

# MTB Exams

## Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy

### Introduction

This policy is primarily aimed at our customers and learners who are delivering/registered on or have taken a MTB Exams approved qualification. It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all reasonable adjustment and special consideration requests in a consistent manner. The term 'centre' used in this policy should be taken to mean and apply to centres, individual music teachers/examiners and associates

This policy outlines:

- our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to our qualifications
- how learners qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- the reasonable adjustments we will permit and those where permission is required in advance before they are applied
- what special considerations will be given to learners

### Centre's responsibility

It is important that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications and your learners are fully aware of the contents of the policy.

MTB Exams may from time to time check that staff delivering MTB Exams qualifications and learners are aware of its contents and purpose.

### Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

If you would like to feedback any views please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

## **Arrangements not covered by this policy**

Circumstances for both internal and external assessment not covered in this policy should be discussed with MTB Exams before assessment takes place. Please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

## **Appeals**

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Appeals Policy.

## **Policy overview**

MTB Exams is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation in relation to the development and delivery of our qualifications and, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. We seek to uphold human rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and special educational needs of our learners and to provide equal reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered on our qualifications.

We expect centres to have a fair access to assessment policy in operation, which reflects the following principles and guidelines.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. We ensure that our qualifications and assessments do not bar learners from taking our qualifications.

We recognise that reasonable adjustments or special considerations may be required at the time of assessment where:

- learners have a permanent disability or specific learning needs
- learners have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs
- learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for learners, nor advantages to give learners a headstart.

There are 2 ways in which access to fair assessment can be maintained:

- through reasonable adjustments and
- through special considerations.

## **Process for requesting reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations**

If a centre or associate is making a request on behalf of its learners it should complete a Reasonable adjustments and special consideration request form (centres will find this in our MTB Exams 'policies' page which can be accessed from the website [www.mtbexams.com](http://www.mtbexams.com)) and in doing so supply relevant supporting information. For example:

- learner's name and MTB Exams registration number
- nature of, and rationale for, the request
- supporting information/evidence (eg medical evidence or a statement from the teacher/examiner or any other appropriate information)

Learners can, in exceptional circumstances, make requests direct to MTB Exams by phoning or emailing our the MTB Exams administrator on Tel: +44 (0)1189680910 or email: [enquiries@mtbexams.com](mailto:enquiries@mtbexams.com)

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be submitted no later than 30 days before the assessment.

Requests for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than 5 working days after the assessment. Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- an application has been overlooked at MTB Exams and the oversight is confirmed by the MTB Exams administrator
- medical evidence comes to light about a learner's condition, which demonstrates that the learner must have been affected by the condition at the

time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

## **How MTB Exams will deal with requests**

We will aim to respond to all requests within three working days of receipt. If we are unable to respond in this time we will provide you with an estimated response date.

## **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 substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. They are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, 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 larger print or on coloured paper providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software
- Copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments

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 programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

MTB Exams and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost

implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

## Definition of special considerations

Special consideration can be applied after an assessment if there was a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

For example, special consideration could apply to a learner who had temporarily experienced:

- an illness or injury
- some other event outside of their control

and which has had, or is likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage, neither should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his / her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his / her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

Centres should note that

- where an assessment requires the learner to demonstrate practical competence or where criteria have to be met fully, it may not be possible to apply special consideration.
- in some circumstances, for example for on-demand assessments, it may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

## Contact us

If you've any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the MTB Exams administrator on Tel: +44 (0)1189680910 or email: [enquiries@mtbexams.com](mailto:enquiries@mtbexams.com)

# Section 1 - Making reasonable adjustments

## Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles should be followed when making decisions about a learner's need for adjustments to assessment. They should:

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

We 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.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, MTB Exams and centres need to bear in mind the following (where appropriate for the related qualification):

- Adjustments to assessment 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 adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards should not be altered. Whilst we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a learner with a disability or difficulty is not placed at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with persons who are not disabled, 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 learners' performance must 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, understand and can do.

- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage over other learners. The qualification of a learner who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other learner. As vocational qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need 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. A centre should not assume that the same adjustment will be required for all assessments. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the learner. The learner should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment should reflect the learner's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The learner should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.
- All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by MTB Exams

## **The process for making the adjustment**

There are two routes through which a learner may be granted adjustments to assessment. These routes are to:

- Use reasonable adjustments permitted at the discretion of the centre

In some cases MTB Exams may permit the centre to implement reasonable adjustments without seeking prior permission. In these cases MTB Exams requires centres to supply a full signed explanation of these when submitting the examination marksheets and recording for moderation and to keep records for inspection (including any declarations that are signed and dated by the member of staff who has formally been given delegated authority for this).

- Apply to MTB Exams for permission

Centres should keep records of adjustments they have permitted and those they have requested from MTB Exams. These records should normally be kept for 3 years following the assessment to which they apply for monitoring by MTB Exams or the regulatory authorities.

## **Qualification specific information**

### **Health and safety considerations for practical assessments**

There are no circumstances when the health and safety of a learner should be compromised in the name of assessment. In a practical activity, if there is a concern that the effects of a person's disability or difficulty may have health and safety implications for him/herself and for others, a suitably qualified person in the centre should carry out a risk assessment related to the learner's particular circumstances. The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with the particular activity, but should also take account of any reasonable adjustments put in place for the learner which may remove or reduce the risk. The risk assessment may reveal that it is not possible for the learner to fulfill all the requirements of the assessment. In this case it may be appropriate to substitute another task. The centre should contact MTB Exams to discuss individual cases where further clarification is necessary.

Assumptions should not be made about a disability posing a health and safety risk, but the health and safety of all learners and others must always be of paramount importance.

### **Assessments which are not taken under examination conditions**

With these types of assessments the centre 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.

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, the centre may:

- allow the learner to use any mechanical, electronic or other aids in order to demonstrate achievement as long as the aids:
  - are generally 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.
  - allow the learner to present their performance in any format as long as it enables them to demonstrate that they have met the assessment criteria,
- The centre is advised to adopt a flexible approach in identifying alternative ways of achieving the assessment requirements. The centre is advised to contact MTB Exams to discuss alternative arrangements that may be appropriate for specific situations.

The outcome produced by the learner must at all times:

- meet the requirements of the specifications regardless of the process or method used
- be assessable
- be able to be moderated or verified.

### **Assessments which are 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 in order to enable access in accordance with the arrangements outlined below.

## **Identifying learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments**

Learners will only be eligible for reasonable adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation, in comparison to a person who is not disabled or affected.

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 eligible for 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**

A learner with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems understanding what is being asked for by the examiner, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter or voice activated software. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

### **Cognition and learning needs**

A learner with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained elements of examinations.

### **Sensory and physical needs**

A learner may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter. In addition they may benefit from the use of assistive technology and extra time to complete assessments.

### **Behavioral, Emotional and Social needs**

The learner may benefit from supervised rest breaks and using carefully selected venue with less distractions for example. A learner with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter.

### **Identifying learners' needs**

Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment.

The centre has a responsibility to ensure it has effective internal procedures for identifying learners' needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of disability and equal opportunity legislation.

A centre may choose to use the following guide:

- Identify those learners who are having difficulties or are likely to have difficulties accessing assessment

A learner should be encouraged to make any access-related assessment needs known to the centre at the earliest opportunity, and preferably before they are registered or entered for a qualification. To assist with the early identification of learners with access-related assessment needs, All staff who recruit, advise or guide potential learners have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. Once the learner's need has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

- Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed

Staff responsible for conducting an MTB Exams qualification should decide, in conjunction with the learner, whether he or she will be able to meet the requirements of the assessment or whether adjustments will be required. It is important that the learner is involved in this discussion as he or she knows best what the effect of their particular disability or difficulty is on how they do things. Where the implications of a particular difficulty are unclear, specialist advice should be sought in order to determine how the difficulty will affect the learner's performance in the assessment. You should avoid making assumptions, on the basis of previous experience, about whether adjustments may be necessary. Judgments should be made on the basis of individual need. If an adjustment is needed, it should be documented for audit purposes.

- Identify the appropriate adjustment

When identifying which adjustments the learner will need in the assessment, staff should take into consideration the learner's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during informal assessments and the assessment requirements of the qualification. Certain simple adjustments may be all that is required, eg adjusting seat height or providing an arm rest, etc. The same learner may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Different qualifications make different demands. Once the adjustment has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

- Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with the guidelines in this policy

The centre must ensure that the adjustment will not impair the ability to assess the learner's performance, skill or knowledge fairly in each assessment.

