

Reasonable Adjustments

Introduction

The IFE operates a system of reasonable adjustments. This system is in place to enable candidates with disabilities (including medical conditions and learning disabilities such as Dyslexia) to access the IFE examinations whilst ensuring that the assessment process remains valid with all candidates receiving an equitable assessment experience.

All decisions on reasonable adjustments rest with the IFE.

What is meant by “reasonable adjustments” and who can apply?

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places candidates at an unfair disadvantage in an examination. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the reliability or validity of what needs to be assessed; the adjustments should provide an arrangement to give candidates fair access to examinations and must not give them an unfair advantage over others.

Candidates who have physical, sensory or learning impairments which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, may apply for reasonable adjustments. Candidates must submit evidence which specifically states the degree to which the impairment has this adverse effect.

Under equalities legislation, candidates are deemed to have such an impairment if they can show that their condition:

- is more than minor or trivial
- has an effect that has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least twelve months
- affects everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

What types of reasonable adjustments are available?

Although reasonable adjustments must not compromise the validity and reliability of examination results, they should be based on individual needs and reflect the ways in which affected candidates normally work.

Examples of reasonable adjustments that might be requested include:

Where candidates have dyslexia/learning disabilities:

- 25% extra time for all examinations
- use of a reader or scribe in severe cases
- use of electronic aids
- use of modified print and/or paper colour (eg examination papers provided on a different colour paper; text printed in a different colour or printed in a bigger/different font)

Where candidates have a hearing impairment:

- use of a communicator
- use of suitable aids recommended by teachers of the hearing impaired

Where candidates have a visual impairment:

- use of a reader and scribe
- use of modified print and/or paper colour

Where candidates have a permanent physical impairment or a temporary injury:

- use of a reader or scribe
- use of electronic aids
- use of an assistant for mobility

The IFE will consider all requests as long as the requests are supported by appropriate evidence and do not compromise the integrity of the assessment process.

Applying for reasonable adjustments

Applications for reasonable adjustments should be submitted at the same time as examinations are booked or as soon as possible afterwards. This will enable the IFE to assess the nature of the application and to determine whether or not the reasonable adjustments requested fall within scope of the policy and are appropriate. It will also provide time for the IFE to liaise with the examination centre to determine whether or not it is possible for the centre to support the request.

Applications for reasonable adjustments should be made using the form provided on the IFE's website. An application must be made for each examination where the candidates would like to have access to reasonable adjustments.

Where examinations are booked for the candidate by their employer/centre, candidates should submit the application to the centre at the time the booking is made. The centre will then submit the application to the IFE on behalf of the candidate. It is important to advise centres as soon as possible as to arrangements that may be needed in order to enable the centre to plan. Where candidates submit their own examination booking to the IFE, they should submit their application for reasonable adjustments directly to the IFE and the IFE will then liaise with the centre on their behalf should the reasonable adjustment be agreed.

Each request for reasonable adjustments will be treated on its merits and should include the following:

- the nature of the candidate's disability or learning need
- the supporting evidence
- the special assessment arrangements that are being requested

The IFE will confirm by email whether or not reasonable adjustments are acceptable and appropriate and, if so, the nature of the arrangements that are permitted and any conditions that should be observed in the implementation of the arrangements.

Candidates should note that the IFE will provide specific guidance for centres for some arrangements including those involving third parties such as scribes and those involving the use of electronic equipment.

Please note the IFE reserves the right to reject requests for reasonable adjustments; for example, requests may be refused where the arrangements proposed are not supported by appropriate evidence or where the arrangements appear to compromise the integrity of the assessment process.

Implementing reasonable adjustments

The IFE will engage with examination centres in order to confirm whether or not the centre can manage the arrangements (eg where the arrangements require the centre to provide an additional examination room and/or additional staff to act as invigilators/scribes). This will enable examination centres to plan for the adjustments and to make any relevant preparations.

Candidates who have agreed a reasonable adjustment directly with the IFE should ensure that they bring the confirmation from the IFE with them on the day of the examination.

Invigilators at examination centres will be asked to confirm via the post-examination Invigilation Report that the arrangements that were agreed with the IFE were made on the day and will be asked for feedback on the implementation process.

Candidates with short-term conditions

In unusual situations, some candidates may require special arrangements at short notice eg due to an unexpected injury or illness. In most situations, these conditions do not affect the way the candidate approaches the examination and can be accommodated by the examination centre without prior agreement with the IFE. Such special arrangements may include enabling a candidate to sit at a desk with additional space so that they can stretch an injured limb - in this instance, the candidate will take the examination with exactly the same examination conditions as other candidates.

Where a short-term condition appears to require an arrangement that affects the way in which the candidate takes the examination so that the conditions are different from those experienced by other candidates (eg the need for additional time and/or a scribe due to an injured wrist), the candidate and/or the examination centre must always seek agreement from IFE before making any alternative arrangements.

Examination centres must report any short-term conditions as part of the Invigilation Report.

Special consideration

In most instances, reasonable adjustments will meet candidates' needs in enabling access to the assessment process. However, in a small number of instances, the reasonable adjustments may not operate as anticipated and candidates may be disadvantaged eg equipment may not work on the examination day, or a third party such as a scribe may not be able to provide the support required. In this instance, the candidate and the centre should notify the IFE immediately after the examination via the Special Consideration process. Information on this is available on the IFE website.

Queries and IFE contact information

Candidates or centres who have queries on who is eligible for reasonable adjustments and the reasonable adjustments that may be permitted should contact the IFE examinations team - adminstaff@ife.org.za