

# NCTJ Reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy

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## 1. Purpose

This policy ensures fair access to NCTJ qualifications and end-point assessments.

The policy outlines:

- A definition of a reasonable adjustment and special consideration.
- The eligibility criteria for learners.
- Examples of reasonable adjustments and special considerations available to learners.
- The procedure for requesting a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.
- How the NCTJ handle reasonable adjustments and special considerations for qualifications and assessments.

## 2. Scope

The policy applies to:

- Centres and learners involved with NCTJ qualifications or end-point assessments.
- NCTJ staff handling requests for reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

## 3. Definitions

**Learners:** Encompasses students, apprentices, or distance learners, at any stage of their journalism training.

**Centres:** Encompasses training providers, HEIs, FE colleges and commercial centres.

**Reasonable adjustments:** Actions taken to reduce the impact of a disability or difficulty on assessment performance. Adjustments ensure learners can demonstrate their knowledge without compromising the assessment's integrity.

**Special considerations:** Adjustments made for learners temporarily affected by illness, injury, or other unforeseen events that impact their assessment performance. Special considerations should not provide an unfair advantage and may involve deferring the assessment rather than modifying results.

**Access to assessment:** The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.

**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 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.

**Assistive technology:** Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.

**BSL/ISL English interpreter:** An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language/Irish Sign Language.

## **4. Policy Statements**

### **4.1 Principles**

NCTJ complies with the Equality Act 2010, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice and related legislation to ensure fair access.

We are committed to respecting human rights, promoting equality, and supporting learners of all backgrounds. We provide fair and equal reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered for our qualifications and end-point assessments.

Centres must comply with all current and relevant equalities legislation and seek to uphold human rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and special educational needs of learners. We expect centres to have a fair access to assessment policy in operation, which reflects the following principles and guidelines.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations are designed to address learner needs while maintaining the integrity of assessments.

When deciding on reasonable adjustments for a learner:

- The assessment requirements must remain valid.
- Adjustments should not provide an unfair advantage.
- Adjustments should reflect the learner's usual way of working.
- Decisions must be based on the learner's individual needs.

The NCTJ and centres must ensure assessments are fair, reliable, and allow learners to demonstrate their abilities without compromising the assessment criteria.

The NCTJ does not offer aegrotat awards (qualification without completing all assessments).

## 4.2 Eligibility criteria

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement whilst maintaining the fairness, accuracy, and reliability of the assessments. They are not meant to make assessments easier or give an unfair advantage.

Fair assessment is supported in two ways:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Special consideration.

We understand that learners may need reasonable adjustments or special considerations during assessments if they:

- Have a permanent disability or specific learning needs,
- Have a temporary disability, medical condition, or learning needs, or
- Learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment

More information regarding eligibility and guidance for centre's concerning identifying learners' needs can be found in appendix A.

## 4.3 Examples of reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Allowing extra time for the assessment
- Modifying assessment materials
- Providing support, such as a reader or scribe
- Rearranging the assessment room
- Using assistive technology like screen readers or voice-activated software
- Offering assessments with different coloured backgrounds or on coloured paper
- Providing coloured transparencies for viewing assessment papers.

These adjustments are approved and arranged **before** the assessment to give the learner access to the assessment. They do not influence how the learner's work is assessed.

The NCTJ and centres are legally required to make adjustments that are reasonable. This depends on factors like individual needs, cost, practicality, effectiveness, and the need to maintain standards, competence, and safety.

More information regarding the range of reasonable adjustments can be found in appendix B.

#### 4.4 Examples of special considerations

Special considerations are adjustments made before or after an assessment to support learners who may have been disadvantaged during the assessment.

Special considerations could apply to a learner affected by a temporary illness or injury or an unforeseen event outside of their control, which impacted their ability to take the assessment or show their true ability.

In most cases, it may be better for the learner to defer or retake the assessment at a later date.

More information regarding special considerations can be found in appendix C.

