

THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY (BCS)

Reg. Charity N^o 292 786

ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT POLICY FOR CANDIDATES REQUIRING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

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Access to Assessment Policy Statement

The British Computer Society (BCS) seeks to provide equal access to assessment for all candidates, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment and that any reasonable adjustments for candidates preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification.

BCS will consider requests from centres for reasonable adjustments to be approved for a candidate. The decision will be based on the individual needs of the candidate as assessed by suitably qualified professionals. In promoting this policy, BCS aims to ensure that a candidate is not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates and their certificate accurately reflects their attainment.

Candidates who may require reasonable adjustments

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. The following individuals will be considered for reasonable adjustments:

Candidates who have:

- a permanent physical impairment, e.g. cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis.
- behavioural, emotional, social needs, e.g. chronic depression, autism.
- a sensory impairment, e.g. hard of hearing.
- specific learning difficulties, e.g. dyslexia.
- a temporary illness, injury or indisposition.
- English as their second or additional language.

This list is not exhaustive and it should be noted that some candidate needs may fall within more than one of the categories set out above.

Reasonable adjustments which may be permitted by BCS include:

- Allocation of additional time,
- Support of a reader,
- Support of a scribe/ amanuensis ,
- Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter,
- Support of a personal assistant,
- Use of assistive technology,
- Rest breaks,
- Use of appropriate assessment locations,
- Use of a bilingual dictionary,
- Re –sits (in the case of temporary illness /injury).

BCS will consider all requests in line with the BCS ‘Access to Assessment Policy Statement’.

Details of Reasonable Adjustments

Allocation of Additional Time

All applications for additional time will be individually considered. The 'standard' time extension that BCS approves for assessments is 33% (e.g. 15 minutes in the case of ECDL Parts 1 and 2) but extensions up to an extra 100% can be approved depending on the nature of the candidate's disability and the reasonable adjustments that are required.

Support of a Reader

A reader is defined as a person who will read to the candidate any part of the assessment materials or any part of the candidate's answers. Candidates with a physical impairment, a visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty may require the support of a reader.

Support of a Scribe/ Amanuensis.

A scribe is someone who writes down a candidate's dictated answers to questions. Such support may be required by candidates who have a physical impairment, a visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty.

Support of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter for Hearing Impaired Candidates.

The role of the interpreter is to converse when asked to do so by the candidate, to ensure that the candidate has properly understood the instructions and questions. The role may include saying the word or phrase, rephrasing, using sign language, or the use of writing.

Support of a Personal Assistant

Some candidates may require someone for help with personal assistance during the assessment. A candidate, for example, with attention difficulties may need the use of a prompter. Such help should maintain the effectiveness of the assessment giving no unfair advantage.

Use of Assistive Technology

Where possible the candidate should use their own equipment. Such equipment should be verified by the Test Centre in order to ensure there is no hidden information or access to information which would give unfair advantage to that candidate. If their own equipment cannot be used, assistive technology which mirrors that of the candidate ought to be provided. The list below is indicative of the most common Assistive Technologies currently available. It is to be taken as a guideline only.

Hardware

- Alternative keyboards and mice, including:
 - Keyboards with Braille labelled keyboards or home-row key indicators;
 - Joysticks/ trackballs/ rollerballs/ mouse keys on keyboard;
 - Mouth stick,
- Braille display,
- Switches (alternative input to keyboard and mouse, used by individuals with physical disability),
- Large monitors,
- Headphones and volume adjustment for use with voice output/input software packages.

Software

- Operating System Accessibility features such as Sticky Keys, Filter Keys, Mouse speed adjustments, etc,
- Screen magnification software,
- Screen reading software (supporting users with a visual impairment or dyslexia),
- Voice recognition software.

Use of bi-lingual dictionaries and translators

Bi-lingual dictionaries may be allowed for candidates whose first language is not English.

Use of appropriate assessment locations

Assessment may be carried out in various locations, e.g. a client's site. Every location must allow for access by a disabled person and provide appropriate disabled facilities, i.e. locations must conform to the requirements of Parts 3 and 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). The Test Centre will need to submit the Off-Site and Mobile Testing Form, downloaded from the Test Centre Forum homepage, along with the standard Access to Assessment request form, before the assessment takes place.

