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Reasonable Adjustments Policy for PeopleCert Exams

August 2023

Version 4.0

Public

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2	THIS POLICY OUTLINES	5
3	PARTNER’S RESPONSIBILITY.....	5
4	REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS	5
5	ARRANGEMENTS NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY.....	5
6	APPEALS.....	5
7	POLICY OVERVIEW	6
8	PROCESS FOR REQUESTING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	6
9	HOW PEOPLECERT WILL RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT FOR AN EXAMINATION.....	7
10	DEFINITION OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS.....	8
11	CONTACT US.....	8
12	SECTION 1 MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT DECISIONS	9
	12.1 PRINCIPLES OF MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	9
	12.2 THE PROCESS FOR MAKING THE ADJUSTMENT	10
13	QUALIFICATION SPECIFIC INFORMATION.....	10
	13.1 IDENTIFYING CANDIDATES WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	10
	13.2 COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION NEEDS.....	10
	13.3 COGNITION AND LEARNING NEEDS	10
	13.4 SENSORY AND PHYSICAL NEEDS.....	10
	13.5 BEHAVIOURAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS.....	10
	13.6 IDENTIFYING CANDIDATES’ NEEDS.....	10
	13.7 IDENTIFY WHETHER REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS MAY BE NEEDED	11
	13.8 IDENTIFY THE APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENT.....	11
	13.9 ENSURE THAT THE ADJUSTMENT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES IN THIS POLICY	11
	13.10 IDENTIFYING AND OBTAINING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.....	11
	13.11 WRITTEN EVIDENCE PRODUCED BY INDEPENDENT, AUTHORITATIVE SPECIALISTS.....	11
	13.12 RANGE OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	12
14	CHANGES TO ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS.....	12
	14.1 EXTRA TIME.....	12

14.2 SUPERVISED REST BREAKS	12
14.3 CHANGE IN THE ORGANISATION OF THE ASSESSMENT ROOM	12
14.4 SEPARATE ACCOMMODATION FOR PAPER-BASED EXAMS.....	12
15 USE OF MECHANICAL, ELECTRONIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL AIDS SUCH AS COLOURED OVERLAYS, LOW VISION AIDS, TINTED SPECTACLES AND OCR SCANNERS	13
16 MODIFICATIONS TO THE PRESENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT MATERIAL	13
16.1 ASSESSMENT MATERIAL IN ENLARGED FORMAT	13
16.2 ON-SCREEN ASSESSMENTS	13
16.3 ASSESSMENT MATERIAL IN BRAILLE.....	13
16.4 LANGUAGE MODIFIED ASSESSMENT MATERIAL.....	13
16.5 ASSESSMENT MATERIAL ON COLOURED PAPER.....	13
17 USE OF ACCESS FACILITATORS	14
17.1 READER	14
17.2 SCRIBE OR AMANUENSIS.....	15
18 APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY	16

Document Revision History		
Version	Date	Description of Change
4.0	02/08/2023	Update in Section 8. Process for requesting reasonable adjustments
3.0	16/12/2022	Update in Section 8. Process for requesting reasonable adjustments
2.0	11/10/2022	Minor technical updates
1.0	04/10/2022	Initial version

1 Introduction

This policy is for our:

- candidates who have registered for a PeopleCert business and IT qualification and who will take an online examination with us;
- staff who respond to all requests for reasonable adjustments for our business and IT examinations;
- partners who are supporting candidates with their reasonable adjustment application;
- Accredited Training Organisations (partners) who are delivering paper-based PeopleCert business and IT examinations as a formally agreed exception.

2 This policy outlines

- How candidates qualify and can apply for reasonable adjustments for PeopleCert business and IT examinations;
- Our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments to our business and IT examinations.

3 Partner's responsibility

It is important that all people involved in the delivery of our qualifications and our candidates are fully aware of the contents of this policy and raise requests for reasonable adjustments in PeopleCert examinations as soon as possible.

For all PeopleCert qualifications, partners must have their own reasonable adjustments policy in place to support candidates during their learning.