#### 4.5 Roles and responsibilities

NCTJ centres:

- Ensure staff and learners are aware of this policy.
- Support learners in submitting requests.
- Maintain records of adjustments and considerations for three years.
- Nominate staff to manage and monitor requests.
- For reasonable adjustments, inform NCTJ of learners' needs **within one month** of course registration and no later than **four weeks before** the first assessment.
- Submit special consideration requests no later than two days after the assessment.

NCTJ

- Review and approve requests in line with regulations.
- Respond to requests within five working days and provide outcomes within 15 working days.
- Maintain confidentiality and securely store learner data.

## **4.6 Qualification-specific information**

### **4.6.1 Health and safety in practical assessments**

A learner's health and safety must never be compromised during an assessment. If a disability may pose risks, the centre must conduct a risk assessment considering reasonable adjustments to reduce risks. The risk assessment should identify the risks associated with the particular activity, but should also take into account 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. If risks remain, it may be appropriate to substitute another task. Contact the NCTJ for guidance in such cases.

Assumptions about disabilities and safety risks should not be made, but safety is always a priority.

### **4.6.2 Examinations**

Assessments under exam conditions may require more adjustments to ensure accessibility, as outlined in this document.

### **4.6.3 Remote exam adjustments**

Remote exams may not suit all learners with approved reasonable adjustments. We recognise the importance of making sure the decisions we take in relation to the delivery of our qualifications do not unfairly discriminate against or prejudice learners because of their particular circumstances and/or protected characteristics. However, decisions must balance fairness, assessment security, and the qualification's integrity and the validity and reliability of the assessment results.

If a remote exam cannot accommodate a learner's reasonable adjustment, they can take the exam in-centre. For details on remote exam adjustments, learners should consult their centre or the NCTJ.

### **4.6.4 Portfolio or work-related project assessments**

Some qualifications require learners to compile a project or portfolio of evidence. Learners may present evidence in any format (e.g., Braille, audio, video) if it meets the assessment criteria. Centres must arrange qualified support for translating Braille or sign language when needed. Necessary resources must be provided to help learners complete portfolios or projects. Adjustments must align with the learner's

usual way of working and not provide unfair advantages. Evidence must consistently meet the assessment criteria, which cannot be changed.

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1 Centres requesting a reasonable adjustment

- Submit a 'Reasonable Adjustment Request Form' through the homepage of the centre's NCTJ Creatio account.
- Provide supporting evidence, such as:
  - The centre's assessment of the learner's needs
  - History of provision for the learner within the centre
  - Medical certificate/doctor's letter
  - Psychological or other professional assessment report

More guidance concerning supporting evidence is provided in appendix D.

- Requests must be submitted **within one month** of course registration or no later than **four weeks** before the first assessment.

### 5.2 Centres requesting a special consideration

- Submit a 'Special Consideration/Deferral Request Form' through the homepage of the centre's NCTJ Creatio account.
- Supporting evidence, if required, must be submitted within 10 days of the assessment date.
- Requests must be submitted before the assessment or within two days after the assessment.

### 5.3 Learners requesting a reasonable adjustment

- Apply directly to the NCTJ to request a reasonable adjustment
- Complete a 'Reasonable Adjustment Request Form' online on the NCTJ's website. The forms are available to access [here](#).
- Provide supporting evidence, such as:
  - History of provision within a centre
  - Medical certificate/doctor's letter

- Psychological or other professional assessment report

More guidance concerning supporting evidence is provided in appendix D.

- Requests must be submitted **within one month** of course registration or no later than **four weeks** before the first assessment.

#### 5.4 Learners requesting a special consideration

- Apply directly to the NCTJ to request a special consideration
- Complete a 'Special Consideration/Deferral Request Form' online on the NCTJ's website. The forms are available to access [here](#).
- Supporting evidence may be requested, depending on the nature of the request submitted.
- Requests must be submitted before the assessment or within two days after the assessment.

#### 5.5 How NCTJ handles reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests

For requests submitted via the NCTJ website, we will provide acknowledgment within five working days.

