

## Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations in First Aid Qualifications

1. This document has been developed collaboratively with the following organisations:
  - The First Aid Quality Partnership
  - The First Aid Awarding Organisation Forum
  - The Resuscitation Council UK

The Health and Safety Executive has been consulted on content relevant to its regulatory responsibilities.

2. All First Aid Training Providers should support and comply with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. Any Learner assessment should be a fair test of their knowledge and the skills they have obtained. For some Learners, however, the usual format of assessment may not be entirely suitable.
3. Training Providers should be committed to making sure individuals with special educational needs, disabilities, temporary illness or injury or other adverse circumstance outside their control are not unfairly disadvantaged when undertaking first aid qualifications or assessments.
4. With a view to removing barriers which prevent Learners from undertaking assessments, reasonable adjustments may be made and special consideration may be given. These arrangements ensure that Learners are able to undertake assessments on a fair and equitable basis and they allow Learners to receive recognition of their achievements while ensuring the integrity, validity and reliability of the assessment process is maintained.

### Reasonable adjustments

5. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
6. The aim of a reasonable adjustment is to reduce the negative impact of a disability on a Learner's ability to access learning and assessment.

7. Examples of reasonable adjustments a Training Provider can make for a Learner during a theory assessment include supporting Learners with dyslexia or other reading or writing disadvantages by:
  - using coloured overlay on written questions;
  - giving additional time;
  - using large print format; or
  - reading the questions to the Learner and/or writing down the Learner's answers.
8. In some cases, it might not be possible to make adjustments to meet published legal criteria. For example, if a Learner is unable to meet the requirements of a qualification necessary for an employer to fulfil their obligations under Health and Safety Legislation, such as the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981. In this scenario, training providers may issue Learners with confirmation of the Learner's attendance and their specific achievements on the course.
9. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be specifically detailed within this document.
10. How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on several factors, including the needs of the Learner. An adjustment may **not** be considered reasonable if it:
  - involves unreasonable costs;
  - involves unreasonable timescales;
  - affects the integrity or security of the assessment; or
  - impacts upon the safety and wellbeing of the Learner or others.
11. There is no duty on Training Providers/Awarding Organisations to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

## Training Providers

12. Training Providers must be able to identify when a reasonable adjustment is required for a Learner and should take all reasonable steps to support Learners to achieve any qualification. Therefore, Training Providers must be aware of the definition of disability as included in the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered (and requested with the Awarding Organisation where appropriate) for Learners who meet this definition.
13. A Learner participating in a workplace first aid course does not necessarily have to become a workplace first-aider – there are many reasons to learn these valuable skills – so every Learner must always be given ability to participate as fully as is reasonably possible in first aid training.

14. In order to assess whether a reasonable adjustment should be made, Training Providers should consider:
- any minimum standard requirements Learners must meet when being assessed (as detailed in the relevant qualification specification or assessment guidance);
  - if the integrity of an assessment, and therefore the reliability and validity of the outcome, would be compromised or undermined;
  - The individual needs of the Learner;
  - The impact on the Learner and any other Learners;
  - The cost and time incurred of making an adjustment; and
  - The safety and wellbeing of the Learner and others.

## Special Considerations

15. In Educational terms, a Special Consideration is defined as a 'post assessment' adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect **temporary** injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.
16. In first aid, the need for such Special Considerations should be avoided by delaying the assessment until the temporary indisposition is resolved. e.g. in the case of injury, delaying assessment until the Learner has recovered. It is acceptable to allow a reasonable period of extra time in which to complete the qualification in such circumstances. Training Providers should seek advice from their Awarding Organisation where appropriate.

