



Policy
Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
Version: 1

Summary:	This policy document sets out how the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) will ensure reasonable adjustments and special considerations can be accessed and applied.	
Target Audience:	Staff, Council, Members, Non-Members, Candidates & Participants	
Next Review Date:	November 2027	
Approved by:	Management Team	23/09/24
Ratified by:	Council	14/11/24
Date issued:	November 2024	

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Scope	3
3. Definitions.....	3
4. Reasonable Adjustments	4
5. Special Consideration	6
6. Assessing and Implementing Adjustments/ Special Considerations.....	8
7. Confidentiality and Data Protection.....	8
8. Complaints and Appeals	8
Version Control	9

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all individuals associated with the Institute, including employees, members, Council, volunteers, and candidates, have equal access to opportunities and are treated fairly. This policy outlines our commitment to making reasonable adjustments and providing special considerations to accommodate individuals with disabilities, special needs, or other relevant circumstances.

The Institute prides itself on providing a high-quality service and takes great care to ensure that all policies and processes are followed. This policy ensures that applications for reasonable adjustments and/or special consideration are handled consistently, transparently and impartially and is enacted under the Institute's By-Laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all activities and services provided by the Institute, including but not limited to training, professional development and educational opportunities. It is applicable to all staff, participants and candidates/ entrants.

The policy should be read alongside the following institute policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Ethics Policy
- Appeals Policy

3. Definitions

3.1. Reasonable Adjustments: Changes or modifications made to the practices, policies, or procedures to accommodate an individual's needs due to disability or other protected characteristics, without causing undue hardship to the organisation.

3.2. Special Considerations: Adjustments or allowances made in response to an individual's specific circumstances that may impact their ability to participate fully, such as medical conditions, temporary impairments, or personal crises.

3.3. Disability: As defined under the Equality Act 2010, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3.4.Principles

- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** The Institute is committed to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals have equal access to opportunities and resources.
- **Equality of Opportunity:** It aims to ensure that no individual is disadvantaged or discriminated against due to disability or special circumstances.
- **Respect and Dignity:** All individuals will be treated with respect and dignity, and their privacy will be protected when discussing and implementing adjustments or considerations.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

4.1. Making Reasonable Adjustments

A reasonable adjustment aims to remove situations or circumstances that could prove to cause a disadvantage to a candidate/ registrant in their undertaking and achievement of an assessment and therefore their qualification.

It does not, however, in its implementation look to cause, whether by intent or not, an advantage for those candidates/ registrants who successfully apply for and have a reasonable adjustment granted to them.

Reasonable adjustments are individual in nature as they are specific to the candidate/ registrant and their situation and circumstance and so should be applied for on an individual basis.

On application of reasonable adjustments, the Institute will ensure that:

- The safety and integrity of the qualification is maintained.
- Candidates/ registrants are recognised and certificated for their actual knowledge and skills levels and not a perceived level of knowledge and skills that has been introduced due to the application of a reasonable adjustment.
- It does not introduce an unfair advantage for a candidate/ registrant that impacts on the validity of a qualification and its awarding
- The proposed adjustment is individual to the candidate/ registrant and not applied on a wider basis to other candidates/ registrants where it is either not required or appropriate by intent or by unintended consequence.

- Does not put other candidates/ registrants at a disadvantage during an assessment

The Institute and awarding bodies will consider and implement reasonable adjustments to accommodate participants with disabilities or special needs. Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- A change in the assessment method used, e.g. the use of spoken assessment rather than written or typed e-assessment.
- The allocation of additional time where an assessment is timebound.
- The use of a different assessment location where the surroundings could cause challenges to a candidate.
- The use of scribes or readers or adaptation of assessment materials using coloured overlays, low vision aids, large format or braille.
- Provision of assessment materials on coloured paper or in audio.

The use of reasonable adjustments will not be taken into consideration when assessing or grading assessments.

4.2. Requesting Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments must be applied for no later than five working days prior to the assessment taking place. Applications later than this may not be processed in time for the assessment and so an adjustment may not be possible. Requests must be made by the candidate to the Institute who will process the application and will pass it on to the awarding organisation for review.

To request a reasonable adjustment, candidates/ registrants should contact the Institute and fill out the 'Reasonable adjustment candidate application' form. If it is concerning a qualification through an awarding body, then the Institute will use the information provided to submit an application on the candidates behalf to the awarding body. This must be completed two working days prior to the assessment taking place in order for the awarding body to be able to process the application.