Rest breaks

Some candidates who may be disadvantaged by specific set times may require breaks. BCS will consider requests for rest breaks, the duration of which will not be deducted from the assessment time. Breaks during an assessment must be supervised and the duration of the break agreed with the assessment invigilator. The candidate must not discuss the assessment with any third party during a break period, nor refer to books or any other source of help.

Temporary illness/ injury

If a candidate suffers temporary illness or indisposition at the time of assessment, a re-sit is permitted. BCS should be notified by the Test Centre Manager in writing, with supporting evidence, of the circumstances including dates and venues.

Other reasonable adjustments

The reasonable adjustments listed above are not intended to be comprehensive. Others will be considered by the BCS in line with the BCS 'Access to Assessment Policy Statement'.

Guidance to centres on the use of BCS approved reasonable adjustments

Strict guidelines during the assessment process must be maintained. For example:

1. Arrangements for the appointment and use of third party support, e.g. a scribe or a British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter, will be the responsibility of the Test Centre Manager.
2. It is the responsibility of the Test Centre Manager to ensure the use of third party support does not give the candidate an unfair advantage or indeed disadvantage the candidate.
3. The third party support should not normally be the candidate's own tutor, except in circumstances where it is necessary to do so. In such cases, BCS should be specifically consulted. On no account may a relative, friend or peer of the candidate be used. In fairness to the candidate, the support person should have had practice working with the candidate in preparation for the assessment.
4. The reader should only read the exact wording (instructions and questions), and not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything. The reader should only repeat instructions and questions on the paper when specifically requested to do so by the candidate. The reader should not advise the candidate which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.
5. The British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter must be a qualified teacher of the deaf or be appointed by a qualified teacher of the deaf. The interpreter should have a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment. The centre should ensure that the interpreter has access to the assessment material in advance of the assessment, to prepare for the signing.

Care must be taken not to indicate the meaning of technical words, in cases where the candidate's understanding of these

words is inherent in the purpose of the question. The interpretation should not explain or clarify. In some instances it may be more appropriate to finger-spell a word.

6. A scribe/amanuensis must write down answers exactly as they are dictated by the candidate. The scribe should not advise the candidate which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.

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

8. A candidate using a reader, scribe or British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter must be accommodated separately to avoid disturbing other candidates. The Test Centre Manager will have to use their discretion in the case of a personal assistant or prompter.

9. A separate invigilator must be present when any third party support, e.g. a reader, is used.

10. The Test Centre must document the name of the reader, scribe or interpreter with the candidate's archived test material.

11. Any assistive technology used by a candidate must have been approved by BCS for the individual candidate's needs. The computer must only be used, during the assessment, by the candidate and not by a third party supporting the candidate.

12. BCS recognises that candidates whose first language is not English are eligible for reasonable adjustments. If they have been in the UK for more than 2 years at the time of the first module examination, supporting evidence will be required from a learning support/basics skills specialist. The centre will need to renew the application when 12 months have elapsed since the first assessment.

13. The Test Centre Manager must ensure that the assessment location and facilities, used by candidates with a particular assessment need, meet the requirements of the candidate. If

the assessment location needs to accommodate a third party support, distances between candidates must be considered.

14. The invigilator must have prior information of any candidate's reasonable adjustments and the name and remit of any third party support that has been approved by BCS.

Procedures for requesting reasonable adjustments for candidates.

Access to Assessment Request Form

Requests for reasonable adjustments must be made by the Test Centre Manager or a nominated member of staff, by completing the on-line version of the Access to Assessment Request Form. The on-line form can be located using the Access to Assessment link on the Test Centre Forum homepage. The paper-based forms which are found in Appendix A should only be used if the Test Centre experiences problems using the on-line form. Please note that the type of disability/ difficulty is now recorded on the Monitoring Form.

Information about the physical or mental health or condition of a person is 'sensitive personal data'. The Test Centre is required by the Data Protection Act to take additional precautions when dealing with such data. Advice on this issue is to be found in Appendix C. In all cases the information and/or supporting evidence should only be sent to BCS if the Test Centre has the candidate's written consent. An example of a consent form is found in Appendix D. A copy of the consent form should be retained at the Test Centre for audit purposes.

