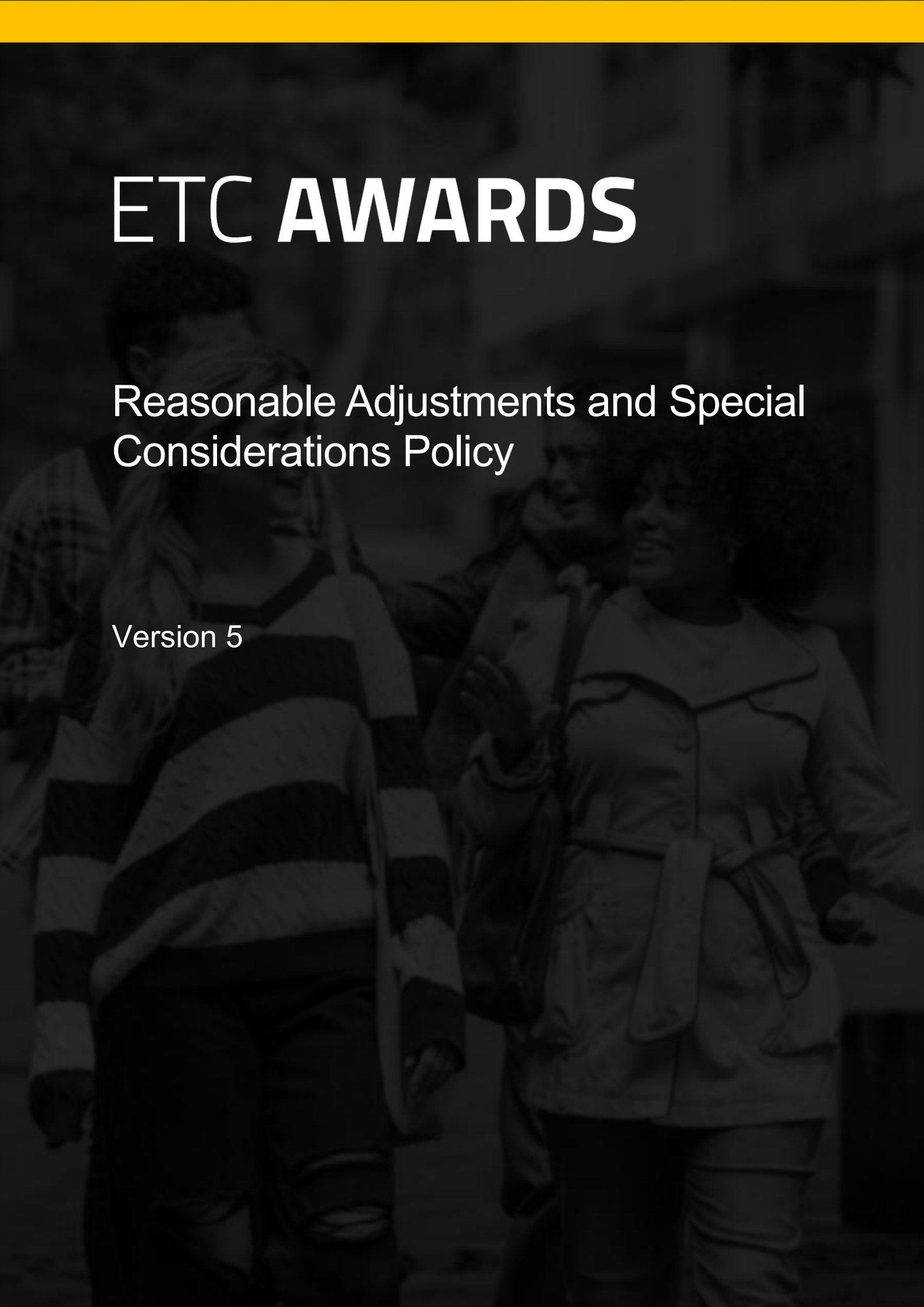

ETC AWARDS

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Version 5

Version Control

Version	Date	Change	Section
1.0-4.0	2018-2025	Not recorded	N/A
5.0	July 2026	Single policy which supports regulated qualifications, apprenticeship assessment and other delivery solutions	ALL
5.1	October 2026	Dedicated email address added in	4

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Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
G6 Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments *G7 Arrangements for Special Considerations*

1. Introduction

This policy applies to ETC Awards customers, including approved Centres, apprenticeship assessment partners, employers, learners and apprentices involved in the delivery of, registration for, or completion of an ETC Awards qualification, assessment or other delivery solution. It sets out the process you should follow when requesting Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations in assessments. It is also used by our staff to ensure they deal with these requests in a consistent manner.

