

POLICY

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

All of the AIA's professional qualification modules are assessed in English by way of a written examination of three hours duration, with an additional fifteen minute reading period. No other forms of assessment are offered by AIA for its registered professional qualification modules.

The AIA's Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy applies to all AIA Qualifications and is designed to ensure that there are no barriers for students in accordance with UK Equalities Law and to provide students with all the information they may require in this respect.

1.0 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1.1 DEFINITION

The AIA understands reasonable adjustment to be the implementation of arrangements designed to lessen the negative effect that a disability or learning need is expected to have on a candidate's performance, without compromising the assessment process.

The AIA makes reasonable adjustments in circumstances where the standard test format is not appropriate for a candidate who is experiencing a temporary or permanent disability or who has a recognised learning need.

Reasonable adjustments must recognise the needs of the candidate and as far as possible facilitate their normal way of working. They must not provide any candidate with an unfair advantage.

If a reasonable adjustment is required it must be organised in advance of the exam date and operated for the duration of the exam. The provision of a reasonable adjustment is not taken into consideration during the marking of the assessment.

The AIA understands that barriers to learning are complex and unique to each individual and takes into account the following points when looking at how to remove or lower barriers for learning:

- **Access** relates to physical access as well as access to study each module of the AIA's professional qualification
- **Awareness** of the needs of disabled people and the barrier they may experience
- **Acceptance** that the AIA may need to do things differently to accommodate specific individuals
- **Appreciation** of the effects of hidden difficulties such as pain or emotional stress

2.0 NATURE OF CONDITION

2.1 CANDIDATES WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

If a candidate experiences specific learning difficulties the AIA will take reasonable practicable measures to alleviate the difficulties. For example in the case of dyslexia the AIA will provide a copy of the exam paper in a larger font on appropriately coloured paper. The AIA will also allow additional exam time of thirty minutes based on advice received from a qualified medical practitioner and with the approval of the Chief Examiner.

2.2 CANDIDATES WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS

If a candidate has a medical condition which is considered long-term and which could unexpectedly affect their performance on the day of the exam (e.g. epilepsy) the candidate must inform the AIA before the exam so that exam venue personnel can be notified accordingly.

In the event that a candidate experiences an epileptic fit during an exam, the Senior Invigilator is authorised to allow the candidate time to recover and then proceed with the exam subject to the candidate feeling able to proceed.

2.3 CANDIDATES WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The AIA will adapt the exam room for candidates who are wheelchair users by, for example, providing more space between desks or the use of larger desks.

2.4 CANDIDATES WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

The AIA can meet the needs of visually impaired candidates by issuing enlarged question papers and allowing additional exam time of thirty minutes. For candidates who have severe visual impairment a reader and writer can also be provided in addition to the extra time allocated.

2.5 CANDIDATES WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

AIA only offers written examinations, no oral assessments are included. At the commencement of the exam candidates have a set of instructions to read and in this instance candidates will be allocated fifteen minutes to read the instructions.

2.6 SUMMARY

Taking into account all of the above matters and the importance of ensuring that a reasonable adjustment is made, without compromising the assessment or providing an unfair advantage to the candidate, the AIA will be solely responsible for any decisions made in respect of reasonable adjustments for a candidate.

3.0 ADMINISTRATION

All reasonable adjustments should be requested by candidates at least twenty-one days prior to the exam date to allow the AIA to make the appropriate decision on ensuring the adjustments are in place at the time of the exam; however, there may be instances which occur at the time of the exam i.e. the condition stated in section 2.2 of this document, when the Senior Invigilator is authorised by the AIA to make a decision on whether to extend the candidate's time for completing the exam. In these cases the Senior Invigilator will be required to complete the Reasonable Adjustment form providing details of the event that occurred and the reason for the decision.

3.1 ELIGIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

All exam candidates are eligible to apply for reasonable adjustment. Information on eligibility and how to apply is available via the AIA website and the AIA application forms to:

- Students
- Study providers
- Exam venues and invigilators
- Exams department
- Examiners
- Chief Examiner

It is essential that the AIA is notified in good time if a reasonable adjustment is required although every effort will be made to accommodate late requests where possible. All requests for reasonable adjustments must be accompanied by appropriate medical evidence of the candidate's condition.

Candidates with special needs may request reasonable adjustment to be made to standard exam conditions or exam paper format providing the request is made on the correct form and submitted to the AIA at least twenty-one days before the beginning of the exam session.

The request should then be recorded by the Qualifications Manager and forwarded to the AIA Chief Examiner for review and approval as appropriate. The Chief Examiner should assess the proposal and consider whether or not the proposed adjustment will lessen the impact of the disability under time constrained exam conditions; the affect the proposed adjustment will have on other candidates ensuring that it will not compromise the integrity of the assessment.

If approved, the Qualifications Manager shall instruct the venue provider to arrange for the required reasonable adjustments to be put in place. It is the responsibility of the venue provider to implement the reasonable adjustment, notify the AIA of the arrangements when they are in place and provide an invigilator for the candidate concerned.

Except in exceptional circumstances reasonable adjustments cannot be made for candidates who fail to notify the AIA of their requirements or who notify less than three weeks prior to the exam date. Exceptionally, where a candidate attends the exam and requests a reasonable adjustment to be made, which due to a sudden need occurring, has not previously been requested, the Senior

Invigilator should contact the Qualifications Manager for instruction. In all cases AIA will do its utmost to accommodate the needs of the candidate.

3.2 IMPLEMENTATION

Candidates who require reasonable adjustments on a long term basis should complete one application in respect of the exams, which is reviewed annually.

