EPA Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) is a recognised and regulated EPA Organisation for End Point Assessments. The EPA Organisation (EPAO) is committed to high levels of quality assurance and policies that are open, transparent and free from bias.

CIPS EPAO is committed to high levels of quality assurance and policies that are open, transparent and free from bias. The commitment to equal opportunities for all underpins and impacts on every area of CIPS as well as stakeholders both internal and external to the EPAO. The EPAO Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy reinforces the EPAO’s commitment to treat everyone equally. No one will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic background, disability, age, religious or political beliefs, family circumstances, sexual orientation, or other irrelevant distinctions.

The EPAO has a responsibility under relevant equalities legislation and the requirements of the apprenticeship regulators (e.g. IFA), to ensure that all apprentices have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and behaviour to the level of attainment required within the EPA. It is the responsibility of Training Providers to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made for apprentices during the EPA process, and the EPAO will ensure that apprentices are given appropriate adjustments to the assessment process to give them an equal opportunity.

NB: The EPAO will not make adjustments to standards. All adjustments must be deemed reasonable and not give the candidate an unfair advantage.

Reasonable Adjustments

Adjustments to the assessment process will typically be made in the following circumstances:

Apprentices with a physical, sensory or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Under equalities legislation, apprentices are deemed to have such impairment if they can show that the condition:

- Is more than minor or trivial
- Has an effect that has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months
- Affects everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping. Supporting evidence will be required in all new cases. Evidence could include medical reports from doctors, psychiatrists, educational psychologists, specialist teachers, or funding agencies.
Providing the adjustment required is the same for each assessment, apprentices do not need to re-submit evidence or a candidate reasonable adjustment request form with subsequent applications when enrolling onto an assessment.

**Apprentices with temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment -**

Apprentices are deemed to have a temporary physical, sensory or mental impairment if the condition is under one year’s duration and is likely to improve. Examples of temporary disability could include broken limbs or injury to hands which could impair a candidate's ability to type or write. Supporting evidence will be required in all cases.

If an apprentice applies for an adjustment due to a temporary physical, sensory or mental disability, evidence must be re-submitted with a Reasonable Adjustment Request Form for each assessment series.

**Types of Reasonable Adjustments available -**

- Extra time
- Use of readers, scribes, transcribers
- Miscellaneous types of reasonable adjustments including brailing of non-secure assessment material, taped responses.

**Procedure for applying for a new reasonable adjustment request**

All Training Providers have a duty to implement the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy for all CIPS Apprentices who study with the provider. This responsibility includes assessment of needs, recommendation of reasonable adjustment, communication with CIPS EPAO and provision of the resources to facilitate the adjustment. Training Providers will also be responsible for ensuring that appropriate facilities for work-based assessment are available in conjunction with the employer.

Apprentices who are registered with a Training Provider must complete an Apprentice Reasonable Adjustment Request Form (Please see appendix 2 of the linked document) and submit this to the CIPS programme leader at the Training Provider, together with appropriate medical evidence. The centre should assess the request and complete a Centre Reasonable Adjustment Request form; this must be submitted to CIPS before the Gateway start date. Supporting evidence should be attached to the form with a copy of the completed Apprentice Reasonable Adjustment Request form. The Training Provider should retain a copy of the apprentices’ application for review and audit purposes.

On receipt of the Centre Reasonable Adjustment Request form from the Training Provider, CIPS EPAO will confirm approval of the proposed adjustment to the Training Provider by email.

**Please note that the EPAO must grant approval for all reasonable adjustments and reserves the right to refuse requests. If an adjustment is made without written approval from CIPS EPAO, this could constitute**
malpractice. Once a reasonable adjustment has been agreed and implemented, no further adjustment will be made to the assessment or marking process.

**Special Consideration**

Special consideration is a minor, post-assessment adjustment to the mark of an assessment. This may be given to an apprentice for circumstances that could not have been predicted, or were outside the apprentices’ control, which may have impacted on their performance. Special consideration ensures that apprentices who have a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the assessment are treated fairly. Examples include influenza, bereavement of a close family member, evacuation of the assessment venue, and disturbances during the assessment such as a fire alarm or severe noise disturbance.

The EPAO will review and consider the special consideration application. The special consideration adjustment will normally be given, taking into consideration the total value of potential marks for the individual assessment.

The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances experienced in the time leading up to, and during the assessment, but will always be a minor adjustment as to do more may jeopardise the standard.

The EPAO will not enter into discussion with apprentices as to how much special consideration should be applied.

**Procedure for applying for Special Consideration**

All apprentices must advise their Training Provider to contact CIPS EPAO by email; epa@cips.org, within 7 days of the end of the assessment, of the circumstances which caused the request for special consideration.

Where appropriate, supporting evidence must be provided e.g. letter from a doctor / hospital / authorised person / assessor’s report etc.

Training Providers are required to advise CIPS EPAO by email if an incident occurred during the assessment, confirming the adjustments made and apprentices affected.

Training Providers will receive confirmation of the Special Consideration application and the EPAO will take the incident into account prior to the release of results.
Review and Appeal

Wherever possible, the EPAO will deal sympathetically with requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration. In cases where a request is turned down the apprentice / Training Provider has the right to request a review of the decision.

Stage 1 – Review

Apprentices and training providers may request a review of the decision made following the above process. The review is conducted by the Head of Assessment Standard and Operations, who will re-examine the initial decision. Requests for a review of a reasonable adjustment decision should be made as quickly as possible following the initial decision, and will be reviewed equally swiftly to allow the outcome to be notified before the assessment takes place.

Stage 2 – Appeal

If the apprentice or Training Provider does not agree with the outcome of the review, they have the right to take the process to Stage 2 appeal, which would involve an independent review of the case. An appeal at Stage 2 will only be considered if the appellant can show that the EPAO did not apply procedures consistently during the original investigation, or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly.

An appeal at Stage 2 will only consider whether the EPAO applied its procedures consistently, properly and fairly during the original investigation and/or the Stage 1 review. The original incident will not be re-investigated at the appeal stage. There is a fee of £125 for Stage 2 appeals, which would be refunded if the appeal were successful.

Appeals are heard by a panel chaired by Head of Assessment Standards and Operations (the Responsible Officer) with at least one independent member, who is not an employee of CIPS, an assessor working for CIPS, or otherwise connected to CIPS. The appeal panel will have had no involvement with the assessment or the administration of assessments, and have no personal interest in the decisions under consideration. The appeal panel may uphold the original decision, or overturn it on the grounds that procedures were not properly followed. The appeal panel will not review the original investigation.

The Head of Assessment Standards and Operations is responsible for ensuring that all parties affected by decisions on malpractice or maladministration are informed of the outcome of the above processes.

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