## First Aid Practical Assessments

17. It is important that no Learner is denied the chance to attend a first aid training course due to a disability. To assess competence and gain certification in first aid qualifications however, the Learner will need to demonstrate the required practical competences, which may include:

### CPR

18. If the Learner has difficulty kneeling on the floor, they may practise with the manikin on a table or chair if it is safe to do so. In real life, the casualty is highly likely to fall to the floor, so the Learner must demonstrate CPR and the safe use of an AED with the manikin on the floor at least once. Padding such as a folded coat may be provided to kneel on during the assessment. When using an AED trainer, the Learner must perform the skill without assistance from a third party.
19. Arthritic wrists (among other conditions) can cause an inability for the Learner to bend their wrists back. Alternative techniques are acceptable – the main measure of success should be the ability to safely and effectively compress the chest at the correct depth and rate, whilst applying pressure to the lower half of the sternum.

20. A Learner must be able to perform CPR effectively and continuously for at least 2 minutes to be considered competent. This must include combining rescue breaths with chest compressions at the current recommended ratio.

### **Unresponsive Casualty**

21. The Learner does not necessarily have to kneel on the floor, but must perform the required skills safely and effectively (e.g. assessing response, opening the airway, assessing breathing and placing the casualty into the recovery position) without assistance from a third party. The casualty (usually another Learner) must be laying on the floor during the assessment. The Learner should be deemed to have completed the recovery position if they placed the casualty onto their side, so that fluids drain from the airway/mouth and the chest is not flat to the floor (as that may impede breathing).

### **Wounds and Bleeding**

22. The Learner must demonstrate the treatment for bleeding safely and effectively, including the application of pressure to a wound and applying a suitable dressing. The Learner usually demonstrates the treatment on another Learner, who acts as the injured casualty. The Learner must perform the skill without assistance from a third party but may ask the 'casualty' to help using one uninjured arm only.

### **Other practical assessments**

23. For other practical first aid skills not mentioned within this document, the general principle to follow is that the Learner should be able to demonstrate the skill safely, effectively and in line with the assessment criteria.

### **Visual Impairment**

24. It is possible for a visually impaired Learner to successfully undertake first aid training and assessment. Where an assessment contains language such as 'look', it is reasonable to amend this to 'assess', which can be demonstrated by using other senses/involving others.

### **Hearing Impairment**

25. It is possible for a hearing impaired Learner to successfully undertake first aid training and assessment. Where an assessment contains language such as 'listen', it is reasonable to amend this to 'assess', which can be demonstrated by using other senses/involving others.

## Additional Support

26. Some Learners may require additional support when attending first aid training in order to reduce barriers to learning and assessment. Examples include a sign language interpreter or a support dog. The Training Provider must reasonably facilitate this but not necessarily meet the direct cost of the support (see paragraph 10).
27. An additional support person does not affect the Trainer to Learner ratio and the Training Provider should not charge an attendance fee for a support person to attend.
28. Sufficient advance notice must be given in order for the Training Provider to make suitable arrangements. This may include checking/notifying other Learners if the additional support may impact on safety/wellbeing (e.g. dog hair allergy).

## An Employer's Responsibilities

29. The Health and Safety Executive publication *First Aid at Work Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 Guidance on Regulations* discusses the factors that an employer should consider when selecting someone to be a first-aider.
30. When selecting someone to take up the role of a first-aider, a number of factors need to be taken into account, including an individual's:
  - reliability, disposition and communication skills;
  - aptitude and ability to absorb new knowledge and learn new skills;
  - ability to cope with stressful and physically demanding emergency procedures;
  - normal duties, which should be such that they may be able to respond immediately and rapidly to an emergency.
31. Where an employer decides to send an employee with a known disability on a first aid course, they may wish to consider discussing the need for a functional capability assessment with their occupational health provider prior to enrolment on the course.
32. The employer's legal responsibility to provide sufficient workplace first aid provision can, however, be achieved by using more than one person. For example, if a disability prevented a Learner from successfully passing a CPR assessment, but the Learner was able to pass all the other assessments on the first aid course, it is reasonable for the employer to train co-worker(s) in CPR. Acting together, the full skillset of workplace first aid provision is maintained. This emphasises the importance of providing a record of the assessments the Learner was able to successfully pass following training.