### **Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence**

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable using the form at the back of this policy.

In order 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, the centre must be clear about the extent to which the learner is affected by the disability or difficulty.

Where the centre 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, the centre does 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, the centre 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. The centre 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 particular assessment, made within the centre 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.***

If necessary, external experts may be called upon to assess the learner. This evidence should include an indication of how the centre plans to meet the learner's needs and should show that the learner can cope with the level and content of the assessment. The evidence should be documented for audit purposes. Information from previous centres attended by the learner may also be included.

- ***History of provision within the centre.***

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 carried out the assessments and wrote 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 does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all applications for reasonable adjustments are based on the individual need of the learner and that the evidence in support of the application is sufficient, reliable and valid. A centre should maintain records of all cases for audit purposes and to monitor the effectiveness of the reasonable adjustments that have been made.

## **Range of reasonable adjustments**

The Permissions Table (in Appendix 1) lists the most commonly requested adjustments to standard assessment arrangements. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list and centres and external verifiers have a duty to seek advice from MTB Exams 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.

Centres should note that:

- not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the centre is advised to contact MTB Exams for advice. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to select an alternative assessment task for the learner.
- the learner may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications. Some learners may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
- adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions.

The list of reasonable adjustments is organised under the following headings:

- Changes to assessment conditions
- Use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Modifications to presentation of assessment material
- Alternative ways of presenting responses
- Use of access facilitators

### ***Changes to assessment conditions***

## Extra time

- Where assessment activities require a prompt response a learner may be allowed extra time during an assessment if he/she has a condition which affects the speed of processing.
- The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the learner's difficulty. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. It is the centre's responsibility to specify the amount of extra time the learner will need, using as a guide the extra time required during formative assessments in the centre.
- Extra time will not be allowed in practical activities where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment.

### Summary:

- 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.

## Supervised rest breaks

- Rest breaks are not applicable where speed or time is a component of what is being assessed, although, if there is a natural break in the assessment, i.e. between tasks, rest breaks can be allowed.

### Summary:

- Rest breaks should not be allowed where their use would invalidate the assessment criteria.

## Change in the organisation of the assessment room

- Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some learners with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.
- Visually impaired learners may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf learners may benefit from being placed near the teacher/examiner and in good light.
- Some learners may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.

- Autistic learners may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

**Summary:**

The centre should consider the needs of the individual learner and, where possible, arrange the assessment room to suit the learner.

***Use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids***

**Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners**

- The centre should ensure that the learner has had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and that any electronic aids are in good working order.
- A centre should contact MTB Exams if they are unclear about whether any new technology will unfairly advantage the learner or invalidate the assessment requirements.

**Summary:**

- 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 assistive technology, for example instruments that use assistive technology, and voice activated software**

- Speech software may be used to allow learners to have access to assessments that are appropriate for them and enable them to show their proficiency
- The centre should ensure that the use of assistive technology will not invalidate the assessment requirements or give the learner an unfair advantage. Due to the rapid development of such technology, centres should seek advice from MTB Exams if the implications of using certain kinds of assistive technology are unclear.
- It should be noted that the use of such software may introduce a hidden assessment agenda, in that the learner has to master the use of the software in addition to mastering the assessment criteria.

**Summary:**

- The learner should be familiar with how the assistive technology works.
- The assistive technology should not give the learner an unfair advantage over other learners or invalidate the assessment criteria.

### ***Modifications to the presentation of the assessment material***

#### **Assessment material in enlarged format**

- For paper-based assessments enlargements for paper-based assessments may be used. Examples of these include:
  - unmodified enlarged papers where the standard paper is photocopied from A4 to A3, thus enlarging the whole paper and retaining the original layout and visual presentation.
  - modified enlarged paper where the paper is modified by simplifying the layout and where necessary reducing the content while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original paper.
- Where the centre is permitted to make the enlargements to externally set assessment material, it should ensure that the entire document is enlarged. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of incomplete enlargement of the material.

#### **Assessment material in Braille**

- Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired learner.
- The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to brailleing.
- Permission may be given to the centre to Braille externally set assessment materials. MTB Exams will advise when this can be permitted.
- Where the centre is permitted to Braille externally set assessment material, it should take responsibility for ensuring that the entire document is brailled. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the brailled material.
- Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the learner, not all blind people are fluent in Braille.
- It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the brailleing of assessment material.

