

Reasonable Accommodation: Information for learners.

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB): Further Education and Training Services

What does Reasonable Accommodation mean?

Reasonable Accommodation means adapting an assessment for learners who would be at a disadvantage in that assessment due to an impairment or disability. Adapting an assessment to provide reasonable accommodation means changing how the assessment is offered without changing the standard of that assessment.

Some grounds for reasonable accommodation include, but are not limited to;

- Learning difficulties,
- Deafness or a hearing impairment,
- Blindness or visual impairment,
- Physical difficulties,
- Mental health and/or behavioural difficulties,
- Any grounds covered by current legislation, (Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 (which makes amendments to the Equal Status Act 2000 and Equality Act 2004, among others).

What supports are available under Reasonable Accommodation?

Reasonable Accommodation adaptations may include the following:

- Modified layout of assessments, e.g. enlargements of exam papers
- Scribes
- Readers
- Rest breaks
- Adaptive equipment/software
- Use of assistive technology
- Additional time for assessments
- Separate room/space for assessment

Other forms of support, not included on this list, may be provided on a case by case basis.



Who can apply for Reasonable Accommodation?

Any learner taking part in courses in LOETB Further Education and Training Services can apply for Reasonable Accommodation. You will need to provide documentation to support your application.

What forms of supporting documentation do I need to provide?

Examples of supporting documentation include:

- Medical Report,
- Educational Psychologist's Report,
- Occupational Therapist's Report,
- Guidance Counsellor's Report,
- LOETB Dyslexia screening test,
- Rehabilitation Psychologist or Rehabilitation Office Report and support documentation,
- Proof of having had Reasonable Accommodation in the past, e.g. Scribe for Leaving Cert exams.

When should I apply for Reasonable Accommodation?

1. If you have a specific or ongoing need for support

If you know you will need support in most, or all, of your assessments you should apply for Reasonable Accommodation at the beginning of your course. For example, if you have a visual impairment you may know at the start of the course that you will need all of your written assessments provided in extra-large type.

If you become aware during the course that you require Reasonable Accommodation only for certain assessments, you should apply as soon as you can, preferably within two weeks of the assessment date, (for example you may have a physical disability that means you need a scribe only for the written parts of your assessments.)

2. If you have a temporary need for support

In some circumstances you may need to apply for Reasonable Accommodation for a specific assessment because of an injury. For example, if you damage your hand prior to an exam you may need a scribe just for that assessment.

In this case you should apply for Reasonable Accommodation as soon as possible.

Please note that you must submit all relevant evidence and documentation to support your application before a decision can be made. If you do not apply in time, a decision may not be made in time for you to receive support.

How do I apply for Reasonable Accommodation?

Decisions about Reasonable Accommodation are usually made by the Programme Coordinator. During your course induction you will be told who you need to speak to if you wish to apply. Your tutor or teacher can also tell you who the relevant person is.

1. You complete the **Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment Application Form, Part A** and send it to the Programme Coordinator. Your application **MUST** include supporting documents, (see section above "***What forms of supporting documentation may be provided?***").
2. The Programme Coordinator decides if there is enough evidence to process the application. They may look for additional evidence from you or your tutor or teacher if required. The Programme Coordinator makes a decision as soon as they have received all the relevant documents, so it is important that they get these in good time.
3. When they have made a decision, the Programme Coordinator will inform you in writing. The decision is recorded in Part A of the application form.
4. A copy of your application and the decision is sent to the Quality Assurance Support Service in LOETB.

If I am successful:

If your application is successful, the Programme Coordinator will work with your tutor or teacher to adapt the assessment process, while making sure not to alter the standard of the assessment.

If I am unsuccessful:

If your application is unsuccessful, the Programme Coordinator will inform you and your tutor or teacher. You will be given information on your right to appeal this decision.

Reasonable Accommodation: Appeals

How do I appeal a Reasonable Accommodation Decision?

You have the right to appeal a Reasonable Accommodation decision made in your case.

The process for an appeal is as follows.

1. To appeal a Reasonable Accommodation decision, you must submit a written appeal request to the Programme Coordinator no more than two days after receiving the original decision.
2. The Programme Coordinator will ask you to sign the appeal section in Part B of your Reasonable Accommodation Application.
3. Your appeal is sent to the LOETB Quality Assurance Support Service to be reviewed by a member of the Further Education and Training Senior Management Team, (SMT*).
4. An SMT member reviews the original application, supporting documents and appeal application and decides to accept or reject the appeal.
5. The SMT member sends their decision in writing to the Programme Coordinator and the QA Support Service within one working week of the appeal being received by the QA Support Service. Appeal decisions can be made in a shorter time depending on the timing of the assessment.
6. The QA Support Service records the decision on Part C of your Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment application form and a copy of this form is kept by the QA Support Service. Your original form and documents are returned to your Programme Coordinator.
7. The Programme Coordinator informs you of the appeal decision in writing.
8. If your appeal is successful the Programme Coordinator will work with your tutor or teacher to adapt the assessment process, while making sure not to alter the standard of the assessment.
9. If you are not happy with the Appeal decision you may submit a complaint under the LOETB Complaints Procedure.

*(The FET SMT is made up of the Quality Assurance Manager, The Training Services Manager, the Further Education Manager and the Director of Further Education and Training Services).

If you need more information on Reasonable Accommodation please speak to your Programme Coordinator or Tutor or Teacher.