The NCTJ will respond to confirm the outcome of all requests within **15 working days** of receipt

Approved deferred exams must be re-booked by the centre or learner.

#### 5.6 Centre record keeping

- Centres must retain records of requests for three years.
- All requests submitted via Creatio will remain accessible for audit purposes.

#### 5.7 NCTJ record keeping

The NCTJ is dedicated to protecting your privacy and keeping your personal information secure when you request reasonable adjustments or special considerations. We follow data protection laws to ensure confidentiality. Any information and documents related to your request will be kept private and stored for the duration of your learning and for 12 months after you receive your qualification or end-point assessment certification.



## 5.8 Arrangements not covered by this policy

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

## 5.9 Appeals

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

## 6. Regulatory references

UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to NCTJ's status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.

This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Regulator	Regulatory document	Conditions of Recognition
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	G6, G7
CCEA	General Conditions of Recognition	G6, G7
Qualifications Wales	Standard Conditions of Recognition	G6, G7

## 7. Review arrangements

The NCTJ will review this policy annually as part of the NCTJ's annual self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback.

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

This policy will be reviewed in September 2025.

## 8. Contact us

Any queries in relation to the contents of this policy, please contact our head of awarding.

Telephone: 01799 544014

Email: [info@nctj.com](mailto:info@nctj.com)

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix A - Eligibility criteria

Learners are eligible for reasonable adjustments if their disability or difficulty places them at a significant disadvantage in the assessment situation, compared to others without similar challenges. Adjustments are based on the learner's specific needs to access the assessment.

Examples of eligible needs include:

- Communication and interaction needs
  - Difficulties with reading or writing may be supported by tools like a reader, word processor, scribe, BSL/ISL, screen readers, or voice-activated software.
  - Extra time may be provided for time-limited assessments.
- Learning and comprehension difficulties
  - Extra time may help learners with learning or comprehension challenges in timed exams.
- Hearing or visual impairments
  - Assessment materials may need modification.
  - Tools like BSL/ISL, a reader, scribe, assistive technology, or extra time can support these learners.
- Behavioural, emotional, and social needs - Learners may benefit from supervised rest breaks, separate accommodation, or the use of a prompter for attention difficulties.

This list is not exhaustive, and some needs may overlap categories.

### Identifying learner's needs

Reasonable adjustments should be based on the individual learner's needs to access the assessment.

The centre must have effective procedures for identifying learners' needs, complying with disability and equal opportunity legislation.

### **Steps for identifying needs:**

#### ➤ **Identify learners with access difficulties:**

- Encourage learners to disclose any access-related needs as early as possible, ideally before registration or assessment entry.
- Ensure staff involved in recruitment, advice, or guidance are trained to identify access-related issues.
- Document identified needs for audit purposes.

#### ➤ **Determine if adjustments are needed:**

- Relevant staff should work with the learner to decide if adjustments are necessary to meet assessment requirements.
- Include the learner in discussions, as they best understand their needs.
- Seek specialist advice if the impact of a difficulty is unclear.
- Avoid assumptions based on past experiences and assess each learner's needs individually.
- Document decisions for the audit purposes..

#### ➤ **Identify the right adjustment:**

- Consider the learner's usual way of working, past support during teaching or informal assessments, and the specific requirements of the qualification or assessment.
- Simple adjustments (e.g., adjusting seat height or providing an armrest) may be sufficient.
- Adjustments may vary between assessments or qualifications.
- Document the identified adjustments for audit purposes.

#### ➤ **Ensure compliance with policy guidelines:**

- Ensure adjustments do not compromise fair assessment of the learner's performance, skills, or knowledge.

### **Appendix B - Range of reasonable adjustments**

Commonly requested reasonable adjustments are outlined within this appendix. This is not a comprehensive list and centres have a duty to see advice from the NCTJ in all cases.

Centres should be aware:

- Not all reasonable adjustments are practical or allowed in every case.
- Reasonable adjustments may vary across qualifications or assessments.
- Most reasonable adjustments apply to assessments taken under examination conditions.