Sufficient evidence must be submitted with the request to ensure it can be considered fully and so as not to cause undue delay to the assessment.

5. Special Consideration

5.1. Making Special Considerations

A special consideration is applied once an assessment has taken place and is used where a candidate has experienced an unplanned, unforeseen, and exceptional event or circumstance that has caused a disadvantage to them whilst undertaking their assessment. The event or circumstance should have been major in its impact and should not be a minor illness or disturbance.

Although an event may be seen as to have been difficult or distressing for the candidate, this in itself will not provide grounds to apply for a special consideration. There must be evidence that the event has had a demonstrable impact on the ability of the candidate/ registrant to perform, for example:

- Causing the candidate/ registrant to be unable to submit required assessments by a given deadline or attend an assessment
- Causing the candidate/ registrant to underperform in their assessment task in a demonstrable way that can be proven when compared to their performance in other similar assessments

Independent evidence would normally be required as part of the submission in circumstances where the unforeseen event involves a third party, e.g. police officer, solicitor, GP, counsellor, etc. This would normally be on headed paper and signed by the third party.

If it is concerning a qualification from an awarding body, the Institute would forward the information received to the awarding body, the awarding body reserves the right to contact the third party to verify the validity of evidence submitted.

As part of the submission, evidence should also be presented to demonstrate the impact the event has had on the candidate/ registrant, e.g. how has it affected their ability to submit evidence by the given deadline or attend an assessment or how has it caused them to underperform when compared to other assessments.

Without sufficient verifiable evidence it will not be possible to consider a submission for a special consideration.

Examples of events or circumstances that would **not** normally be considered for a special consideration to be granted are:

- Where the circumstances that gave rise to the need for a special consideration were foreseeable and preventable.

- Pressures of paid work on the candidate/ registrant.
- Annual leave/holidays.
- Poor practice, e.g. no back-up of electronic documents.
- Error due to a candidate/ registrant not being aware of the dates or times of an assessment or a submission deadline.
- Poor time management by the centre and/or candidate/ registrant.

As with a reasonable adjustment, a special consideration does not, in its implementation, look to cause, whether by intent or not, an advantage for those candidates/ registrants who successfully apply for and have a special consideration granted to them. They will be minor in their application so that any adverse impacts are kept to a minimum.

Special considerations are individual in nature as they are specific to the candidate/ registrant and their situation, circumstance, and the potential impact it could have had and so should be applied for on an individual basis.

There will be occasions that, due to a legal or regulatory duty such as a licence to practice qualification requiring a certain form of assessment, that special considerations cannot be made. In these instances, candidates/ registrants may be offered an opportunity to retake their assessment rather than to apply a different form of special consideration.

The Institute will work with candidates / registrants to meet specific needs where possible to ensure equality of access.

5.2. Requesting Special Consideration

Special consideration should be applied for on completion of the assessment. This should be done no later than two working days after the assessment.

It is not possible to apply special consideration prior to assessment taking place. The Institute will endeavour to minimise the impact of events so that the need for special consideration is exceptional rather than the norm.

To request special consideration, candidates/ registrants should contact the Institute. On receipt of the request the Institute will complete the 'Candidate special Consideration' form. The Institute will use the information provided to submit an application on the candidate's behalf to the awarding body.

Sufficient evidence must be submitted with the request to ensure it can be considered fully and so as not to cause undue delay to the issuing of results or disadvantage to the candidate/ registrant.

6. Assessing and Implementing Adjustments/ Special Considerations

Upon receiving a request for reasonable adjustments, the following process will be followed:

- a. **Acknowledge Receipt:** Confirm receipt of the request and discuss the individual needs.
- b. **Assess Feasibility:** Assess the feasibility of the requested adjustments, considering the specific needs of the individual and the impact on the organisation.
- c. **Submit Application for Review:** Submit the application to the awarding body.
- d. **Issue Notification of Review Outcome:** The submitting individual will be notified of the outcome of the review

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information related to requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and in accordance with data protection laws. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to implement the adjustments.

8. Complaints and Appeals

If an individual is dissatisfied with the handling of their request for reasonable adjustments or special considerations, where applicable they have the right to follow the complaints and / or appeals process. The Appeals Policy and Complaints Policy are available on the Institute's website.

Any decisions on appeals are final. No further internal appeals will be accepted. Candidates who believe the awarding body acted in a way that is contrary to regulatory duties, or did not give due regard to evidence or information should access the appropriate awarding bodies appeals procedures and policy.

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date