

Process for dealing with requests for adjustment to examination procedures

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires awarding bodies to agree reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates in order to lessen or remove the effects of a ‘substantial disadvantage’ in an examination. The reasonableness of the adjustment will depend on the needs of the disabled candidate. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, time frames or affects the security or integrity of the examination. There is no duty on the Institute to make any adjustment to the competencies being tested in an examination. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and the Institute will assess each application for adjustment on an individual basis.

A candidate does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the DDA) to be allowed an adjustment. The process for granting adjustments and the evidence required will vary according to the nature of the request and the reason for seeking it. These adjustments are intended to increase access to examinations but cannot be granted where they will directly affect performance in the skills that are the focus of the examination.

Adjustments are not there to give candidates an unfair advantage, but to give all candidates a level playing field in which to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. In order to ensure this, the Institute requires that evidence of need must always be supplied to support an adjustment request. Applications for adjustment must be made in advance of the examination date and ensure the Institute has enough time to comply.

Examples of some of the adjustments that may be made

- Extra time of up to 25%
- Use of specialist equipment such as a magnifier or reader
- Assessed in workplace

The need for an adjustment must be justified and accompanied by a medical report from either a GP or a Consultant if the candidate is being treated in secondary care.

All instructions and regulations for conducting examinations must be adhered to at all times regardless of any special arrangements made.

For example

- All examinations must start at the agreed time so if extra time is allowed it will be added at the end. This would mean that only one examination could be taken in a single day.
- If assessment is taking place in the workplace then IHRIM must approve the invigilator and be able to inspect the examination room if requested. Arrangements and costs are the responsibility of the candidate’s Trust.

It is possible for candidates to register for an examination and then decide to defer. The Institute does not require a reason for this however there is a charge to cover administration costs and if there is a subsequent increase in fees the candidate will have to pay the tariff and abide by the regulations current at the time of sitting the examination.

The full fee for the examination must be paid as usual regardless of any special arrangements agreed with the candidate.