As part of our audit and quality assurance activities, our Quality Auditors may check that your relevant staff and candidates are aware of the contents of this policy and its purpose.

4 Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually and revise it when necessary in response to customer and candidate feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

If you would like to provide feedback, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

5 Arrangements not covered by this policy

Partners delivering and candidates taking our languages qualifications should refer to the LanguageCert reasonable adjustments and special consideration policies.

This policy does not outline the requirements on partners to provide reasonable adjustments to support candidates' learning. This policy may, however, be used to inform partners' policies so that provision for candidates' learning and examinations are consistent where possible and based on the candidates' needs.

6 Appeals

If you wish to appeal against our decision to decline a request for reasonable adjustments in one of our examinations, you have the right to appeal. Please refer to PeopleCert's Appeals Policy for further information.

7 Policy overview

PeopleCert is committed to complying with all relevant legislation in the development and delivery of our qualifications, and which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to, the Equality Act 2010.

PeopleCert, and its partners, must ensure that all candidates are treated equally, and that no PeopleCert learner or examination candidate is discriminated against in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Assessment should be a fair test of candidates' knowledge and what they are able to do; however, for some candidates, the usual learning approach or format of an examination may not be suitable. We ensure that our qualifications and examinations do not bar candidates from taking them. Our partners consider reasonable adjustment requests from learners. PeopleCert considers reasonable adjustment requests from candidates registered for a PeopleCert examination where a reasonable adjustment may be required.

Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that candidates receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make learning or assessment easier for candidates, nor advantages to give candidates a head-start.

8 Process for requesting reasonable adjustments

Candidates should be fully involved in any decisions about reasonable adjustments and any adaptations they may need for their learning and for their examination(s). This will ensure that individual needs can be met, while still bearing in mind the specified learning goals and assessment criteria for a particular qualification.

As the needs and circumstances of each candidate are different, partners must, and PeopleCert will, consider any request for a reasonable adjustment on a case-by-case basis.

For a PeopleCert business and IT examination, our candidates may apply directly to us. Our partner may choose to assist them.

In either case, the candidate, or the partner with the candidate, should send a reasonable adjustment request to customerservice@peoplecert.org, supplying all relevant supporting information, including:

- Candidate's name, the ATO name, and registration number.
- Nature of, and rationale for, the request.
- Supporting evidence needs to be uploaded on the candidate's profile, under "My Files/Library" (e.g., a medical certificate, an educational psychologist assessment, and any other appropriate supporting information such as previously approved arrangements with another examinations provider).

Requests for additional time up to 25% of total examination time, a reader or a scribe should be submitted **no later than 5 business days** before any PeopleCert examination. For these requests, completion of the form is not required.

Requests for all other reasonable adjustments should be submitted **no later than 10 business days** before any PeopleCert examination. For these requests, we ask that the Reasonable Adjustments Request Form is submitted to ensure we have the additional information required to process the request as swiftly as possible.

We will review requests after the required submission date exceptionally.

Where more time is required to agree a reasonable adjustment with a candidate, we will work with the candidate, and the partner where appropriate, to put an arrangement in place. If this requires an exam to be rescheduled to allow the best arrangement to be put in place, we will provide this for the candidate at no charge.

9 How PeopleCert will respond to requests for reasonable adjustment for an examination

We aim to respond to all requests within **48 hours of receipt**. If we are unable to respond within this timeframe for a legitimate reason, we will provide you with an estimated response date.

In considering an application, we will:

- Review the evidence and rationale submitted by the partner/candidate to assess the merits of the claim and whether the request is valid and a reasonable adjustment should apply.
- Review the examination specifications to determine whether such an adjustment can be reasonably applied and to confirm that it will not provide an unfair advantage to the candidate(s).

In all cases, we will communicate our decision to the applicant party and in doing so outline the extent to which a reasonable adjustment will be applied. If an application is rejected, we will provide a clear rationale as to why and in doing so inform the applicant party that the candidate or partner has the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the arrangements outlined in our Appeals policy.