This policy outlines:

- Arrangements for making Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations in relation to our qualifications, apprenticeship assessments and other delivery solutions
- How learners and apprentices qualify for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
- The Reasonable Adjustments permitted and those where permission is required in advance before they are applied
- What Special Considerations will be given to learners and apprentices

1.1 Review Arrangements

ETC Awards will review the policy annually as part of its self-evaluation arrangements, and revise it as and when necessary, in response to provider, employer and learner feedback. In addition, the Regulator may require us to change our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy to comply with their requirements, or issue good practice guidance which will lead us to make amendments outside of the regular review period.

2. Responsibilities

ETC Awards is committed to ensuring that all learners and apprentices have fair access to assessment through the consistent application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations. We will ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition and any qualification or apprenticeship assessment-specific requirements.

2.1 ETC Awards Responsibilities

ETC Awards will:

- Maintain, review and implement arrangements for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations that are valid, fair, consistent and compliant with regulatory requirements

- Ensure that reasonable adjustments do not compromise the validity, reliability or integrity of the assessment or the competence standards being assessed
- Provide clear guidance, documentation and support to Centres, Training Providers, Employers and Apprenticeship Assessment Partners regarding the application process and evidential requirements
- Make decisions that are evidence-based, proportionate and consistent, taking account of the individual needs of the learner or apprentice while maintaining assessment standards
- Ensure appropriate records are maintained for all requests, decisions and outcomes to provide a clear audit trail
- Monitor the application of reasonable adjustments and special considerations through quality assurance activities to ensure consistency across all qualifications and apprenticeship assessments
- Ensure all relevant staff, including those involved in product development, assessment delivery, quality assurance and operational management, understand and apply this policy consistently

2.2 Centre, Training Provider, Employer and Apprenticeship Assessment Partner Responsibilities

Approved Centres, Training Providers, Employers and Apprenticeship Assessment Partners are responsible for supporting learners and apprentices by:

- Identifying, at the earliest opportunity, any individual who may require a reasonable adjustment
- Implementing appropriate arrangements, where permitted, that reflect the learner's or apprentice's normal way of working and are supported by appropriate evidence
- Seeking approval from ETC Awards where prior authorisation is required before an adjustment is implemented
- Ensuring requests for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations are submitted within the published timescales and include sufficient supporting evidence
- Maintaining accurate records of requests, evidence, decisions and adjustments made, and making these available to ETC Awards upon request
- Ensuring all staff involved in assessment are familiar with this policy and their responsibilities for implementing it consistently and fairly
- Maintaining their own Fair Access, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations procedures that align with this policy and relevant regulatory requirements
- Cooperating fully with ETC Awards during quality assurance, monitoring and audit activities

All parties share a responsibility to ensure that assessment remains fair, valid and reliable, enabling learners and apprentices to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competence without providing an unfair advantage or disadvantaging other learners.

3. What this Policy Covers

ETC Awards is committed to providing fair and equitable access to assessment for all learners and apprentices undertaking regulated qualifications, apprenticeship assessment and other delivery solutions.

We recognise that some individuals may require reasonable adjustments or, in exceptional circumstances, special consideration to ensure they are not unfairly disadvantaged during assessment. These arrangements are designed to remove unnecessary barriers to assessment while maintaining the integrity, validity and reliability of the assessment and the standards being measured.

In applying this policy, ETC Awards will ensure that all decisions are:

- Compliant with the Equality Act 2010, Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition and any qualification or apprenticeship assessment-specific regulatory requirements
- Made on an individual basis, taking account of the learner's or apprentice's specific needs and the requirements of the assessment
- Based on appropriate, relevant and proportionate evidence
- Consistent, transparent and capable of withstanding regulatory scrutiny
- Recorded to provide a clear audit trail and support quality assurance

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations are intended to provide fair access to assessment and must not:

- Compromise the validity, reliability or integrity of the assessment.
- Alter the competence standards, learning outcomes or assessment criteria being assessed
- Give any learner or apprentice an unfair advantage or disadvantage
- Reduce the level of knowledge, skills or competence required to achieve the qualification or successfully complete an apprenticeship assessment

ETC Awards expects all approved Centres, Training Providers, Employers and Apprenticeship Assessment Partners to operate in accordance with these principles and to work collaboratively with ETC Awards to ensure that assessment remains fair, consistent and accessible for all.