Reasonable adjustments are categorised as:

- Changes to assessment conditions
- Use of mechanical and electronic aids
- Use of access facilitators

### **Changes to assessment conditions**

#### ➤ **Extra time for assessments**

- Learners with conditions affecting processing speed may be granted extra time for time-limited assessments.
- The extra time should match the learner's needs based on the learner's difficulty. Unlimited extra time is not permitted.
- Centres must determine and specify the required extra time, using formative assessments as a guide.
- Extra time is not allowed for computer-based tests measuring speed (e.g., typing tests). However, it may be permitted for tests focusing on software manipulation rather than speed.
- Extra time is not allowed for practical activities where timing is critical or group activities where performance is assessed collectively.
- For on-screen assessments, extra time may need to be customised for each learner. Centres should contact the NCTJ to request a time extension.
- Centres must ensure the learner can cope with the assessment content and is medically fit for extended assessments.

#### ➤ **Supervised rest breaks**

- Learners with a demonstrated need may take supervised rest breaks during time-limited assessments.
- Breaks can be inside or outside the assessment room, and the learner and their work must be supervised throughout the break.

- Break time should not be deducted from the total assessment time.
- Rest breaks are not allowed when speed or timing is part of the assessment. However, they can be taken during natural breaks, such as between tasks.
- For on-screen assessments, centres should confirm with the NCTJ if rest break time needs to be included in the extra time request. This is necessary because the test runs continuously on the system. The test system must also be supervised to prevent interference during the break.
- Rest breaks are not permitted if they would invalidate the assessment criteria.

➤ **Adjusting the assessment room**

- Small adjustments to the assessment room can help learners with visual, hearing, or physical difficulties. For example:
  - Visually impaired learners may need to sit near a window for better lighting.
  - Deaf learners may benefit from sitting at the front in good light.
  - Some learners may need chairs with armrests or adjustable heights.
- Centres should tailor the room setup to meet the learner's needs whenever possible.

➤ **Separate accommodation within the centre**

- Learners using readers, scribes, BSL/ISL, transcribers, practical assistant or word processors may need separate accommodation to avoid disturbing others.
- When learners are accommodated separately under exam conditions, standard exam rules must still apply, and separate invigilation should be provided.

**Use of mechanical and electronic aids**

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

- Learners should have practice in using aids (e.g., coloured overlays, tinted glasses, OCR scanners), and electronic aids must be in good working order.
- If these aids may disturb others during an exam, the learner should be accommodated separately with their own invigilator, who is fully informed of the support provided.

- Centres should consult the NCTJ if unsure whether new technology might give an unfair advantage or affect the assessment requirements.
- Aids must not provide an unfair advantage or compromise the assessment criteria.
- **Use of assistive technology, for example speech/screen reading software and voice activated software**
  - Some learners may benefit from software that reads assessment materials aloud or records spoken responses.
  - Speech software is not allowed if reading is being assessed but may be used in other areas, especially vocational, to help learners demonstrate their proficiency.
  - Centres must ensure assistive technology does not invalidate the assessment requirements or give an unfair advantage. If unsure, they should consult the NCTJ.
  - Learners must be familiar with the technology.
- **Assessment material in enlarged format**
  - For paper-based assessments, enlargements may include:
    - Unmodified enlargements: A4 papers photocopied and enlarged to A3, keeping the original layout and visual presentation.
    - Modified enlargements: Simplified layouts with reduced content, where necessary, meeting the same objectives as the original paper.
  - If the NCTJ provides enlarged materials, centres must apply at least **four weeks** before the assessment date.
  - If centres enlarge materials themselves, they must ensure:
    - The entire document is enlarged.
    - The material remains secure.
    - Errors from incomplete enlargement may result in penalties for the learner.
    - Scale diagrams in assessment materials cannot be enlarged.
  - Centres are responsible for providing centre-created materials in suitable formats for learners. Security and completeness of enlarged materials remain the centre's responsibility when permitted by the NCTJ.
  - For on-screen assessments:

- Screen magnification software can be used to adjust font and text size.
- Learners should practise adapting on-screen settings using practice tests.