Some requested adjustments may be considered unreasonable if they:

- Do not meet the published criteria.
- Involve unreasonable costs to PeopleCert (for example, Braille papers cannot be produced at short notice).
- Involve unreasonable timeframes.
- Affect the security and integrity of the qualification or the examination.

Adjustments must not put in jeopardy the health and well-being of the candidate or any other person.

10 Definition of reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to mitigate a situation that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in an examination. It is applied to an examination to enable the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements, for example, allowing a candidate extra time to complete the assessment activity.
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials on paper or in Braille.
- Providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader.
- Re-organising the assessment room for paper-based examinations, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic candidate.
- Changing the assessment method, for example, from a written assessment to a spoken assessment.
- Providing the mechanism to have different coloured paper for paper-based assessments.

Reasonable adjustments are approved before an examination takes place. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work.

PeopleCert and its partners are required by law to do only what is reasonable to grant access to learning and to a PeopleCert examination. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

11 Contact us

For any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact us by using one of our support channels found here <https://www.peoplecert.org/help-and-support>

12 Section 1 Making reasonable adjustment decisions

12.1 Principles of making reasonable adjustments

These principles will be followed by PeopleCert when making decisions about a candidate's need for adjustments to assessment.

Adjustments:

- Should not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification.
- Should not give the candidates an unfair advantage.
- Should reflect the candidate's normal way of working.
- Should be based on the individual need of the candidate.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the process of assessment is robust and fair and allows the candidate to show what they know and can do without compromising the assessment criteria.

When considering whether an adjustment to assessment is appropriate, PeopleCert will bear in mind the following (where appropriate for the related qualification):

- Adjustments to assessment should not compensate the candidate for lack of knowledge and skills. The candidate must be able to cope with the content of the assessment and be able to work at the level required for the assessment.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not invalidate the assessment requirements of the qualification or the requirements of the assessment strategy. Competence standards should not be altered. While we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a candidate is not placed at a substantial disadvantage accessing an assessment in comparison with others, there is no duty to make any adjustment to a provision, criterion or practice which is defined as a competence standard. All candidates' performance must be assessed against set standards. These standards cannot be altered, but it may be possible to change the delivery or process of assessment so that each candidate has an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must not give the candidate an unfair advantage or disadvantage over other candidates. The qualification of a candidate who had an adjustment to assessment must have the same credibility as that of any other candidate. As our business and IT qualifications may lead to employment, achievement of such qualifications must give a realistic indication to the potential employer of what the holder of the certificate can do.
- Any adjustment to assessment must be based on the individual need of the candidate. Decisions about adjustments to assessment should be taken after careful consideration of the assessment needs of each individual candidate, the assessment requirements of the qualification and the nature and extent of the support given as part of normal teaching practice. Different qualifications and different methods of assessments can make different demands on the candidate. The candidate should be consulted throughout the process.
- Any adjustment to assessment should reflect the candidate's normal way of working providing this does not affect what is being assessed in any way. The candidate should have experience of and practice in the use of the adjustment.

- Any adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is sufficient, valid and reliable.

All adjustments to assessment must be authorised by PeopleCert in advance.

12.2 The process for making the adjustment

Any request for a reasonable adjustment may be submitted by the candidate or by our partner on the candidate's behalf by completing the Reasonable Adjustment Request Form.

13 Qualification specific information

13.1 Identifying candidates who are eligible for reasonable adjustments

Candidates will be eligible for reasonable adjustments only if they are at a significant disadvantage in an examination.

Any adjustment to assessment agreed by PeopleCert will be based on what the candidate needs to access the assessment. Below are some examples of candidate needs that may be eligible for adjustments to assessments. This list is not exhaustive, and it should be noted that some candidate needs will fall within more than one of the categories set out below.

13.2 Communication and interaction needs

A candidate with communication and interaction difficulties may have problems with reading or writing, the effects of which could be reduced through the use of a reader, scribe, or British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter. They may also benefit from extra time during assessments that are time-constrained to allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

13.3 Cognition and learning needs

A candidate with learning difficulties and difficulties with comprehension may benefit from extra time in time-constrained examinations. They may also need assistance with reading and writing.