3.1 Circumstances Covered by this Policy

This policy applies where a learner or apprentice requires support before, during or after an assessment due to:

- A permanent disability or long-term health condition
- A specific learning difficulty or neurodiverse condition
- A temporary illness, injury or medical condition
- Mental health or wellbeing circumstances that have a demonstrable impact on assessment
- Other exceptional circumstances that place the individual at a substantial disadvantage during assessment

Support will normally be provided through one of two arrangements:

Reasonable Adjustments – agreed before an assessment to remove barriers to access.
Special Consideration – considered after an assessment where unforeseen circumstances have adversely affected performance.

3.2 Circumstances Not Covered by this Policy

This policy does not apply where:

- Poor preparation or lack of knowledge has affected assessment performance
- Absence from assessment is due to personal arrangements or unauthorised absence
- Circumstances relate to the normal challenges of study, training or employment
- Requests seek to change the competence standards or assessment requirements of a qualification or apprenticeship assessment

Where circumstances fall outside this policy, ETC Awards will consider each case individually and advise the appropriate course of action in accordance with regulatory requirements.

3.3 Appeals

Any individual or organisation dissatisfied with a decision relating to a Reasonable Adjustment or Special Consideration may appeal in accordance with the ETC Awards Appeals Policy.

4. Request Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations should normally be submitted by the approved Centre, Training Provider, Employer or Apprenticeship Assessment Partner on behalf of the learner or apprentice and via the deciated email address RASC@etcawards.co.uk. In exceptional circumstances, ETC Awards may accept requests directly from an individual.

All requests must be supported by appropriate evidence demonstrating the need for the adjustment or the circumstances giving rise to the request. ETC Awards reserves the right to request additional information where this is necessary to reach a fair and informed decision.

4.1 Reasonable Adjustments

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments should be submitted as early as possible to allow sufficient time for consideration, implementation and, where necessary, discussion with the Centre or Assessment Partner before the assessment takes place. Wherever practicable, requests should be received no later than **10 working days** before the scheduled assessment.

Where a request is received after this timeframe, ETC Awards will make every reasonable effort to consider the request, although it may not always be possible to implement the adjustment before the assessment date.

4.2 Special Considerations

Requests for Special Consideration should be submitted as soon as reasonably practicable after the assessment and normally no later than five working days following the assessment. Requests received after this timeframe will only be considered where there are exceptional circumstances and appropriate supporting evidence is provided.

4.3 Decision Making

ETC Awards will consider each request on its individual merits, taking account of:
The evidence provided:

- The requirements of the assessment
- The need to maintain the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment
- The competence standards being assessed
- Applicable regulatory and legal requirements

ETC Awards aims to acknowledge receipt of requests within **two working days** and will normally communicate a decision within **five working days** of receiving all required information. Where additional evidence is required, or the request is particularly complex, ETC Awards will advise the applicant of the expected timescale for reaching a decision.

Where a request is declined, ETC Awards will provide the reasons for the decision together with details of the appeals process.

5. Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

A Reasonable Adjustment is an action taken before an assessment to reduce or remove a disadvantage experienced by a learner or apprentice arising from a disability, learning difficulty, medical condition or other protected characteristic, enabling them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competence on an equitable basis.

Reasonable Adjustments are intended to remove unnecessary barriers to assessment and must not compromise the validity, reliability or integrity of the assessment or alter the competence standards, learning outcomes or assessment criteria being assessed.

5.1 Principles

When considering a Reasonable Adjustment, ETC Awards will ensure that any adjustment:

- Is based on the individual needs of the learner or apprentice
- Reflects their normal way of working, wherever possible
- Is supported by appropriate and proportionate evidence
- Is practicable and reasonable in the context of the assessment
- Maintains the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment
- Does not alter the competence standards or assessment requirements
- Does not provide an unfair advantage or disadvantage to any individual

Each request will be considered on its own merits, taking account of the assessment method, the assessment objectives and any regulatory requirements applicable to the qualification, apprenticeship assessment or other delivery solution.

