

End-Point Assessment Services

Fair Access and Special Considerations Policy

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Fair Access and Special Considerations Policy

1. Aim of the policy

This aim of this policy is to set out some principles to clarify the expectations on all parties to support fair access procedures to operate effectively and to ensure fair access in practice to the End-point Assessment (EPA) for apprentices who are registered for BPN EPA. All apprentices and potential apprentices should be able to enter and successfully participate in an apprenticeship programme and end-point assessment in pursuit of their learning objectives. BPN is committed to ensuring that we and our approved end-point assessment venues provide apprentices with all relevant information about the end-point assessment.

It sets out our intention to deliver an EPA service that is fair, accessible and does not include any unnecessary barriers to entry.

Also refer to the **BPN Equality and Diversity Policy**.

2. Provider and host venue responsibility

It is important that staff involved in the delivery of apprenticeship qualifications and on-programme assessment are fully aware of the contents of the policy. Providers and host venues responsible for facilitating end-point assessment venues must ensure that they adhere to the requirements of this policy.

3. Policy statement

BPN is committed to the development and support of apprentices including information provision and entry and access arrangements, irrespective of any protected characteristic they may have.

BPN is committed to:

- Ensuring that every BPN approved end-point assessment location has and implements a fair access policy for the delivery and facilitation of end-point assessments.
- Ensuring that all end-point assessments are developed to be representative of the apprentices registered with BPN, including ensuring that there are no features of end-point assessments that could disadvantage any apprentices that have a particular protected characteristic or barriers to entry other than those directly related to the purpose of the end-point assessment or apprenticeship qualification. The nature of any such features or barriers will be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified in terms why they are required for the particular end-point assessment.
- Ensuring fairness in our application of all access arrangements for end-point assessments.
- Ensuring that apprentices with a protected characteristic are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in end-point assessments in comparison to apprentices who do not share that characteristic, ensuring that all achievement in end-point assessments is comparable.
- Ensuring that adequate monitoring and review of equality and diversity throughout the process of developing and delivering end-point assessment products and services.
- Ensuring that BPN considers all access requests relating to end-point assessments that are received, except where acceptance of the request is not logistically possible or where acceptance would undermine the reliability or integrity of the assessment.

- Monitoring data related to apprentice achievement in order to detect and mitigate against any accidental bias.
- Ensuring that all BPN approved end-point assessment venues are fulfilling their fair access responsibilities by adhering to equality legislation and operating a fair access procedure.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the fair access policy into the work objectives of all staff involved in the delivery of end-point assessments.
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate to our staff including as part of induction training as well as further on-going training.

Where complaints relating to issues of fair access cannot be satisfactorily resolved by a provider, apprentices must be made aware of their right to appeal to BPN via the arrangements outlined in our BPN Complaints and Appeals Policy

4. Management process

- EPA administrators will monitor and maintain records of completion and update of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for all EPA contributors.
- Apprentices, or Training Providers/ Employers on behalf of apprentices, will be encouraged, on application to register for the EPA, to request any required access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, providing evidence as appropriate. (Please also see our Reasonable Adjustments policy)
- Apprentices, or Training Providers/ Employers on behalf of apprentices, will be encouraged to request access adjustments if they become apparent post-application to the EPA. All reasonable adjustment requests must be made no less than 1 month before EPA take place
- Apprentices will also be able to apply for mitigating circumstances to be considered after the EPA event if a temporary injury, illness or other affected their performance on the day of the EPA.
- Where it is not reasonably possible to apply the requested access arrangements or if the requested access arrangements compromise the purpose of the EPA, BPN will communicate this to the apprentice and their employer clearly stating the reasons.
- EPA administrators and assessors will ensure that the approved adjustments are applied during the assessment events

5. Special Considerations

This policy is applied if there is a reason an apprentice may have been disadvantaged during their assessment for reasons beyond their control.

Every request for special consideration will be unique to the apprentice or assessment and will depend on the circumstances at the time of the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the apprentice. For example, special considerations may be considered if:

- performance in an assessment is affected, or part of an assessment is missed, due to circumstances beyond the control of the apprentice. For example:
 - personal illness, accident, bereavement
 - serious disturbance during the assessment

- public transport failure meaning that the apprentice is late or unable to attend
- alternative assessment arrangements (reasonable adjustments) which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate

If the circumstances beyond the apprentice's control are the result of the staffing or equipment associated with the end-point assessment organisation, such as equipment failure on the day of, or during, an observation, or assessor's illness preventing attendance, a request for special consideration is not required, and the assessment will be re-arranged. In such circumstances the apprentice has the right to complain under BPN EPA Complaints and Appeals policy.

Requests for special consideration will not be permissible under the following circumstances:

- if the request is solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. In these circumstances, the request must have been made and agreed in advance of the assessment through the BPN and Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- if the assessment is missed due to pre-planned arrangements such as holiday, and hospital appointments
- if the apprentice does not provide supporting evidence, such as a medical certificate, where consideration is requested for a medical condition.

Applying for special consideration

Apprentices must apply to BPN for special consideration **within seven days** of the assessment. This request must be supported by their employer, and contain the relevant evidence relating to their application.

The application will be considered by BPN EPA manager, with a decision about whether to accept or reject the application within 7 days.

If an application is rejected, the apprentice has the right to appeal through the BPN Appeals Policy.

If the application is accepted, a range of options may be available, which will depend on the circumstances, for example:

- re-scheduling of the assessment or part of the assessment. The rescheduling of the assessment in such circumstances is not considered a re-sit or re-take. Re-assessment will be carried out no later than 4 weeks after the application for special consideration, depending on the apprentice's circumstances.
- re-marking of the assessment to take account of the reduced time an apprentice had to complete the assessment

6. Accountability and Review

The Fair Access and Special Considerations Policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis and each time a new apprenticeship standard is offered. The BPN governing body, through the Internal Quality Assurance Lead, is responsible and accountable for compliance with the policy and regulatory bodies.

Appendix A: Application and Approval of Special Consideration

BPN is committed to ensuring that all assessments are a fair test of an individual's knowledge, skills and behaviours, and what they are able to do. It also recognises that in certain instances unforeseen or unplanned for events might occur that impact on the opportunity that the apprentice has for a fair and equitable assessment. In such circumstances after the assessment, the apprentice may apply for special consideration.

Once an apprentice/ training provider has decided that an application for special circumstances is necessary, they must apply to BPN **within seven working days of the assessment** using this form to detail the special circumstance that occurred.

The Assessment Manager will review all requests for special considerations in line with the policy and agree with the employer and training provider what further action will be allowed.

Application

Name of the Employer:	
Name of the Training Provider:	
Name of the Apprentice	
Title and Level of the Apprenticeship:	
Date of end-point assessment:	

End-point Assessment Component Affected (e.g., interview, simulated task)	Special Circumstance (please explain)	Supporting Evidence Provided (if applicable)

Declaration (at least two signatures required)	
<i>I confirm that in my view, the above apprentice has reasonable grounds to apply for special considerations</i>	
Role and Signature of employer representative	
Signature of training provider representative	
Signature of apprentice	
Date	