13.4 Sensory and physical needs

A candidate may need to have assessment material modified for hearing impairment and visual impairment. They may also need to use a BSL/English interpreter, practical assistant, reader and scribe. In addition, they may benefit from extra time to complete assessments.

13.5 Behavioural, Emotional and Social needs

The candidate may benefit from supervised rest breaks and special arrangements for their examination room.

13.6 Identifying candidates' needs

Any adjustment to assessment should be based on the individual candidate's needs to access the assessment.

Our partners have a general responsibility to ensure they have effective internal procedures for identifying candidates' needs and that these procedures comply with the requirements of disability and equal opportunity legislation.

A candidate should be encouraged to make any access-related assessment needs known to our partners at the earliest opportunity, preferably before they are registered or entered for a qualification and certainly before any examination. To assist with the early identification of candidates with access-related assessment needs, our partners should ensure that all staff who recruit, advise or guide potential candidates have had training to make them aware of access-related issues. Once the candidate's need has been identified, it should be documented for audit purposes.

13.7 Identify whether reasonable adjustments may be needed

The relevant people in our partner organisations should discuss with the candidate whether they will be able to meet the requirements of the assessment or whether adjustments will be required.

13.8 Identify the appropriate adjustment

When identifying which adjustments the candidate will need in a PeopleCert exam, we will take into account the candidate's normal way of working, history of provision during teaching and during previous assessments and the assessment requirements of the qualification. The same candidate may not require the same adjustment for all types of assessment. Different qualifications make different demands. For example, a dyslexic candidate may need extra time to complete a written exam but may not need extra time for a purely practical activity. Once a required adjustment has been identified by a partner, it should be documented for audit purposes.

13.9 Ensure that the adjustment is in accordance with the guidelines in this policy

We will ensure that any adjustment will not impair the ability to assess the candidate's performance, skill or knowledge fairly in each assessment.

13.10 Identifying and obtaining supporting evidence

Any application for an adjustment to assessment must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable.

In order to ensure that any adjustment to assessment will provide the candidate only with the necessary assistance without giving them an unfair advantage over others, PeopleCert will need to be clear about the extent to which the candidate is affected.

In all cases, the candidate must provide evidence of their need for a reasonable adjustment to PeopleCert.

13.11 Written evidence produced by independent, authoritative specialists

For a disability, this could take the form of medical, psychological or professional reports or assessments. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the assessments and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and extent to which the candidate is affected by the difficulty, including the effects of any medication that the candidate may be taking. In cases where changes might be expected in the way the candidate is affected by the difficulty, there will have to be recent and relevant evidence of assessments and consultations carried out by an independent expert.

A candidate with a Statement of Special Educational Need does not automatically qualify for reasonable adjustments. The demands of the qualification should be taken into account. The reasons for the statement may have only limited effect on achievement in the assessment.

All applications for reasonable adjustments need to be based on the individual need of the candidate and evidence in support of the application must be sufficient, reliable and valid.

13.12 Range of reasonable adjustments

Please note that:

- Not all the adjustments to assessments described below will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. If in doubt, the partner or the candidate can contact us for advice. In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate to select an alternative assessment task or assessment method for the candidate.
- The candidate may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all qualifications. Some candidates may need a single adjustment; others may require a combination of several adjustments.
- Adjustments to assessments will mostly be needed for assessments which are taken under constrained/examination conditions such as PeopleCert examinations

14 Changes to assessment conditions

14.1 Extra time

Where assessment activities are time-constrained, a candidate may be allowed extra time during an assessment if they have a condition which affects the speed of processing.

The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the candidate's difficulty. 'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. The extra time the candidate will need is approved by PeopleCert.

14.2 Supervised rest breaks

Where assessment activities are time-constrained, a candidate may, if there is demonstrated need, be allowed supervised rest breaks during an assessment.

