



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS, SPECIAL CONSIDERATION AND MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

Policy reference UKV-QA-18 | Version 3.0

UK Versity Online Limited | BAC Accredited College | UKPRN 10052768

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Policy owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approved by	Principal (Ramanjeet Singh), on behalf of the Academic Board
Approval date	1 October 2026

Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and Mitigating Circumstances Policy

UK Versity Online Limited | ATHE 889 | Pearson 07737 | OTHM DC1506132 | Ascentis 3286 | NCFE 8465520 | IFA Direct 283334

Document control

Title	Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and Mitigating Circumstances Policy
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Effective date	1 October 2026
Next review	September 2027 (annual), or earlier if required
Owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approval authority	Academic Board, chaired by the Principal (Ramanjeet Singh)
Approval date	1 October 2026
Applies to	All UK Versity applicants and learners, and all staff involved in admissions, teaching, assessment and examinations
Supersedes	Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy (QA-02, April 2026); mitigating circumstances section of the Learner Handbook 2025/26
Summary	Sets out how learners apply for reasonable adjustments, special consideration, extensions and mitigating circumstances, how decisions are made and recorded, and when awarding organisation approval is needed.

Compliance mapping

BAC College Scheme 2023 standards	11.9; 16.5
UK Quality Code 2024 (voluntary)	Principles 10, 11
OfS conditions (benchmark only; not OfS registered)	B2, B4 (benchmark)
Awarding organisations	ATHE; Pearson; OTHM; Ascentis; NCFE; IFA Direct
Legislation and regulation	Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025); Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

Version history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	November 2014	First issue as Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy (QA-02)

Version	Date	Change
2.0	April 2026	Revised to align with ATHE Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations v5.0 (June 2024)
3.0	October 2026	Full rebuild: RA/SC and mitigating circumstances consolidated; extensions procedure, decision timescales, AO approval routes including NCFE Functional Skills access arrangements; BAC/QAA/OfS mapping, version control

1. Purpose

UK Versity wants every learner to have fair access to learning and assessment. This policy explains how UK Versity:

- meets its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners;
- applies special consideration where a learner's performance in assessment is affected by circumstances outside their control;
- handles requests for extensions and mitigating circumstances (BAC standard 11.9);
- seeks awarding organisation (AO) approval where it is needed;
- records decisions so they can be checked by AOs.

Adjustments and considerations are not concessions to make assessment easier. They remove barriers so that the learner's result reflects their real achievement, without giving an unfair advantage.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants and learners, and to all staff involved in admissions, teaching, assessment, examinations and quality assurance, for all qualifications delivered by UK Versity with ATHE (Awarding body for Training and Higher Education), Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson BTEC, including BTEC Higher Nationals), OTHM Qualifications, Ascentis (including Access to HE Diplomas, validated under the QAA Access to HE scheme), NCFE (including qualifications under the NCFE CACHE brand, and NCFE Functional Skills) and Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA) qualifications delivered through IFA Direct, administered in partnership with ATHE.

For learners on Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes, the Pearson HN edition of this policy (v3.0, July 2026) applies and takes precedence where the two differ.

For NCFE Functional Skills external assessments, access arrangements also follow UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01 Plagiarism, Malpractice and Examination Conduct Policy v1.0 (18 September 2026) and UKV-QA-22 Examinations and Controlled Assessment Policy.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable adjustment:** a change made before learning or assessment to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage, for example extra time, materials in another format or assistive technology. NCFE and exam guidance often call these **access arrangements**.
- **Special consideration:** an adjustment made, usually after an assessment, where temporary illness, injury or other adverse circumstances at the time of assessment affected the learner.
- **Extension:** a new deadline for a piece of assessed work, agreed before the original deadline.
- **Mitigating circumstances:** serious, unforeseen circumstances outside the learner's control that affect their ability to study or meet deadlines, which may lead to an extension, deferral or special consideration.

4. Policy statement and principles

Decisions under this policy will:

1. be based on the individual learner's needs at that time and on evidence;
2. not compromise what the assessment is designed to measure, or the validity and reliability of the result;
3. not give the learner an unfair advantage or disadvantage;
4. reflect the learner's normal way of working, where possible, and involve the learner;
5. be made promptly, recorded, and made available to AO external quality assurers;
6. be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know, with the learner's consent.

A request for special consideration cannot be made only on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. Those needs are met through reasonable adjustments.

5. Reasonable adjustments

5.1 Identifying needs

UK Varsity asks applicants to declare any disability, learning difficulty, health condition or other need on the application form, at the admissions interview, on the Learner Agreement and during induction. Learners can declare a need at any time. The overall support offer, the Learning Support Plan process and the limits of what a distance learning college can provide are set out in UKV-QA-32 Supporting Learners with Additional Needs and Disabilities Policy. This policy covers the formal decisions on adjustments to assessment, special consideration and awarding organisation approval. Tutors who notice a possible need, for example through initial assessment, refer the learner to the Student Administrator and Welfare Officer with the learner's agreement (UKV-QA-32).