## **Summary:**

In cases where the centre is permitted by MTB Exams to braille assessment material, the centre should take responsibility for ensuring that the entire document is brailled.

## **Language modified assessment material**

- The carrier language in assessment material may be modified for a deaf learner whose first language is either English or British Sign Language (BSL). In either case, the learner's English may be limited and modified assessment material may be necessary.
- Where the centre is permitted to modify externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the accuracy of the modification. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of inaccurate modification of the material.
- It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the modification of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials.

## **Summary:**

In cases where the centre is permitted by MTB Exams to modify assessment material, the centre should take responsibility for the accuracy of the modification.

## **Assessment material in BSL (British Sign Language)**

- Where the centre cannot provide a BSL/English interpreter for the assessment, and if language modified assessment material does not provide sufficient assistance, a BSL version of assessment material may be provided on DVD instead of (or in addition to) the assessment material in written English.
- Where the centre is permitted to translate externally set assessment material into BSL, they should take responsibility for the accuracy of the translation. The learner may be penalised for any errors in his/her work which occur as a result of errors in the material.
- It is the centre's responsibility to arrange for the translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL.
- Centres should note that translation of centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference materials into BSL will not be suitable for all

assessments and that they need to contact MTB Exams for further advice if they are unclear whether this adjustment is appropriate.

- Centres should read the guidance for BSL/English interpreters in conjunction with this section.

**Summary:**

- In cases where the centre is permitted to translate the assessment material into BSL, it should take responsibility for the accuracy of the translation.
- The centre should provide sufficient playback equipment that is in full working order.

### **Assessment material on coloured paper**

- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material on coloured paper, if required.

**Summary:**

- Where the centre is permitted to photocopy externally set assessment material onto coloured paper, it should take responsibility for ensuring that the entire document is copied.
- The learner may be penalised for any errors in his / her script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.

### ***Alternative ways of presenting learner responses***

A learner should be provided with the means to present their responses by the method most appropriate and familiar to them, as long as the use of methods will not invalidate the requirements of the assessment. The use of ICT is generally perceived to have a positive impact on helping learners to access assessment.

## **Use of access facilitators**

### **British Sign Language (BSL)**

- Although British Sign Language (BSL) is now recognised as an official language of the UK, it is not a statutory language, unlike English, Welsh and Irish (Gaelige).
- The regulatory criteria state: "*A Learner taking a qualification may be assessed in British Sign Language or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted by an awarding organisation for the purpose of Reasonable Adjustment*" (Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition 2011 – G2.2)
- For assessments where playing and listening are the competences being assessed, BSL or any other sign language may only be used for the assessment material rubric and instructions.
- The centre should ensure that the BSL interpreter has an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment.
- A learner should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a BSL/English interpreter and should have used this arrangement during the learning programme leading up to the assessment.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and the person providing the interpretation is clear about the limitations of the latter's role in the assessment situation.
- The centre should ensure that the person providing the interpretation has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing
- The interpretation should not give the learner an unfair advantage

The BSL interpreter:

### **Prompter**

- A learner with severe attention problems may benefit from the use of a prompter.
- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a prompter is an appropriate arrangement.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a prompter.
- Where the problem is one of concentration, consideration should be given to allowing rest breaks rather than a prompter.
- Prompters should be sufficiently familiar with the learner to recognise when his/ her attention is no longer on the assessment task

- The prompter should sit near enough to be able to observe the learner and draw his / her attention back to the task. This should, however, be organised as unobtrusively as possible. The learner's attention may be drawn back to the task using a light tap on the learner's arm or shoulder or, alternatively, on the desk (though not in a way that may be taken to indicate any part of the examination question paper). Verbal prompting should not normally be used. The method used by the prompter to bring back the learner's attention should be agreed before the assessment between the learner and the prompter and should be acceptable to the centre. It should be noted that some learners with emotional and behavioural sensitivity/vulnerability and/or mental health conditions may not be comfortable with a 'light tap' prompt. A form of verbal prompting should be considered and agreed for these learners.
- In the case of an epileptic learner where the problem is one of temporary absencing, the normal procedure to help that learner will be allowed.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.
- The centre should give the prompter clear instructions regarding what they are required to do and what they may and may not do during the assessment.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and the prompter have had experience of working together.