➤ **Assessment material in Braille**

- Assessment materials can be provided in Braille for blind or visually impaired learners.
- Visual content will be removed before the materials are formatted into Braille.
- Diagrams in assessment materials can be produced as tactile diagrams.
- Centre's must apply at least **ten weeks** before the assessment date if Braille materials are needed. If no longer required, the NCTJ should be informed immediately to avoid incurring costs.
- Permission may be granted for centres to convert assessment materials into Braille, with guidance provided by the NCTJ.
- Where the centre is permitted to convert assessment materials into Braille it should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the entire document is produced in Braille. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the Braille material.
- Centre's converting materials to Braille must ensure:
  - The entire document is converted to Braille.
  - The material remains secure.
  - Errors in the Braille material may result in penalties for the learner.
- Braille may not suit all blind learners, as not everyone is fluent in Braille.
- Centre's are responsible for converting their own materials, resources, or references into Braille.

➤ **Responses in Braille**

- Learners may respond in Braille if needed.
- Centres must provide an authenticated transcript reflecting the learner's responses and ensure the transcriber is skilled in Braille and properly briefed.

➤ **Language modified assessment material**

BSL and ISL are recognised languages in the UK but are not statutory like English, Welsh, and Irish (Gaelic).

- Assessment materials can be adapted for deaf learners whose first language is English, British Sign Language (BSL), or Irish Sign Language (ISL). Since BSL/ISL has its own grammar, syntax and vocabulary, written materials often need modification.
- Technical language cannot be modified. Modified assessment materials must contain the same questions as the standard version, and learners are expected to give the same answers.
- For listening tests, a transcript may be provided and read aloud by a live speaker to enable lip-reading.
- Centres must apply at least **ten weeks** before the assessment date if the NCTJ is to provide modified materials.
- If centres are allowed to modify materials themselves, they are responsible for ensuring the materials are secure and accurately modified. Errors in modification may result in penalties for the learner.
- Centres are also responsible for modifying their own assessment materials, resources, or references.

➤ **Assessment material in British Sign Language (BSL)/Irish Sign Language (ISL)**

- If a BSL/ISL interpreter or language-modified material is insufficient, assessment material can be provided in BSL/ISL, except when reading or listening skills are being assessed.
- Centres must apply at least **10 weeks** before the assessment date for NCTJ-provided BSL/ISL materials.
- If centres translate materials themselves, they must ensure accuracy, security, and proper handling, as errors may result in penalties for the learner. Centres should read the guidance for BSL/ISL in conjunction with this document.
- Centres are responsible for translating their own materials and providing playback equipment.



➤ **Responses in British Sign Language (BSL)/Irish Sign Language (ISL)**

- Learners may sign their responses unless written or speaking English, Welsh, or Irish (Gaelic) is being assessed.
- Full responses can be signed in BSL/ISL, with finger spelling required for specific names or terms.
- Centres must translate responses accurately, using a qualified translator, and maintain authenticated transcripts for records. The centre should keep this as a record of the assessment.

➤ **Assessment material on coloured paper**

- Centres are responsible for providing coloured paper for their own materials or photocopying NCTJ materials securely and completely. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their script which occur as a result of incomplete copying of the document.
- Centres must apply at least 10 weeks before the assessment date for NCTJ-provided assessment material on coloured paper.
- Learners can use coloured overlays or adjust screen colours for on-screen assessments. Practice tests should be used to explore options.

➤ **Assessment material in audio format**

- Audio materials may be provided if needed, except for assessments involving reading or requiring visual content like diagrams.
- Centres must apply **10 weeks** in advance for NCTJ-provided audio materials.
- Where the centre is permitted to produce an audio version of externally set assessment material, they should take responsibility for the security of the material and for ensuring that the recording is accurate. The learner may be penalised for any errors in their work which occur as a result of errors in the recording.
- Suitable playback equipment must be provided in full working order.
- It is the centre's responsibility to provide centre-devised assessment material/resource or reference material in a suitable format for learners.

