Reasonable adjustment

Under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education, 2005 (website), RTOs are required to customise their services, including making reasonable adjustment to learning and assessment strategies to facilitate the successful participation of people with disability in education, training and employment. The goal is to ensure that all students have the best opportunity to learn and to demonstrate that they have achieved unit requirements.

Reasonable adjustment in assessment can be offered to students under the key assessment principle of “fairness”, defined in the Standards for RTOs (2015) (website). It applies particularly to students with disabilities.

Remember: Reasonable adjustment in assessment does not mean lowering the standards. It means the assessor uses creative and flexible ways to collect assessment evidence, while ensuring that the assessment decision meets the requirements for validity and reliability.

Different kinds of adjustments may need to be made, depending on whether the assessment process is predominantly assessing knowledge or skills.

The Institute’s Teacher Consultants for Students with Disabilities can provide detailed information and assistance to you in determining effective strategies for implementing reasonable adjustment.

Reasonable adjustment in assessment may include:

- Extend or modify timeframes for assessment
- Extra reading/writing/performance time for completion (where speed is an important component of the learning outcome, approval for extra time should be sought from the relevant educational manager)
- Extend break times during an assessment task or workplace assessment
- Use a Reader or Writer
- Use an Interpreter for learners who are Deaf or who have a hearing impairment
- Provide alternative accommodation (which may involve separate supervision)
- Allow adaptive technology equipment (for example digital audio and video recordings or files, speech recognition software, ergonomic furniture)
- Use specialised assessment staff
- View video evidence of a learner undertaking a task
- Seek evidence from a third party to demonstrate competence (Note that third party evidence is complementary, and should be used to support direct evidence gathered by the assessor)
- Ensure the language of assessment instruments does not create barriers (use plain English). Use generic terms when constructing assessment tasks, for example, using ‘communicate’, ‘present’ or ‘create’ is more inclusive than ‘speak’, ‘talk’, ‘listen’, ‘look’, ‘draw’ and ‘write’. The latter terms might exclude students with sensory impairments or physical disabilities.

Reasonable adjustments to written assessment task may include:

- Questions on audio/video tape
- Questions in Braille
- Questions in electronic format such as CD or USB flash drive
- Enlarged text
- Oral assessment, or use of Auslan

Remember that reasonable adjustment is a legitimate strategy for ensuring fairness in assessment, and learners who have been granted reasonable adjustment should not be seen as getting favoured treatment.

The table below, adapted from the Business Services Training Package BSB07, provides some practical things that can be done to provide reasonable adjustment to learners with specific support needs to enable them to undertake learning and assessment. Note that any decision about the most suitable adjustment option for the student should be made in full consultation with the student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of disability</th>
<th>Possible Reasonable Adjustment strategies for assessment, while maintaining the integrity of the unit requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquired brain injury</td>
<td>• Reflective listening skills&lt;br&gt;• Stress minimisation&lt;br&gt;• Time and patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
<td>• Audio loops for people using hearing aids&lt;br&gt;• Plain English documents&lt;br&gt;• Sign language interpreters&lt;br&gt;• Telephone typewriters &amp; voice recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>• Additional time&lt;br&gt;• Practical assessment which is appropriate for the skill, that is, avoiding written assessment for practical tasks&lt;br&gt;• Using practical tasks which demonstrate the application of knowledge&lt;br&gt;• Plain English documents and assessment instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility impairment</td>
<td>• Access to aids such as for holding documents and operating computers&lt;br&gt;• Adjustable tables&lt;br&gt;• Lifting limits&lt;br&gt;• Note taking support&lt;br&gt;• Oral rather than written assessments&lt;br&gt;• Wheelchair access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychiatric disability</td>
<td>• Identification and avoidance of stress&lt;br&gt;• Ongoing rather than formal assessments&lt;br&gt;• Reflective listening skills&lt;br&gt;• “Time-out” breaks in assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Speech impairment | • Stress minimisation  
• Time and patience  
• Written rather than verbal participation in learning activities and assessment |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vision impairment | • Additional writing time for assignments/tests  
• Audio tapes  
• Braille translations  
• Enlarged computer screens  
• Enlarged text and images  
• Good lighting or reading lamps  
• Allowance for entry of guide dogs  
• Voice synthesisers on computers |

For more information see:
- WSI Teacher Consultants for students with disabilities: Enter “disabilities” into the search line in the [WSI Intranet Staff List](WSI Intranet) for a full list of staff.
- TAFE NSW Assessment Policies - [Students with Disabilities Policy](DEC Intranet) (DEC Intranet)
- [Reasonable Adjustment: A guide to working with students with disability](pdf – 2.3MB), Department of Training and Workforce Development, Western Australia, 2013
- [Reasonable Adjustment](website), Qld VET Development Centre, 2010. This resource has detailed information and advice, checklists and case studies.
- [Australian Government JobAccess](website) (website) provides a “workplace adjustment tool” that gives practical guidance on the use of a wide range of workplace adaptations.