During an assessment a prompter:

- should draw the learner's attention back to the task in hand;
- should use the method of prompting agreed with the learner;
- should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the assessment,

### **Summary:**

- The centre should check that the use of a prompter is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The centre should select a prompter and fully brief him / her on their responsibilities.
- A prompter should not be allowed where such use would invalidate the assessment requirements.

### **Practical assistant**

- A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner. Examples of the kinds of tasks with which

the practical assistant may assist are, turning the pages of the question paper or, guiding a learner using a Braille paper to the correct page they need.

- The centre should, in consultation with the learner, decide whether the use of a practical assistant is an appropriate arrangement. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those qualifications where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.
- The centre is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the provision of a practical assistant.
- The practical assistant should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment, but should not normally be the learner's own teacher/tutor/assessor except when it is necessary to do so. In such cases, MTB Exams should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the learner be used as a practical assistant.
- A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out his/her instructions accurately.
- The centre should prepare clear written instructions for the practical assistant on the assistance they are able to give the learner. A copy of these instructions should also be given to the examiner and learner. The centre should note that the practical assistant may not perform tasks for which the learner will receive credit.
- The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements. For example, where the manipulation of apparatus or making accurate visual observations may be the skill being assessed, the use of a practical assistant will not be permitted.
- A learner using a practical assistant may need to be accommodated separately from other learners. In these cases a separate invigilator should be present to ensure that the guidance regarding practical assistants is followed. During practical assessments, the assessor should be present in addition to the practical assistant.
- During a practical assessment, a practical assistant:
  - should follow the instructions prepared by the centre on the level and kind of assistance that can be given to the learner;
  - should ensure the safety of the learner and those around him / her;
  - should not give factual help to the learner or offer any suggestions;
  - should carry out instructions exactly as they are given unless to do so would cause a hazard. If the practical assistant does not understand the learner's instructions, he/she may ask for clarification but must not lead the learner in any way or attempt to interpret the learner's wishes; if incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment;

- should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment (there may be parts of the assessment which the learner can do without help and thus gain credit for demonstrating the required skills);
- should immediately refer any problems during an assessment to the invigilator/supervisor.

### **Summary:**

- The centre should check that the use of a practical assistant is the most appropriate arrangement to enable the learner to undertake the assessment.
- The centre 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.

### **Other languages and use of translators**

- MTB Exams primarily offer its qualifications and units in the language of English. Nonetheless MTB Exams will undertake to support the delivery of our qualifications in other languages, most notably Welsh, Irish (Gaeilge) and British Sign Language where appropriate and upon request and evidence of sufficient demand.
- In implementing any arrangements to support other UK-based languages, MTB Exams may engage with the relevant regulatory body to seek further advice and guidance on the most appropriate arrangements to put in place to ensure comparability of assessments, moderation and awarding.
- Assessments in other languages will only be allowed where proficiency in English, Welsh or Irish is not required in the workplace for individuals to be deemed capable of carrying out the role (associated with the qualification). At all times requests from centres/learners for reasonable adjustments in relation to the use of other languages must be approved by MTB Exams in advance so as to ensure that final assessments would be comparable to that offered in English (Welsh and/or Irish)

### **Summary**

- MTB Exams may permit the user of a translator if there is a strong rationale and it is clear that the lack of English, Welsh or Irish would not prevent a learner carrying out the role that the qualification relates.
- MTB Exams will not permit the use of an interpreter.
- If the centre were to employ the translator themselves MTB Exams reserves the right to quality assure the assessments and the centre must be able to produce evidence of the translator's credentials.
- MTB Exams also reserve the right to employ its own translator to carry out an assessment and/or support our quality assurance of the centre's arrangements.
- Should a translator be used at the centre then field staff (ie external verifier or member of our exams team) will include learners that have had the support of a translator within their monitoring sample.

## Section 2 - Making special considerations

We will review the circumstances and evidence surrounding each request for special consideration to ensure that the decision made maintains the equity, validity and reliability of the assessment for the learner and does not give the learner an unfair advantage.

