possible must reflect the candidate/apprentice's normal way of working within the training environment or workplace.

Special Consideration

Special consideration may be given following a dated examination for candidates/apprentices who are present for the examination but may have been disadvantaged, for example, by temporary illness or adverse circumstances during the assessment. Where an assessment requires a competence, criterion or standard to be met fully or in the case of a Licence to Practice it may not be possible to apply special consideration.

Responsibilities

Trainers (anyone involved in the assessment of candidates/apprentices), must consult with individual bodies on requirements for Access to Fair Assessment, and follow the specific guidance in their Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

Written By	Revision Date	Revision Number	Approved By	Review Date
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