

## Education

# Current student - Exams and assessments

## Further Education



**RIGHT TO  
PARTICIPATE**

## Useful knowledge

In Further Education exams are usually set by external examination awarding bodies, for example AQA, Edexcel or City and Guilds. Awarding bodies are covered by the Equality Act and are therefore required to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their examination processes to make them accessible to disabled students.

Common examples include:

- Extra time or opportunities to take rest breaks
- Exam papers in your preferred format
- Assistive technology e.g. screen reading software
- Use of a separate room so that you're not disturbed by other candidates, and they are not disturbed by you
- Assistance from another person such as a prompter, scribe or reader

## Useful knowledge

- Effective communication
- Planning in advance

## Ways to assert your legal rights

- 1.** Ask for a confidential chat with the staff member responsible for disability. In schools this person is usually the SENCO. In Further Education they are usually called the learning support adviser. Tell them about any difficulties you're having with your exams and assessments and ask what support can be put in place. Don't wait until it becomes a big problem.
- 2.** Some arrangements can be made by education providers themselves. At other times the learning support adviser may have to apply to the awarding body for approval. The main thing to bear in mind is that the awarding body may have deadlines for processing requests for access arrangements.

3. If you feel you're not making progress through informal discussion, you should put your request in writing and include the following:

*Under the Equality Act 2010, exam awarding bodies have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. I would like to request all reasonable steps be taken to alleviate the substantial disadvantage I am facing in my exams/assessments/assignments.*

Describe what has happened and the impact on your ability to progress on the course. Give the facts of the case, being specific and clear. Make sure to describe any disadvantage you're experiencing. Suggest as many different options for reasonable adjustments as you can.

4. If you have a complaint about the exams you've already taken, you should first make an appeal through your school or college to the relevant examination awarding body. If this does not resolve the situation, you can make an appeal directly to the awarding body.

In certain circumstances, the content of an exam may be discriminatory. For example if it requires communication in a particular way e.g. multiple choice which disadvantaged a learner with Asperger's syndrome. This would probably need an investigation into whether this was a justifiable 'competence standard.'

## You can have confidence in the process because

Examination awarding bodies have been covered by the Disability Discrimination Act since 2001 and the Equality Act since 2010. The seven largest national awarding bodies are all members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which produces [guidance on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments](#).

## You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

Telephone • 0808 800 0082  
Text phone • 0808 800 0084  
Email • [through websites form](#)

Disability Rights UK [student helpline](#)

Telephone • 0330 995 0414  
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