



ESTAR

ELITE SKILLS, TRAINING
& RECRUITMENT

CP-001

**Access to Fair
Assessment Policy**

Rev: 00



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

Policy owner: Head of Quality & Compliance

Operational leads: SEND/Additional Learning Support (ALS) Lead, Curriculum Lead, EPA Lead (where applicable)

Applies to: All learners/apprentices on ESTAR programmes (funded and non-funded), including subcontracted delivery where ESTAR is the lead provider

Review cycle: Annual (or earlier if regulatory/awarding/EPAO requirements change)

Version: 00

1. Purpose

ESTAR Education is committed to ensuring that **all learners have fair access to assessment** and an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and behaviours. We will make **reasonable adjustments** and apply **access arrangements** and/or **special consideration** where appropriate, so that assessment remains **fair, valid and reliable** and does not disadvantage any learner.

This policy sets out:

- how learners request support for assessment;
- how ESTAR evaluates and approves adjustments;
- how adjustments are implemented and recorded; and
- how decisions can be reviewed or appealed.

This aligns with common sector expectations for fair access and the evidence typically reviewed in quality assurance activity (e.g., reasonable adjustment processes and decision logs).

2. Scope

This policy covers:

- **Internal assessments** delivered/marked by ESTAR (knowledge tests, practical observations, professional discussions, assignments, mock tests, etc.)
- **External/awarding organisation assessments** where ESTAR acts as a centre and must follow awarding organisation rules
- **End-Point Assessment (EPA) related support** where ESTAR supports an apprentice to request reasonable adjustments (final approval typically sits with the EPAO/assessment body)

3. Key definitions

- **Reasonable adjustment:** A change to the assessment process/arrangements to remove disadvantage for a learner with a disability, long-term condition, SEND, or other evidenced need, **without changing the assessment standard.**



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- **Access arrangement:** Pre-assessment support (e.g., extra time, reader, scribe, assistive technology, rest breaks) agreed in advance to allow access to assessment **without altering what is being assessed**. This concept is set out clearly in JCQ guidance used widely across UK centres.
- **Special consideration:** A post-assessment adjustment decision (or other mitigation route) where a learner's performance was temporarily affected by illness, injury, bereavement or another event outside their control.

4. Principles

ESTAR will ensure adjustments:

1. **Support access, not advantage** – adjustments must not make the assessment easier or compromise standards.
2. **Maintain assessment integrity** – we will not adjust the competence requirements or the level of demand.
3. **Are evidence-based and proportionate** – decisions are made case-by-case and supported by appropriate evidence (medical/SEND evidence, workplace evidence, prior arrangements, tutor observations, etc.).
4. **Are planned early** – needs are identified as early as possible in onboarding/initial assessment and reviewed during learning.
5. **Are consistently recorded** – decisions are documented and auditable (including rationale, evidence, implementation and review).

5. Legal and regulatory context (high level)

- **Equality Act 2010** (duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled learners).
- **Awarding organisation/EPAO requirements** (must be followed exactly where applicable).
- **Regulatory expectations around fair process/appeals** (e.g., regulated qualifications require proper, fair application of procedures including for reasonable adjustments/special consideration decisions).
- **JCQ Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments** (where ESTAR delivers/hosts assessments under JCQ-aligned rules).

6. Roles and responsibilities

Learner/Apprentice

- Disclose support needs as early as possible and provide evidence where available.
- Engage with agreed arrangements and feedback on effectiveness.

Tutor/Assessor



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- Identify potential needs early; signpost the learner to ALS/SEND Lead.
- Implement approved arrangements and record their use.

SEND/ALS Lead (or nominated Inclusion Lead)

- Coordinates evidence, recommends arrangements, and monitors effectiveness.
- Maintains the **Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration Log**.

IQA / Quality Team

- Confirms that assessment decisions remain valid and consistent.
- Samples evidence and records as part of IQA.

EPA Lead (where applicable)

- Supports the apprentice and employer to submit requests to the EPAO in good time.
- Ensures EPAO approval is received before the assessment event.

Head of Quality & Compliance

- Final internal decision-maker for ESTAR-run assessments.
- Ensures this policy remains current and staff are trained.

7. Requesting reasonable adjustments / access arrangements

7.1 When requests can be made

Requests may be made:

- during onboarding/initial assessment;
- at any point during learning if needs emerge; and/or
- in preparation for a scheduled assessment.

7.2 How to request

Learners (or tutors on their behalf) complete an **Access to Fair Assessment Request Form** and submit to the ALS/SEND Lead.

