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| <b>Document Title</b>            | Supports for Reasonable Accommodation  |
| <b>Policy Area</b>               | Area 7: Supports for Learners  |
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| <b>Applies to</b>                | <input type="checkbox"/> All<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific (QQI accredited and SQT approved programmes involving assessment) |
|                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learners only <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and learners              |

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| <b>Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols</b> | <p>This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI</li> <li>- Assessment and Standards (2022 - Revised), QQI</li> <li>- Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers (2013), QQI</li> <li>- Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners, (2015 - Revised), QQI</li> <li>- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012</li> <li>- Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes (2023), Quality and Qualifications Ireland</li> <li>- Principles, Guidelines, and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities, <b>AHEAD &amp; DAWN (2019)</b>, AHEAD Educational Press.</li> </ul> |
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## 1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the principles and procedure for the support of learners with disabilities or long-term illness in undertaking their programme and assessment. It also assists SQT in fulfilling its legal responsibilities regarding the needs of these learners.

## 2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

This document is specific to QQI accredited programmes and SQT's own programmes, which involve an element of assessment. Policies and procedures relating to reasonable accommodation for other awarding bodies are addressed by the awarding body in question and information is available through the Accreditation Manager.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- **Reasonable accommodation:** Reasonable accommodation is defined by the Equal Status Act (2000-2004) as 'any means of providing special treatment or facilities if, without such accommodations, it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail of the service provided by the educational establishment'.

A reasonable accommodation is a support provided to a candidate with a disability or specific learning difficulty. It acknowledges that a particular assessment instrument may place barriers in the way of a candidate seeking to demonstrate his/her learning. (For example, a visually impaired candidate may need to use specialist technology to complete his/her examination.) Reasonable accommodation recognises the impact of a disability in an examination or assessment situation. It enables the candidate to use an alternative assessment method (where necessary) to demonstrate his/her attainment of the required standards<sup>1</sup>.

- **Disability:** The legal definition of disability, which is outlined in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2011), defines disability as follows:
  1. the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,
  2. the presence in the body of organisms causing or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,
  3. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,
  4. a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
  5. a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour."

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- <sup>1</sup> Assessment and Standards (2022 - Revised), QQI

## 4. RESPONSIBILITY

The following responsibilities apply:

### **Learner Responsibilities**

- The learner is responsible for applying for Reasonable Accommodation.
- The learner is responsible for providing verifiable evidence of their disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term illness.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

- The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs is responsible for implementing this policy, with the support of the relevant Course Administration Manager and / or Accreditation Manager and in consultation with the relevant Programme Director and/or Tutors.
- The Tutor is responsible for supporting learners who disclose a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term illness throughout the reasonable accommodation application process and to keep in contact throughout the period of study to ensure levels of support are maintained.
- All staff are responsible for the proper treatment of the learner's sensitive personal data.

## 5. SCOPE

This policy applies to learners with disabilities or specific learning difficulties. It does not cover temporary illness or injury, in such cases, QAP7-3: Personal Mitigating Circumstances will apply.

## 6. POLICY

In line with SQT's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, SQT provides Reasonable Accommodations to meet the needs of learners with long terms disabilities or specific learning difficulties. SQT follows the recommendations in the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) guidance document - Principles, Guidelines, and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities (2019).

The goal is to support learners while maintaining the integrity and status of assessment tasks, ensuring fairness for all learners.

### **Example of Reasonable Accommodations**

The following Accommodations, guided by the principles of the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD) and the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) are offered to support learners in a fair and consistent manner:

- Modified presentation of assignments/examination papers (e.g., enlargements, specific colour print)
- Provision of scribes and/or readers for assessments
- Scheduled rest periods during exams or assessments
- Allocation of extra time where appropriate
- Spelling and/or grammar waivers for written assessments
- Alternate assessment formats where necessary and practicable

In providing Reasonable Accommodations, SQT ensures that the needs of the individual learner are considered while maintaining the essential learning outcomes of the programme.

## 7. PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A REASONABLE ACCOMODATION

Below is the procedure to be implemented for learners requesting a Reasonable Accommodation.

### 1. Learner Application

All applicants are requested to disclose details of any learning or medical support requirements they have when applying for a programme within their application form. In cases where a learner develops or discovers a support requirement during their studies, the learner is advised to contact their Course Administration Manager or Accreditation Manager as soon as possible and the same procedure (steps 2 and 3) is followed.

### 2. Follow up by Director of Quality and Academic Affairs

If a learner discloses any learning or medical support requirements on their application form, the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs will follow up by reaching out to request further information and schedule an initial call. Learners will be asked to complete the 'Application for Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment' form and provide relevant documentation. Relevant documentation can be found [here](#).

### 3. Support Arrangements

Following receipt of the completed form and verification of a support requirement, a support meeting or telephone call is arranged with the potential or registered learner and relevant member(s)<sup>2</sup> of SQT. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the learner requirements in more detail and possible reasonable accommodations. It concludes with the preparation of a Needs Assessment Report.

### 4. Decision of SQT

The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and other relevant staff considers the recommendations identified within the Needs Assessment Report and determines the feasibility of making the accommodations required.

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<sup>2</sup> Generally the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and Programme Tutor and/or Accreditation Manager, depending on the circumstances and accommodation sought.

## **5. Communication with Learners and Staff**

The outcome of the needs assessment is communicated to the learner in writing by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and the learner is required to confirm acceptance of the accommodations proposed. Upon receipt of the learner's acceptance, the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs notifies the relevant Course Administration Manager, Accreditation Manager and Tutor.

## **6. Learner Appeal**

Learners who are refused Reasonable Accommodations can appeal the decision by writing to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs within 5 working days from receipt of the decision, in accordance with QAP7-6: Academic Appeals.

## 8. POLICY MONITORING

| Responsibility   | Frequency             | Methods  |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| Director of Quality and Academic Affairs – Document Update | Per QA audit schedule | - Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.                                 |
| Programme Board  | Each meeting          | - Review of reasonable accommodation requests.<br>- Feedback from learners who have been granted reasonable accommodation. |

## 9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

| Version No | Approval Date | Description of Revision  | Originator                               | Approved By      |
|------------|---------------|--|--|------------------|
| 2.0        | 1/3/19        | Complete revision and new document format.   | Director of Quality and Academic Affairs | Academic Council |
| 3.0        | 7/6/19        | Amended the definition of 'Disability'.  | Director of Quality and Academic Affairs | Academic Council |
| 4.0        | November 24   | Updated policy to include the most recent guidelines from DAWN/AHEAD and DARE. Minor updates to procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations. | Director of Quality and Academic Affairs | Academic Council |