Supervised rest breaks may be taken either in or outside the assessment room depending on the nature of any examination. The duration of the breaks must not be deducted from the assessment time. The examiner and any invigilation staff should be aware that, during the supervised rest breaks, the candidate is still under assessment conditions and that the usual regulations governing conduct of assessments will apply during this time.

14.3 Change in the organisation of the assessment room

Minor changes to the organisation of the assessment room may benefit some candidates with autistic spectrum disorder, with visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties.

- Visually impaired candidates may benefit from sitting near a window so that they have good lighting.
- Deaf candidates may benefit from sitting near the front of the room and in good light.
- Some candidates may benefit from using chairs with arm rests or adjustable heights.
- Autistic candidates may benefit from having visual/noise stimuli, such as a ticking clock removed from the room.

14.4 Separate accommodation for paper-based exams

Where a paper-based exception is provided for a candidate or a number of candidates, it may be necessary to accommodate a candidate separately if they are using readers, scribes, BSL/English interpreters, which may disturb other candidates.

15 Use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids such as coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and OCR scanners

A candidate requiring such aids must have had sufficient practice in the use of these aids and must ensure that any electronic aids are in good working order.

PeopleCert will review whether any technology will unfairly advantage/disadvantage the candidate or invalidate the assessment requirements. PeopleCert will also discuss with the candidate if a paper-based exam exception might be better with mechanical, electronic and technological aids that a candidate needs.

16 Modifications to the presentation of the assessment material

16.1 Assessment material in enlarged format

Some candidates may need enlarged paper-based assessments to access their examination. Examples of these include:

- Unmodified enlarged papers where the exam questions are presented on paper in A3, retaining the original layout and visual presentation of the questions on screen.
- Modified enlarged paper where the question layout is simplified and where necessary some content is reduced while still meeting the same objectives as those tested in the original exam questions.

16.2 On-screen assessments

It is possible to zoom a PeopleCert exam to a certain point. Proctors also have the opportunity to zoom further where the candidate needs this. If the font and text size used for an on-screen assessment is still not suitable for the candidate, a paper-based exception may be agreed.

16.3 Assessment material in Braille

Assessment material may be provided in Braille for a blind or visually impaired candidate. The material will be modified to remove any visual content prior to Brailleing.

Diagrams in the assessment material can be produced as tactile diagrams.

When PeopleCert must provide examination material in Braille, we must receive the application **no later than 8 weeks** before the date of the examination. If Braille examination material has been ordered, but is no longer required, the candidate or partner must inform us immediately as any costs incurred may need to be passed back to the partner.

Braille is not always an appropriate adjustment for the candidate, as not all blind people are fluent in Braille.

16.4 Language modified assessment material

A transcript of the test may be provided, which can be read to the candidate by a live speaker. This will enable the candidate to lip-read the text.

16.5 Assessment material on coloured paper

In some instances, we may be able to provide examination material on coloured paper. The candidate must apply in sufficient time for us to organise this.

17 Use of access facilitators

17.1 Reader

A reader is a person who, when requested, will read to the candidate all or part of the assessment material and the candidate's written responses.

Some candidates may be more comfortable with accessing the examination in Braille or through sign language.

Any reader should not normally be the candidate's own tutor or assessor, except in circumstances where it might be necessary. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used as a reader.

The reader should be selected on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the candidate. The reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate and should have sufficient knowledge of the subject to read technical terms accurately.

A candidate should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the reader and should have used this arrangement during any training programme leading up to the assessment.

Where a candidate is not eligible for the use of a reader, it may be helpful for the candidate to read the questions aloud.

The reader:

- Should read only as requested by the candidate. The candidate may choose to read some parts of the assessment themselves.
- Should read accurately. If the reader is working with a deaf or hearing impaired candidate, the reader should articulate clearly.
- Should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything.
- Should repeat instructions and questions on the paper only when specifically requested to do so by the candidate.
- May consult a dictionary, (only where this is allowed), at the candidate's request and read out entries.
- Should read, as often as requested, the answers already recorded, but may not act as proofreader.
- Should not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- May enable a visually impaired candidate to identify which piece of visual material relates to which question but should neither give factual help to the candidate nor offer any suggestion.
- Is permitted to help a visually impaired candidate using diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information that the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted candidate.
- Should, if requested, give a visually impaired candidate the spelling of a word which appears on the paper, but otherwise spellings must not be given.
- Should refer any problems during the assessment to the invigilator.