7.3 Evidence requirements

Evidence should be **proportionate** and may include (as appropriate):

- medical letter/diagnostic report;
- EHCP or SEND support plan;
- workplace evidence (apprenticeship context);



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- history of previous access arrangements (e.g., prior centre approvals where applicable);
- tutor/assessor observations and mock assessment evidence where relevant.

(Where JCQ rules apply, evidence must meet JCQ requirements and timescales.)

7.4 Decision timescales

- ESTAR aims to confirm decisions **within 10 working days** of receiving a complete request and evidence.
- For high-stakes assessments (e.g., final synoptic tests, external exams, EPA), requests should be submitted **at least 6 weeks** prior to the assessment date to allow approvals, planning and resources (commonly used best practice in sector fair access policies).

8. Decision-making process (ESTAR-run assessments)

1. **Review request + evidence** (ALS/SEND Lead + Tutor/Assessor input)
2. **Risk/impact check** – does the adjustment:
 - preserve assessment objectives and standards?
 - remain manageable and safe?
 - avoid unfair advantage?
3. **Approval / refusal / modification** (Head of Quality & Compliance)
4. **Implementation plan** agreed (who, what, where, when)
5. **Record in the log** (decision, evidence, rationale, dates, assessor, review date)

If a request is refused or modified, ESTAR will explain:

- the rationale; and
- alternative adjustments/support options (where available).

9. Typical adjustments (examples)

Adjustments are always individual, but may include:

- extra time (where permitted by rules);
- supervised rest breaks;
- separate room / reduced distraction environment;
- reader / computer reader;
- scribe / speech-to-text;



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- assistive technology;
- enlarged print / coloured overlays;
- alternative format of evidence (e.g., professional discussion instead of written narrative **where assessment criteria allow**);
- scheduling adjustments (within permitted windows).

ESTAR will **not** approve adjustments that change the competence requirements, lower the standard, or invalidate comparability.

10. Special consideration

Special consideration may be considered when a learner is temporarily affected by circumstances outside their control at or near the time of assessment (e.g., illness, bereavement). JCQ defines this as a post-examination adjustment to reflect temporary indisposition.

Special consideration routes may include (subject to awarding/EPA rules):

- rescheduling within permissible windows;
- allowing a missed component to be re-attempted where rules permit;
- applying awarding body/EPAO special consideration processes.

Evidence may be requested (e.g., fit note, incident report, employer confirmation).

11. End-Point Assessment (EPA) and external assessment bodies

Where assessment is owned by an **EPAO or awarding organisation**, ESTAR will:

- support the learner to request adjustments;
- provide evidence and learning history where appropriate; and
- ensure the learner understands what is approved and how it will work on the day.

Final approval sits with the EPAO/awarding body (and their published policies/procedures). ESTAR will not implement unapproved arrangements for external assessment events.

12. Recording, audit and quality assurance

ESTAR maintains:

- **Access to Fair Assessment Request Forms** (securely stored)
- **Reasonable Adjustments & Special Consideration Log** (auditable decision log)



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- **Assessment plans** showing arrangements in place
- **IQA sampling evidence** confirming implementation and consistency

This aligns with typical external quality assurance expectations (policies, procedures, and logs evidencing decisions).

13. Confidentiality and data protection

Information about a learner's disability/SEND/health is handled as confidential and processed in line with data protection requirements. Only staff who need the information to implement adjustments will have access.

14. Staff training

All delivery staff involved in assessment will receive training/briefing on:

- recognising barriers to assessment;
 - how to raise/support requests;
 - implementing approved arrangements consistently; and
 - recording and QA expectations.
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15. Appeals and complaints

15.1 Review of a decision

A learner may request a review of an adjustment/special consideration decision within **10 working days** of notification. The review will be conducted by a senior member of staff not involved in the original decision (where possible).

15.2 Complaints

If unresolved, the learner may use ESTAR's Complaints Policy. For relevant post-16 provision, escalation routes may include the DfE complaints process where applicable.

(Note: if you want, I'll plug in the exact DfE post-16 complaints reference here once we confirm whether this policy is strictly for apprenticeships, adult skills, or both—different wording is best.)

16. Malpractice and misuse

Any attempt to obtain unfair advantage (false evidence, undeclared support, collusion, misuse of assistive tech) will be treated under ESTAR's **Malpractice and Maladministration Policy** and may result in:

- withdrawal of approval;



Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Form: CP-001

Revision: 00

- investigation; and/or
- referral to awarding bodies/EPAOs where required.

17. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed:

- annually; and
- immediately following changes to awarding body/EPAO rules, JCQ guidance, or relevant regulatory expectations.

Date of last Review	Print Name	Position
02/02/2026	Keiran Casey	Chief Executive Officer
	Darren Beach	Quality Manager