5.2 Examples of adjustments

Depending on the need and the assessment, adjustments may include:

- extra time to complete assignments;
- materials in large print, alternative colours, accessible digital formats or with captions (UKV-QA-13);
- use of assistive technology, speech-to-text or text-to-speech software;
- a reader, scribe or British Sign Language interpreter for live sessions or assessments, considered case by case against what is reasonable for an online provider (UKV-QA-32 section 6.3);
- producing evidence in an alternative format (for example a recorded presentation instead of a written report) where the format is not what is being assessed;
- rest breaks, or a separate room or supervised setting for external assessments;
- modified papers for NCFE Functional Skills (for example enlarged or coloured papers).

A reader, scribe or interpreter must not be involved in the delivery, assessment or quality assurance of the learner's programme, and must not interpret or add to what the learner says.

5.3 How to apply

1. The learner completes the Reasonable Adjustments Form, available from the Student Administrator and Welfare Officer or on Moodle, and sends it to admin@ukiversity.co.uk, marked for the Quality Manager.

2. The learner provides evidence where it is needed, for example a diagnostic report, a statement of learning needs, an Education, Health and Care Plan, or a letter from a doctor or other appropriately qualified professional. Evidence is needed for exam access arrangements, for alternative assessment methods and where the awarding organisation requires it. Everyday support agreed in a Learning Support Plan under UKV-QA-32 section 6.2 does not need a diagnosis or evidence.
3. Requests should be made at enrolment, or as early as possible before the assessment.

For NCFE Functional Skills external assessments, requests must reach UK Versity at least the following time before the assessment. These periods allow UK Versity to decide the request and still meet NCFE's own deadlines (15 working days for coloured or enlarged papers, 30 working days for braille, tactile or modified-language papers):

Arrangement	Minimum notice
Arrangements that do not need a modified paper	10 working days
Coloured or enlarged papers	20 working days
Braille, tactile or modified-language papers	35 working days

5.4 Decision

1. The Quality Manager, or a member of staff trained by the Quality Manager, checks that the evidence is current and relevant.
2. A decision is made within **5 working days** of receiving a complete request. The outcome may be approval, approval with conditions, a request for more evidence, or refusal with written reasons.
3. Where AO approval is required (section 8), the Quality Manager or Examinations Officer applies to the AO and tells the learner that the decision depends on the AO.
4. Approved adjustments are recorded on the learner's record and shared with their tutors, assessors and, for exams, the Examinations Officer and invigilators.
5. The use of an approved reasonable adjustment is not taken into account when the work is marked.

6. Special consideration

6.1 Eligible circumstances

Special consideration may be given for circumstances such as:

- serious or terminal illness or injury of the learner;
- serious or terminal illness of a parent, spouse, partner or near relative;
- recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family;
- a flare-up of a severe long-term condition, such as diabetes or epilepsy;
- a recent domestic crisis;
- a recent physical assault or trauma;
- a broken limb or sudden onset of disability.

Work pressures, holidays, poor planning and computer or printer failure that could have been prevented by normal backups are not normally eligible.

6.2 How to apply

1. The learner completes the Special Consideration and Mitigating Circumstances Form and sends it to admin@ukversity.co.uk within **7 working days** of the assessment or deadline affected.
2. The learner provides documentary evidence, for example a medical certificate, death certificate or employer letter.
3. A separate application is made for each unit affected.

6.3 Decision and outcome

1. The Quality Manager decides within **5 working days** of receiving a complete application.
2. For internally assessed, assignment-based units, the usual outcome is more time or a later opportunity to complete the assessment, so that the learner can still meet all criteria. The result must reflect the learner's achievement, not their potential.
3. For NCFE Functional Skills external assessments, the Examinations Officer applies to NCFE under its special consideration process.
4. Decisions are reported to the Assessment Board (UKV-QA-15).

7. Extensions and mitigating circumstances

7.1 Extensions

1. A learner who cannot meet a deadline emails the Course Coordinator **before** the deadline, giving the reason and, where appropriate, evidence.
2. The Course Coordinator can agree an extension of up to 10 working days. The new deadline is confirmed in writing and recorded on the assessment tracker.
3. Requests for longer extensions, or requests made after the deadline, are treated as mitigating circumstances (section 7.2).
4. Extensions of the same length are given for similar circumstances, so that learners are treated consistently.

7.2 Mitigating circumstances

1. Where serious circumstances affect a learner's studies for a longer period, the learner submits the Special Consideration and Mitigating Circumstances Form with evidence, before the deadline or as soon as possible afterwards.
2. The Quality Manager decides within 5 working days. Possible outcomes include a longer extension, a revised study plan, a break in study, or deferral to a later cohort.
3. Any change must stay within the learner's AO registration period. Where it cannot, the Registrar asks the AO whether an extension of registration is possible.
4. Without approved mitigating circumstances, late work is handled under UKV-QA-15 section 7.

If something serious is affecting your studies, tell us straight away. Email your Course Coordinator before your deadline if you can, or as soon as possible afterwards. We would rather help you early than see you fall behind. You can also talk to the Student Administrator and Welfare Officer in confidence.

