

Reasonable Adjustments and Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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Purpose

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the global professional body for public finance professionals, supporting practitioners at every level from those beginning their careers to those leading the profession.

CIPFA designs, delivers, and assesses qualifications to enable learners to attain high levels of competence in public finance. We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in line with the Equality Act 2010 and aim to ensure fair access to all assessment activities. This includes offering Reasonable Adjustments and considering Extenuating Circumstances to reduce any disadvantage experienced by learners.

Scope

This policy sets out the arrangements and procedures for Reasonable Adjustments and Extenuating Circumstances for CIPFA learners. It is also intended as a point of reference for internal staff, employers, partners and stakeholders.

Definition of Reasonable Adjustments and Extenuating Circumstances

CIPFA's assessment arrangements are divided into two categories:

Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made before an assessment takes place to ensure a learner with a long-term condition, disability or specific learning need is not unfairly disadvantaged. These adjustments must reflect the learner's usual way of working and must not compromise the competence standards being assessed.

Extenuating Circumstances refer to short-term or unforeseen events, such as illness, injury, or bereavement, which may significantly affect a learner's performance in an assessment or prevent them from completing it.

Guiding principles

CIPFA takes due regard of the Equality Act 2010 and guidance from external regulators such as Ofqual and Skills England. In determining and applying adjustments, we also consider best practice drawn from sector frameworks such as those provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and other regulated awarding organisations.

Assessment Adjustment Criteria

CIPFA will not remove barriers that could affect the validity and integrity of the assessment such as making adjustments to the content of the assessment or the assessment criteria but where it is possible to make adjustments that are reasonable and that minimise the extent to which students are disadvantaged in attaining the qualification because of their disability, we will endeavour to do so for those students that meet the criteria.

An assessment adjustment will only be granted if it:

- Meets the individual needs of the learner
- Is effective in reducing disadvantage
- Is practical and does not affect the validity or reliability of the assessment
- Does not compromise assessment security or integrity
- Does not entail unreasonable cost or delay

Adjustments will never modify core assessment criteria or competence standards. Where appropriate, learners may use aids (e.g., assistive software, coloured overlays, adapted materials) that are generally commercially available or otherwise in common use by the learner.

Where appropriate and permitted, learners may use aids (e.g., assistive software, coloured overlays, adapted materials) that are generally commercially available or otherwise in common use by the learner.

Examples of possible Reasonable Adjustments (subject to individual need and assessment context) include:

- Adaptations to the assessment environment or materials
- Use of assistive technology (e.g., screen reader, voice-to-text software)
- Changes in timing or format (e.g., additional time, rest breaks)
- Alternative location or supervised assessment site
- Use of a reader, scribe or British sign language interpreter
- Adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes
- Adaptation to equipment
- Assessment material in an enlarged format or braille
- Extra time

However, not all of the above will be reasonable or permissible in all contexts. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Applying for Reasonable Adjustments or Extenuating Circumstances

Learners must apply directly to CIPFA by completing the relevant online application form, available on the CIPFA website: <https://www.cipfa.org/qualifications/exams>

Applications must be accompanied by clear and appropriate supporting evidence. Evidence may include medical documentation, official reports, police or death certificates, or formal employer statements. Evidence must be:

- Dated and signed by a relevant professional
- Written on official letterhead or be an authenticated copy
- Personalised and specific to the learner's individual circumstances
- Verifiable and relevant to the assessment period
- Free from speculation or opinion

In exceptional cases, CIPFA may consider an employer's notification as sufficient evidence. Applications submitted without appropriate evidence will not be accepted.

Where a learner has multiple needs, CIPFA will consider the cumulative impact and determine appropriate adjustments where possible.

Categories of Adjustment

The examples in the following table are illustrative only. CIPFA considers each application individually, and outcomes are based on assessed need, feasibility, and regulatory requirements.

Category of Learning Need	Examples of Need	Possible Arrangements
Cognition and learning needs	Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, visual processing disorders, literacy or numeracy difficulties	Extra time, coloured overlays, reading pens, reader, scribe, word processor, modified language papers
Communication and interaction needs	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech and Language Needs (SLCN)	Modified language papers, extra time, reader, scribe, supervised rest breaks
Sensory and physical needs	Hearing or visual impairments, mobility challenges, arthritis, cerebral palsy	Enlarged/Braille papers, assistive technology, live speaker, Communication Professional, alternative access arrangements
Mental health and emotional needs	ADHD, depression, anxiety disorders	Supervised rest breaks, separate room, prompt, scribe, word processor
Assessment accessibility	Limited internet access, remote locations	Local invigilation, offline submission processes

Timeline

Applications for Reasonable Adjustments and Extenuating Circumstances should be submitted no later than the published deadlines. Requests made after this time will not normally be considered unless exceptional and evidenced circumstances apply.

Adjustment requests typically open one month before the registration deadline and must be submitted in advance of the scheduled assessment. Only arrangements approved by CIPFA in advance will be honoured.

Learners will receive written confirmation of approved adjustments, usually two weeks prior to the assessment.

Details and deadlines are published here: <https://www.cipfa.org/qualifications/student-policies-procedures-and-forms>

Policy version and owner

Policy owner	Head of Qualifications Innovation and Development
Version	1.3
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Regulatory references

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
Condition G6: Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments
Other Regulation
Equality Act 2010