5.2 Types of Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional assessment time
- Supervised rest breaks
- Adapted assessment materials or alternative formats
- Assistive technology
- Readers, scribes or interpreters
- Accessible assessment venues
- Alternative methods of presenting evidence, where permitted by the assessment requirements
- Other reasonable arrangements that enable equitable access to assessment

The appropriateness of any adjustment will depend on the nature of the assessment and the competence being assessed.

5.3 Approval of Reasonable Adjustments

Some Reasonable Adjustments may be implemented by approved Centres or Assessment Partners where delegated authority has been provided by ETC Awards and the requirements of this policy are met.

Where prior approval is required, no adjustment must be implemented until written approval has been received from ETC Awards.

Approved Centres, Training Providers, Employers and Apprenticeship Assessment Partners are responsible for maintaining appropriate records of all Reasonable Adjustments implemented and making these available to ETC Awards during quality assurance or regulatory audit activities.

5.4 Assessment Integrity

Reasonable Adjustments are designed to provide equitable access to assessment and are not intended to compensate for a lack of knowledge, skill or competence.

ETC Awards will not approve any adjustment that:

- Changes the competence standards or learning outcomes being assessed;
- Reduces the level of performance required to achieve the assessment
- Compromises assessment security
- Undermines public confidence in the qualification, apprenticeship assessment or other delivery solution
- Conflicts with regulatory or statutory requirements

Where a requested adjustment cannot be approved because it would compromise the assessment, ETC Awards will work with the Centre or Assessment Partner to identify an alternative arrangement wherever reasonably practicable.

5.5 Qualification and Assessment-Specific Requirements

Some qualifications, apprenticeship assessments or other delivery solutions may contain assessment-specific requirements that limit the Reasonable Adjustments that can be applied. Where such requirements exist, ETC Awards will ensure that any approved adjustment remains consistent with the relevant assessment strategy, assessment plan, regulatory requirements and competence standards.

6. Definition of Special Considerations

Special Consideration is a post-assessment arrangement that may be applied where a learner or apprentice has experienced temporary illness, injury or other exceptional circumstances beyond their control that have had, or are likely to have had, a material impact on their ability to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or competence during an assessment.
Special Consideration is intended to ensure fairness where unforeseen circumstances have affected assessment performance. It is not a substitute for appropriate preparation, attendance or the application of a Reasonable Adjustment before the assessment.

6.1 Principles

When considering a request for Special Consideration, ETC Awards will ensure that any decision:

- Is based on the individual circumstances of the learner or apprentice
- Is supported by appropriate and proportionate evidence
- Maintains the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment
- Does not alter the competence standards or assessment requirements
- Does not provide an unfair advantage or disadvantage to any individual
- Complies with applicable regulatory and legal requirements

Each request will be considered on its own merits, taking account of the nature of the assessment, the circumstances presented and the evidence provided.

6.2 Outcomes of Special Consideration

Where a request is approved, ETC Awards will determine the most appropriate outcome in accordance with the relevant qualification, apprenticeship assessment or delivery solution requirements.

Depending on the assessment and the applicable regulatory requirements, outcomes may include:

- Allowing the assessment result to stand where no further action is appropriate

- Rescheduling or deferring an assessment or assessment component
- Applying an adjustment to the assessment outcome where this is permitted by the assessment requirements
- Any other appropriate action that maintains the fairness and integrity of the assessment

Approval of a Special Consideration request does not guarantee a change to the assessment outcome.

6.3 Circumstances Where Special Consideration Will Not Normally Apply

Special Consideration will not normally be approved where:

- Insufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that the circumstances had a material impact on the assessment;
- The learner or apprentice was absent for reasons within their control, including personal commitments or unauthorised absence;
- The request relates to poor preparation, lack of knowledge, training or practice;
- The circumstances relate to normal workplace, training or study pressures; or
- Approval would compromise the validity, reliability or integrity of the assessment or alter the competence standards being assessed.

6.4 Assessment-Specific Requirements

Some qualifications, apprenticeship assessments or other delivery solutions may contain specific requirements relating to the application of Special Consideration.

Where such requirements exist, ETC Awards will ensure that any decision is consistent with the relevant assessment strategy, assessment plan, regulatory requirements and competence standards.