Access to Assessment for BCS

Intech Centre seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all candidates, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment and that any reasonable adjustments for candidates preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification.

Intech Centre will apply reasonable adjustments upon receiving an approval from BCS. The decision will be based on the individual needs of the candidate as assessed by suitably qualified professionals. In promoting this policy, BCS aims to ensure that a candidate is not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates and their certificate accurately reflects their attainment.

Candidates who may require reasonable adjustments

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA),1995, defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. The following individuals will be considered for reasonable adjustments: Candidates who have:

- A permanent physical impairment, e.g. cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis
- Behavioural, emotional, social needs, e.g. chronic depression, autism
- A sensory impairment, e.g. hard of hearing
- Specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia

This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some candidates may be covered by more than one of the categories listed above. Although these matters are not covered directly by the DDA, we also wish to accommodate candidates:

- For whom English is their second or additional language
- Who have a temporary illness or injury

Reasonable adjustments include:

- Allocation of additional time
- Support of a reader
- Support of a scribe/amanuensis
- Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter
- Support of a personal assistant
- Support of a prompter
- Use of assistive technology
- Rest breaks
- Change in the assessment room
- Use of appropriate assessment locations
- Use of a bilingual dictionary
- Re –sits (in the case of temporary illness /injury)

V6 May 2024
By Senior Manager
Signed by S. Y.

362 Essex Road • Islington • London • N1 3PD
Tel: 020 7354 5655
info@intechcentre.com • www.intechcentre.com

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Details of Reasonable Adjustments

Allocation of Additional Time

All applications for additional time will be individually considered. The 'standard' time extension that BCS approves for assessments, based on ECDL Foundation qualifications, is 33% (e.g. 15 minutes in the case of ECDL Parts 1 and 2) but extensions up to an extra 100% can be approved depending on the nature of the candidate's disability and the reasonable adjustments that are required.

Some of our more recent qualifications which lie outside the field of influence of the Foundation will follow the UK guidelines and a standard time extension of 25% will apply.

Support of a Reader

A reader is defined as a person who will read to the candidate any part of the assessment materials or any part of the candidate's answers. Candidates who have difficulty in reading and understanding complex English may require the support of a reader.

Support of a Scribe/Amanuensis

A scribe is someone who writes down a candidate's dictated answers to questions. Such support may be required by candidates who have a physical impairment, a visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty. A scribe is not permitted in an assessment requiring keyboard skills such as the application modules in the ECDL qualification.

Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter for Hearing Impaired Candidates

The role of the interpreter is to converse when asked to do so by the candidate, to ensure that the candidate has properly understood the instructions and questions. The role may include saying the word or phrase, rephrasing, using sign language, or the use of writing.

Support of a Personal Assistant

Some candidates may require someone for help with personal assistance during the assessment. The personal assistant may assist, e.g. by turning the pages of the question paper. A practical assistant is a person who, during an assessment, carries out practical tasks at the instruction of the candidate. A practical assistant will not normally be allowed in those parts of a qualification where the practical skill is the focus of the assessment.

Support of a Prompter

Candidates with severe attention problems may benefit from the use of a prompter in timed assessment situations to draw their attention back to the assessment task.

Use of Assistive Technology

Where possible the candidate should use their own equipment. Such equipment should be verified by the Approved Centre in order to ensure there is no hidden information or access to information.

If their own equipment cannot be used, assistive technology which mirrors that of the candidate ought to be provided. The list below is indicative of the most common assistive technologies currently available. It is to be taken as a guideline only.

Hardware

- Alternative keyboards and mice, including: Keyboards with Braille labelled keyboards or home-row key indicators Joysticks/trackerballs/rollerballs/mouse keys on keyboard Mouth stick
- Braille display
- Switches (alternative input to keyboard and mouse, used by individuals with physical disability)

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Signed by S. Y.

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- Large monitors
- Headphones and volume adjustment for use with voice output/input software packages

Software

- Operating System Accessibility features such as Sticky Keys, Filter Keys, Mouse speed adjustments, etc
- Screen magnification software
- Screen reading software (supporting users with a visual impairment or dyslexia)
- Voice recognition software

Use of bi-lingual dictionaries and translators
Bi-lingual dictionaries may be allowed for candidates whose first language is not English.

Change in the Assessment Room
Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some candidates with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties. For example:

• Autistic candidates may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock, removed from the room.

• Visually impaired candidates may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.

• Hearing impaired candidates may benefit from being seated near the front of the room.

• Some candidates may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.

Use of appropriate assessment locations.
A Centre may offer assessments at other locations that meet the requirements set out in this manual, e.g. assessments may be conducted at a client's site. Centres can only operate in this way for a maximum of six months. If more than six months is required the location must be registered as a Satellite Site. Members of Approved Centre staff must conduct the assessments and must be registered with BCS.

Working in Clients Homes
Whereas visiting candidates or clients in their own home is highly likely not to incur any risks, there are health and safety elements which should be considered before Centre staff go off-site to work with individuals outside of the normal working environment.

Any Centre wishing to offer off-site assessments must download and complete the 'Off site Assessment Form' from the Approved Centre Forum and make it available for inspection at audit. Do not post the form to BCS. This form needs to be completed on each occasion an assessment takes place and exam conditions must be adhered to at all times. The Centre must also complete the Access to Assessment online request form to apply for offsite testing and submit it to BCS Qualifications.

Rest breaks
Some candidates who may be disadvantaged by specific set times may require breaks. BCS will consider requests for rest breaks, the duration of which will not be deducted from the assessment time.

Breaks during an assessment must be supervised and the duration of the break agreed with the assessment invigilator. The candidate must not discuss the assessment with any third party during a break period, nor refer to books or any other source of help.

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Other reasonable adjustments

The reasonable adjustments listed above are not intended to be comprehensive. Others will be considered in line with the BCS Qualifications 'Access to Assessment Policy Statement'.

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Signed by S. Y.

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