8. Awarding organisation approval

Most adjustments for internally assessed assignments can be approved by UK Versity. AO approval is needed where:

- the AO's policy says an arrangement must be approved by the AO;
- an arrangement goes beyond what the AO's policy describes;
- a learner is to be assessed in British or Irish Sign Language (ATHE);
- an NCFE Functional Skills access arrangement or special consideration is not centre-delegated.

The Quality Manager (or, for NCFE Functional Skills exams, the Examinations Officer) makes the application with the learner's consent and the supporting evidence, and records the AO's response.

9. Appeals

A learner who disagrees with a decision under this policy may appeal in writing within 10 working days of the decision under UKV-QA-23 Appeals Policy and Procedure. The appeal is heard by someone not involved in the original decision. Appeals are free, and no learner is disadvantaged for appealing.

10. Confidentiality and records

Information about a learner's disability, health or circumstances is special category personal data. It is used only to decide and put in place adjustments or considerations, shared only with staff who need it and, where required, with the AO, and handled under UKV-QA-29 Data Protection and Records Retention Policy.

The Quality Manager keeps a central Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration log recording: learner name and ID, qualification and unit, request, evidence seen, decision, date, decision-maker, AO approval where needed, and how the arrangement was put in place. Special considerations are also recorded on the assessment tracker. The log and evidence are made available to AO external quality assurers and kept for **4 years** after the results for the assessment are issued.

11. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal and Director of Education	Approves this policy; makes sure staff are trained and resources are available.
Quality Manager	Owns this policy; decides requests; applies to AOs; keeps the central log; reports to the Assessment Board and Academic Board.
Course Coordinator	Agrees extensions of up to 10 working days; refers longer requests to the Quality Manager.
Examinations Officer and NCFE Coordinator	Applies to NCFE for Functional Skills access arrangements and special consideration; records arrangements on the Invigilator Register and briefs invigilators.
Registrar	Identifies needs at admission; asks AOs about registration extensions.
Student Administrator and Welfare Officer	Provides forms; supports learners with welfare needs; refers with consent.
Tutors and assessors	Put approved adjustments in place; refer possible needs; do not take adjustments into account when marking.
Learners	Tell UK Versity about needs early; provide evidence; apply within the timescales.

12. Awarding organisation requirements

AO	Requirement / escalation route	Source document
ATHE	Centre policy must follow ATHE principles; arrangements beyond ATHE's policy need ATHE advice (ATHE normally responds within 10 working days); evidence kept for 4 years after results are issued and made available to the EQA.	ATHE Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations v5.0 (June 2024)
Pearson	HN edition applies, including the Extenuating Circumstances Panel of the Assessment Board.	Pearson HN Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy v3.0 (July 2026)
OTHM	Arrangements recorded and declared at EQA; appeals to OTHM within 30 working days of the centre's final outcome.	OTHM Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure v4.1 (July 2026)
NCFE	Functional Skills access arrangements may be centre-delegated or need NCFE approval; special consideration through NCFE's process; the centre appeals on the learner's behalf within 14 calendar days.	UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01; NCFE Appeals Policy ADEL-002 v2.6
Ascentis	Access to HE and other Ascentis qualifications follow Ascentis requirements; Access to HE appeals within 20 working days of the unit grade being confirmed.	Access to HE Handbook for Centres 2025-26
IFA Direct	Administered in partnership with ATHE; ATHE policy applies.	As for ATHE

13. Related policies and legislation

- UKV-QA-05 Recruitment and Admission Policy
- UKV-QA-11 Learner Induction, Management and Support Policy
- UKV-QA-13 Online and Distance Learning and Course Materials Policy
- UKV-QA-15 Assessment Policy
- UKV-QA-17 Resubmission and Reassessment Policy
- UKV-QA-22 Examinations and Controlled Assessment Policy
- UKV-QA-23 Appeals Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-26 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Harassment Policy
- UKV-QA-29 Data Protection and Records Retention Policy
- UKV-QA-32 Supporting Learners with Additional Needs and Disabilities Policy
- UKV-NCFE-FS-P-01 Plagiarism, Malpractice and Examination Conduct Policy v1.0 (18 September 2026)
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
- BAC College Scheme 2023, standards 11.9 and 16.5
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024), Principles 10 and 11 (voluntary alignment)

14. Monitoring and review

The Quality Manager monitors the number and type of requests, decision times, AO approvals, extensions and deferrals, appeals and EQA comments, and reports them to the Academic Board at least annually, with equality analysis where numbers allow.

This policy is reviewed at least annually, and earlier if legislation, AO requirements, BAC standards, an EQA or inspection action, or a significant incident requires it. The Quality Manager records each version in the Policy Register (UKV-QA-REG v3.0). Records are kept for 4 years after the results for the assessment are issued.

Approval and review

Stage	Name and role	Date
Prepared by	Director of Education	30 September 2026
Checked by (policy owner)	Quality Manager	30 September 2026
Approved by	Ramanjeet Singh, Principal and Director of Education, on behalf of the Academic Board	1 October 2026
Next review due	Quality Manager (Shazia Khan) to schedule through the Policy Register UKV-QA-REG	September 2027