Candidates should be asked to contact the Qualifications Manager as instructed on the back of the exam entry form. The Qualifications Manager should then issue a form to the candidate to complete and return. (Appendix 1 Student with Special Needs Form)

The form requires the candidate to tick a box identifying their condition and to submit this to the Qualifications Manager along with written confirmation of their condition and needs provided by a qualified medical practitioner. To maximise confidentiality correspondence in this regard shall be between the Qualifications Manager and the candidate only. The Qualifications Manager should then enter a classification on the candidate's record that allows other members of the Secretariat to identify that the candidate has special needs, but prohibits general access to any further details recorded in the candidate's file.

On receipt of the completed form and medical note the Qualifications Manager should contact the relevant exam venue provider by email to request the provision of the appropriate facilities. It is essential that the provision of reasonable adjustment does not compromise other candidates' ability to undertake the exam or in any way create an unfair advantage over other candidates. (Appendix 2 Venue Provider Instructions)

The venue provider shall be asked to confirm the facilities that are available at the venue and their availability for the exam session in question. The Qualifications Manager should then relay this information to the candidate who should confirm whether or not they will attend to take the exam.

3.3 POST EXAM PERIOD

After the exam, the Qualifications Manager should contact both the candidate and the venue provider to ascertain if the provision of the reasonable adjustment was satisfactory. Feedback should be recorded on the candidate's record to be accessed only by the Qualifications Manager.

3.4 APPEALS

If a candidate considers that the reasonable adjustments put in place failed to adequately meet their needs and as a result their exam performance was adversely affected, they are eligible to make an appeal in this respect. Details of how to make an appeal are available on the AIA website (alternatively candidates may email the details of their appeal to exams@aiaworldwide.com)

In such instances the AIA shall request a report from the venue provider and from the invigilator as well as supporting medical evidence confirming the reasonable adjustments in place were insufficient or inadequate and that the adverse circumstances cited were beyond the candidate's control.

3.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Reasonable Adjustment policy should be reviewed annually by AIA secretariat in conjunction with the AIA's Equal Opportunities Policy. The Compliance Executive should evaluate the effectiveness of the policy on an ongoing basis by monitoring reasonable adjustment applications and assessing the effectiveness of reasonable adjustment provisions using candidate and exam venue feedback provided by the Qualifications Manager as part of the annual monitoring process.

A summary of this evaluation should be presented by the Compliance Executive in the quarterly compliance report submitted to the Qualifications Committee. If necessary, adjustments to the reasonable adjustment procedure will be actioned in line with any subsequent recommendations made using the established reporting route documented in the compliance procedures.

4.0 SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Special consideration should be given to candidates who, after the exam, are reported to have been disadvantaged in some way during the exam itself due to previously unforeseen circumstances such as sudden onset of illness or accident. It is not given to candidates who have failed to report a learning need or disability prior to the exam.

The focal point of any special consideration afforded to the candidate must be their performance in the exam itself and not their potential ability. Most usually special consideration is expressed in terms of an offer to re sit the exam at a later date.

Candidates may apply for special consideration if they consider that their exam performance has been adversely affected by events beyond their control that occurring during the exam.

The AIA offers special consideration as a result of the following occurrences:

- Illness during an exam which affects the candidate's performance
- An untoward incident which occurs during an exam which may affect a candidate's performance, for example an interruption such as a fire alarm or the need to evacuate the building

The AIA does not offer special consideration where:

- The candidate has requested to leave the exam room for an unauthorised period of time
- The candidate has left the exam before the end of the exam period unless due to illness or an untoward incident

The AIA will not grant access to the exam to candidates arriving late, thirty minutes after the commencement of the exam.

4.1 ADMINISTRATION OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

4.1.1 Eligibility and Evidence

All exam venue providers should receive instructions (Appendix 2 Venue Provider Instructions) and forms to complete and return to the AIA should a candidate be unable to complete an exam or if an untoward incident occurs during an exam (Appendix 3) Incident of Student/Candidate Malpractice and (Appendix 4) Special Consideration form. Although the AIA supplies the venue provider with guidelines for dealing with instances such as special consideration, misconduct and disturbances, the Senior Invigilator is authorised to use their own discretion on the best way to deal with the situation to ensure minimum disruption to other candidates.

Requests for special consideration must be submitted to the AIA within seven days of the exam taking place. Such requests will be considered alongside the contents of the invigilator's report.

The only exception to the above is where a candidate claims they were suffering from a condition at the time of the exam which could have adversely affected their performance during the exam but which was not diagnosed until after the exam. Such claims must be supported by detailed medical evidence provided by a qualified medical practitioner.

All medical evidence submitted to the AIA should be saved to the candidate's file and protected with the same classification as that of candidates requesting reasonable adjustment. Only the Qualifications Manager should have access to these details.

4.1.2 Outcomes

The AIA should fully investigate all requests for special consideration and therefore candidates should not expect to be notified of any outcome until 28 days after submitting their request.

If the investigation finds in favour of a candidate they should be given the opportunity to re-sit the exam free of charge at the next scheduled exam session. If the investigation finds that a candidate has no basis for special consideration, the candidate shall be notified in writing of the outcome and no further action should be taken.

APPENDICES

| Appendix | Title | Code | Location |
|-----------------|---|-------------|-----------------|
| A1 | Student with Special Needs | EXM | Appendix |
| A2 | Instructions to Exam Venue Provider | EXM | Appendix |
| A3 | Incidents of Student/Candidate Malpractice or Maladministration | EXM | Appendix |
| A4 | Special Consideration Form | EXM | Appendix |