17.2 Scribe or amanuensis

A scribe is a person who, in an assessment, writes down or word processes a candidate's dictated responses. Where there is evidence of need, a scribe may be allowed in all assessments where writing or keyboarding is not the competence being assessed. The most common need for a scribe is where a candidate has injured their arm and is unable to write.

The effective use of a scribe requires high level communication skills from the candidate, and some candidates would be more comfortable with the use of a computer and some additional time.

For a candidate requiring a scribe and a reader, the same person may act as both, provided permission has been given for both.

The use of a scribe should not affect the assessment requirements for the qualification being assessed. In some cases, the writing of answers by the candidate may be the skill being assessed.

A scribe should be selected on the basis of their ability to work effectively with the candidate. A scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the candidate's responses, write legibly and/or type for the candidate at a reasonable speed, and have sufficient knowledge of the subject to be able to record technical terms correctly.

A scribe should not normally be the candidate's own tutor or assessor, except when necessary. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used as a scribe.

A candidate should, wherever possible, have had previous practice in working with the scribe and used this arrangement during their learning programme.

During the assessment, a scribe:

- Should check with the candidate for which parts of the assessment they wish to have their responses scribed. The candidate may choose to write some responses him/herself.
- Should neither give factual help to the candidate nor offer any suggestions.
- Should not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question or the order in which the questions should be answered.
- Should write down answers exactly as they are dictated. Where spelling accuracy and punctuation is being tested, the scribe must follow explicit instructions from the candidate. The scribe may not take responsibility for spelling technical words.
- Should write a correction on a typescript or Braille sheet if requested to do so by the candidate.
- May, at the candidate's request, read back what has been written but no comment must be made about any part of the candidate's response.
- Should immediately refer any problems in communication during the examination to the invigilator.

18 Appendix 1 – Glossary

Term	Definition
Access to assessment	The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.
Appeal	A process through which an awarding organisation (PeopleCert) or a partner (ATO) may be challenged on the outcome of a decision.
Assessment	The process of making judgments about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment criteria	The requirements that a candidate needs to meet in order to achieve success (or a given grade) in a qualification, unit, or part of a unit.
Assessment method	The means by which an individual's competence is judged.
Assessment needs	The adjustments that some individuals require to the assessment strategy and/or assessment task in order to demonstrate that they can meet the required standard.
Assessment task	An activity undertaken by an individual candidate to show that they can meet the required standard.
Assessor	The person who assesses a candidate's work.
ATO (Approved Training Organisation)	An organisation accountable to an Awarding Organisation for the delivery of training to the standards required for the qualification and the examination.
BSL/English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and from British Sign Language.
Competence	The ability to perform to the required standard.
Externally set	Examinations or assessment tasks or assignments which are determined by the Awarding Organisation.
Invigilator	A person who supervises individuals taking an examination or assessment.
Learning programme	A course of study.
Malpractice	Actions and practices which threaten the integrity of public qualifications.
Moderation	The process of checking that assessment standards have been applied correctly and consistently between assessors and over time, and making adjustments to results - where required - to compensate for any differences in standard that are encountered.
Reasonable adjustment	Any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial

Term	Definition
	disadvantage in the assessment situation. Arrangements are approved in advance of an examination or assessment.
Risk assessment	An estimation of the likelihood of something unfortunate happening as a result of a course of action.
Scribe	Person who writes down or word processes a candidate's dictated responses.
Qualification specification	A detailed statement or document which sets out the aims, purpose, content, structure, and assessment arrangements for a qualification.
Standards	The combination of knowledge, understanding and skills required to perform a job or task to the level of competence required in the workplace.



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