## **Use of access facilitators**

### ➤ **British Sign Language (BSL)/Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter**

- Deaf learners whose primary language is BSL/ISL may use an interpreter to sign questions (or part questions) in written assessments.
- For assessments testing reading, speaking, or listening, BSL/ISL can only be used for instructions and rubrics.

Role of the reader BSL/ISL interpreter:

- Interpreters must be qualified in sign language and familiar with the assessment content.
- Learners should have prior experience working with an interpreter, ideally during their learning programme.
- Interpreters and learners must understand the role's limitations.
- Interpreters should prepare by reviewing the assessment material in advance, as agreed with the NCTJ.
- At the learner's request, sign text on reference materials (e.g., maps or diagrams), but the learner must independently study the materials.
- They should avoid interpreting technical terms or giving explanations and may finger-spell words when needed.
- Any interpreted words or phrases without standard signs must be noted on the assessment material and attached to the learner's answers.

Additional requirements:

- Learners using a BSL/ISL interpreter should be in a separate room to avoid disturbing others.
- A separate invigilator must ensure guidelines are followed.

### ➤ **Reader**

- A reader reads assessment materials and, if needed, the learner's written responses.
- Readers are allowed if there is evidence of need, except where reading is being assessed.
- The centre, in consultation with the learner, should decide if a reader is effective or if alternatives like screen readers, electronic formats, Braille, or sign language would be better.

- The centre is responsible for arranging a suitable reader who:
  - Is not the learner's tutor or assessor unless approved by the NCTJ.
  - Is not a relative, friend or peer of the learner.
  - Can read accurately and at a good pace, with knowledge of technical terms.
  - Has worked with the learner before, if possible.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the reader's role.

#### Role of the reader:

- Reads only when requested by the learner. The learner may choose to read some parts of the assessment themselves.
- Reads instructions and questions exactly, without interpretation or rephrasing.
- Repeats instructions/questions only if asked.
- May consult a dictionary if allowed and read entries.
- Reads, as often as requested, recorded answers if requested but does not act as a proofreader.
- Must not give advice on which questions to answer or their order.
- Helps visually impaired learners identify visual material and diagrams without giving factual help or suggestions.
- Provides spellings from the exam if requested but does not give additional spellings.
- Refers any issues to the invigilator.

#### Additional requirements:

- A separate invigilator must oversee the assessment to ensure the reader follows guidelines.
- The learner using a reader should be in a separate room to avoid disturbing others.
- If a reader and scribe are needed, the same person can perform both roles with permission.
- If the learner reads questions aloud for themselves, they must be in a separate room with invigilation.
- Readers should not be used if it would invalidate the assessment.

- They are approved and managed by the Head of Centre or delegated staff.

➤ **Scribe**

- A scribe writes or word processes a learner's dictated responses during an assessment. They are allowed if there is evidence of need, except when writing or typing is being assessed.
- The centre should decide with the learner if a scribe is suitable. Learners may prefer using a computer if that reflects their normal way of working.
- A scribe must accurately record responses, write legibly or type quickly, and handle technical terms correctly.
- The centre is responsible for arranging a suitable scribe who:
  - Is not the learner's tutor or assessor unless approved by the NCTJ.
  - Is not a relative, friend or peer of the learner.
  - Has worked with the learner before, if possible.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and reader are clear about the limitations of the scribe's role.
- A scribe must not impact the assessment requirements. Voice recognition technology may be used if it reflects the learner's usual method of writing.

Role of the scribe:

- Scribes cannot help with factual information, suggest answers, or advise on which questions to answer or their order.
- Scribes must follow the learner's preferences on which parts to scribe.
- They must write exactly what the learner dictates, following instructions for spelling, punctuation, and corrections.
- Scribes cannot assist with diagrams or graphs but can read back what has been written upon request.
- Scribes should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the learner
- Any communication issues during the assessment must be reported to the invigilator.

Additional requirements:

- Scribes must work in a separate room with the learner to avoid disturbing others.
- A separate invigilator must ensure guidelines are followed.