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment
- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course, eg disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

## Appendix 1 – Reasonable adjustments permissions table

This table outlines some of the decisions on reasonable adjustments that can be made. However, centres and external verifiers have a duty to seek advice from MTB Exams in any case where they are in doubt if an adjustment is needed or how it should be applied.

- Permitted – Reasonable adjustment permitted at the discretion of the centre
- Apply – Apply to MTB Exams for permission

Reasonable adjustment	Assessments NOT taken under examination conditions	Assessments taken under examination conditions
Extra time up to 25%	Permitted	Permitted Permitted/ Apply *
Extra time in excess of 25%	Permitted	Apply
Supervised rest breaks	Permitted	Apply
Change in the organisation of assessment room	Permitted	Permitted
Separate accommodation within the centre	Permitted	Permitted
Taking the assessment at an alternative venue	Permitted	Permitted
Use of coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles, CCTV and OCR scanners	Permitted	Apply
Use of assistive software	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Use of bilingual and bilingual translation dictionaries	Permitted	Apply
Assessment Material in enlarged format	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in Braille	Apply	Apply
Language modified assessment material	Apply	Apply
Assessment material in BSL	Apply	Apply
Assessment material on coloured paper	Permitted	Apply
Assessment material in audio format	Apply	Apply
Use of ICT	Permitted/ Apply *	Apply
Responses using electronic devices	Permitted	Apply
Responses in BSL	Permitted	Apply
Responses in Braille	Permitted	Apply
Reader	Permitted	Apply
Scribe	Permitted	Apply
BSL/English interpreter	Permitted	Apply
Prompter	Permitted	Apply
Practical assistant	Apply	Apply
Transcriber	Permitted	Apply
Other	Apply	Apply

\* Permitted at the discretion of the centre unless ICT is implicitly or explicitly excluded in the Standard being assessed or in its associated Assessment Strategy or Qualification Manual

## Appendix 2 - Glossary

Term	Definition
Access to Assessment	The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.
Appeal	A process through which an awarding organisation or centre may be challenged on the outcome of a decision
Assessment	The process of making judgments about the extent to which a learner's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment criteria	The requirements that a learner needs to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade) in a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment method	The means by which an individual's competence is judged.
Assessment needs	The adjustments that some individuals require to the assessment strategy and/or assessment task in order to demonstrate that they can meet the required standard.
Assessment task	An activity undertaken by an individual learner to show that he or she can meet the required standard.
Assessor	The person who assesses a learner's work.
Assistive technology	Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.
BSL/English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language
Carrier language	The language communication used by the awarding organisation to set an assessment task or test (which may not be the first/preferred language of the learner)
CCTV	Closed circuit television
Centre	An organisation or consortium accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to a qualification or units.
Competence	The ability to perform to the required standard
Enabling technologies	See assistive technology
Externally set	Examinations or assessment tasks or assignments which are determined by the awarding body
External verifier	Person who checks that a centre's assessment and quality assurance procedures comply with the requirements of the awarding organisation and the regulators.
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment
Learning programme	A course of study
Oral language modifier	Person who can modify/rephrase the carrier language of an assessment for a learner whose first/preferred language is English, but who has specific difficulties with written language
Malpractice	Actions and practices which threaten the integrity of public qualifications
Moderation	The process of checking that assessment standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors, between centres and over time, and making adjustments to results where required to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered.
Portfolio	A collection of work submitted for assessment.
Prompter	Person who draws the learner's attention back to the task in hand

Practical assistant	Person who carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the learner
Reasonable adjustment	Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Arrangements are approved in advance of an examination or assessment.
Risk assessment	An estimation of the likelihood of something unfortunate happening as a result of a course of action.
Scribe	Person who writes down or word processes a learner's dictated responses
Qualification specification	A detailed statement or document which sets out the aims, purpose, content, structure, and assessment arrangements for a qualification.
Standards	The combination of knowledge, understanding and skills required to perform a job or task to the level of competence required in the workplace.
Sector body	A body (such as a Sector Skills Council) recognised by the regulatory authorities as responsible for formulating and reviewing standards of occupational competence for an employment sector.
Special consideration	Procedures implemented at the time of an examination to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a learner who has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the examination.
Speech software	A computer programme that reads text
Transcript	A full written or typewritten copy of information or material originally provided in writing, speech or sign language.
Voice activated software	A computer programme which responds to spoken instructions.