- If a reader and scribe are needed, the same person can perform both roles with permission.
- The scribe must be approved by the Head of Centre or a designated staff member.

### ➤ **Prompter**

- Learners with severe attention issues may use a prompter during timed assessments to help them stay focused.
- Centres should decide, in consultation with the learner, if a prompter is suitable. Rest breaks may be a better alternative for some learners.
- The centre is responsible for arranging a suitable prompter who:
  - Is not the learner's tutor or assessor unless approved by the NCTJ.
  - Is not a relative, friend or peer of the learner.
  - Has worked with the learner before, if possible.
  - The centre should ensure that the learner and prompter are clear about the limitations of the prompter's role.
- Centres should ensure the prompter is approved, trained, and understands their role's limitations.
- Centre should provide clear instructions to both the prompter and invigilator.

### Role of the prompter:

- Prompters must recognise when a learner is off-task without misunderstanding natural thinking pauses.
- Prompting should be discreet, such as a light tap on the desk or shoulder. Verbal prompting is not allowed unless agreed for learners with emotional or behavioural sensitivities.
- Avoid giving factual help, suggestions, or advice on question order.
- Stay vigilant during the assessment and refer any issues to the invigilator.
- In cases like epilepsy, normal assistance for temporary absences is permitted.

### Additional requirements:

- Prompters must work in a separate room with the learner to avoid disturbing others.
- A separate invigilator must ensure guidelines are followed. The invigilator should be fully informed of the strategies used to regain the learner's attention.

- The prompter must be approved by the Head of Centre or a designated staff member.

➤ **Practical assistant**

- A practical assistant should be a person who is able to ensure the safety of the learner and carry out their instructions accurately.
- The centre decides, with the learner, if a practical assistant is suitable. Practical assistants are not allowed in assessments where practical skills are being tested.
- The use of a practical assistant should not modify the specification requirements.
- The centre is responsible for arranging a suitable practical assistant who:
  - Is not the learner's tutor or assessor unless approved by the NCTJ.
  - Is not a relative, friend or peer of the learner.
  - Has worked with the learner before, if possible.
- The centre should ensure that the learner and practical assistant are clear about the limitations of the practical assistant role.
- The centre should provide clear written instructions for the practical assistant, invigilator, and learner.
- Learners using an assistant may need a separate room and invigilator.

Role of the practical assistant:

- Follow the centre's instructions on what help they can give.
- The practical assistant should be familiar with the requirements of the assessment.
- Practical assistants must ensure the learner's safety and follow instructions without giving factual help or advice. If incorrect or inadequate instructions are given by the learner this must be reflected in the outcome of the assessment.
- Do not guide or interpret the learner's intentions.
- Should not expect to assist the learner throughout the entire assessment.
- Ensure safety and refer problems to the invigilator.
- Help only when necessary, leaving the learner to demonstrate their skills where possible.
- Any safety issues during the assessment must be reported to the invigilator.

Additional requirements:

- Learners using a practical assistant may need to work in a separate room with the learner to avoid disturbing others.
- A separate invigilator must ensure guidelines are followed.
- The practical assistant must be approved by the Head of Centre or a designated staff member.

### ➤ **Transcriber**

- A transcriber assists learners whose handwriting is illegible but they are unable to use a computer or dictate responses (it may not be allowed where writing by hand is the competence being assessed) or who respond in Braille or sign language.
- Centres should decide, in consultation with the learner, if a transcriber is suitable.
- Transcribers provide a word-for-word transcript to support assessment but do not correct spelling, punctuation, or grammar unless allowed.
- Transcripts must be separate from the learner's original work and securely attached for assessment.
- The examiner/assessor will assess the learner's work and will only refer to the transcript if it is impossible to decipher any part of the learner's response(s). For responses produced in Braille or BSL/ISL the examiner/assessor may refer solely to the transcript.
- The centre is responsible for arranging a suitable transcriber who:
  - Is not the learner's tutor or assessor unless approved by the NCTJ.
  - Is not a relative, friend or peer of the learner.
  - Is familiar with the learner's handwriting, is fully competent in Braille (where the transcription is for responses produced in Braille), or who has the required skills in BSL/ISL (where the transcription is for responses produced in BSL/ISL).
- The centre should ensure that the learner and transcriber are clear about the limitations of the transcriber's role.
- The centre should provide clear written instructions for the transcriber, invigilator, and learner.
- The centre should ensure the transcript does not delay submission for marking

#### Role of the transcriber:

- Produce the transcript immediately after the exam under secure conditions.

- Create an exact copy, word-for-word transcription, of the learner's work without corrections unless permitted.
- For online exams held in the Cirrus platform, transcribed answers should be written directly into the answer boxes on Cirrus.
- For paper-based exams use proper ink for handwritten transcripts and avoid altering or annotating the original script. Indicate, where applicable, any corrections to spelling on the verbatim transcript using a different colour ink, but not red, green or purple ink. Pencil must not be used for this purpose.
- Transcribe only text, not diagrams or drawings.
- Not involve the learner in the production of the transcript

Additional requirements:

- Learners using a transcriber may need to work in a separate room with the learner to avoid disturbing others.
- A separate invigilator must ensure guidelines are followed.
- The transcriber must be approved by the Head of Centre or a designated staff member.

➤ **Other languages and translators**

- NCTJ qualifications and assessments are primarily in English but can be offered in Welsh, Irish (Gaelic), British Sign Language (BSL), or Irish Sign Language (ISL) upon request and if there is sufficient demand.
- Assessments in other languages are allowed only if proficiency in English, Welsh, or Irish is unnecessary for the workplace role.
- Requests for language adjustments must be pre-approved by the NCTJ.
- NCTJ will not permit the use of an interpreter.
- If the centre were to employ the translator themselves the NCTJ reserves the right to quality assure the assessments and the centre must be able to produce evidence of the translator's credentials.
- The NCTJ also reserves the right to employ its own translator to carry out an assessment and/or support our quality assurance of the centre's arrangements.



## **Appendix C – Special considerations**

The NCTJ reviews each special consideration request to ensure fairness and to ensure we maintain the assessment's validity and reliability without giving an unfair advantage.

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if their performance is affected by factors beyond their control, such as illness, accident, bereavement, or a serious disturbance during the assessment.

A learner is not eligible if:

- No evidence is provided showing how they were affected during the assessment.
- They missed the assessment due to personal arrangements like holidays or unauthorised absence.
- Course preparation was disrupted by issues such as building work, staffing changes, or industrial disputes.

The following are examples of special considerations and what the NCTJ may offer:

- Recent personal illness, accident, or bereavement: A deferral may be offered to allow the learner to take the assessment later.
- Serious disturbance during the exam: Examiners may consider the circumstances during marking.
- Inadequate reasonable adjustments for a permanent or long-term disability: Learners may be offered a retake, or examiners may be informed to consider the issue during marking.

## **Appendix D - Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence**

To ensure adjustments provide necessary assistance without unfair advantage, the centre must clearly understand how the learner's disability or difficulty affects them.

Centres must ensure applications are based on individual needs with sufficient, reliable evidence. Records should be maintained for audits and to monitor the effectiveness of adjustments.

A Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify a learner for adjustments. Qualification demands must be considered.

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:

- The centre's assessment of the learner's needs

- Should be conducted by qualified staff (e.g., learning support staff, teaching staff, assessors or other specialist staff).
  - May involve external experts to assess a learner if needed.
  - Should outline the learner's needs, how they will be met, and demonstrate their ability to cope with the assessment.
  - Past information from previous centres can also be included.
- History of provision for the learner within the centre
- Include records of support during learning or training and formative assessments.
  - Evidence must show how the learner's needs are being met.
- Medical certificate/doctor's letter and/or psychological or other professional assessment report
- Certificates/letters/reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report.
  - Reports should detail the nature of the difficulty, its impact, and any relevant medication effects. This must be recent and relevant if the condition is likely to change.