Before an Access to Assessment Request Form is submitted, BCS would expect the following criteria have been met:

- the candidate has been registered with BCS by the Test Centre,
- the candidate has completed a training programme
- the candidate has attempted a mock/ sample assessment set by the Test Centre.

Please note that if the amount of extra time is above 33% (e.g. more than 15 minutes), the Test Centre should specify the extra time required (up to a limit of 100%) using the objective evidence provided by the candidate's experiences in a mock/sample assessment.

Supporting Evidence

Where the Test Centre can verify evidence of the disability or difficulty and where the implications are clear, (such as for candidates who are registered as blind or partially sighted, or with

physical difficulties or a profound hearing impairment), the Test Centre does **not** need to provide further evidence of these physical difficulties.

Where the implications of the disability or difficulty are not obvious, BCS will expect Centres to have supporting evidence of the effect of the impairment on the candidate's performance in an exam. This would cover requests regarding issues such as:

- a specific learning difficulty, e.g. dyslexia, or,
- EFL candidates, or,
- a temporary illness or injury.

Any of the following types of supporting evidence will be acceptable:

- Written evidence of *assessments of the candidate's needs made within the Test Centre by relevant staff* with competence and responsibility in this area. This could include learning support staff, teaching staff, trainers, assessors and other specialist staff. Information from previous Test Centres may also be used.
- History of provision within the Test Centre. This should include information about the *support received by the candidate* during the learning or training programme and during formative assessments.
- Written evidence of *assessments done by independent, authoritative, external specialists*. This can take the form of a report or assessment from a health professional, educational psychologist or other appropriate specialist. These reports should state the name, title and professional credentials of the person who carried out the tests and wrote the report. The report should set out the nature of the difficulty and the 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 there could be significant improvements in the way the candidate is affected by the difficulty, the assessments and consultations should have been carried out within the preceding two years by an independent expert.
- A letter from another awarding body.

The Test Centre should decide which of the above forms of evidence will best assist an understanding of the candidate's requirements. It should be noted that it is the Test Centre's responsibility to authenticate the candidate's need for assistance. Please note that supporting evidence will always be required if the request includes additional time in excess of 33%. We would expect that the evidence includes reference to the candidate's experiences with a mock /sample assessment.

Supporting evidence can be presented to the BCS in the form of:

- a Test Centre report, or
- a health professional/ educational psychologist/ specialist report, or
- a Confirmation of Access to Assessment Form. This is found in Appendix B and can also be downloaded from the link to the Access to Assessment Form on the Test Centre Forum homepage. It can be used by a member of the Test Centre staff or the independent expert to summarise their supporting evidence, and is then countersigned by the Test Centre Manager, or
- A letter from another awarding body.

In the case of e-Citizen candidates, it is sufficient to use written evidence of assessments made by relevant Test Centre staff such as learning support staff and teaching staff.

We recommend that the on-line form is submitted at least 10 working days before the date of the first assessment. The details will be processed, a decision will be made and the Test Centre Manager will be notified by email. If supporting evidence is required before a decision can be made, we will inform Test Centres by email. The supporting evidence (if authorised by the candidate), should be sent by post or fax to:

ECDL Access to Assessment Department,
4th Floor, Minton Place,
Station Road,
SWINDON, SN1 1AB
Fax: 01793 485866, or
sent as an email attachment to ecdlenq@hq.bcs.org.uk.

Please label the letter or fax as 'Strictly Private and Confidential'. A final decision will be made when the supporting evidence has been processed and the Test Centre Manager will be notified by email.

The request must be approved before the candidate sits the assessment.

The Test Centre Manager should retain the supporting evidence documentation at the Test Centre until the candidate completes the qualification or leaves the Test Centre. The External Verifier may request to see this evidence (with the candidate's permission) as part of the annual audit.

Enquiries about any aspect of the Access to Assessment policy should be made to the Access to Assessment team via ecdlenq@hq.bcs.org.uk or telephone 01793 417530.

Confidentiality

Test Centres and BCS will keep in confidence all correspondence and documentation it receives, as stated within the *Accredited Test Centre Contract*.



APPENDIX A

ECDL

Access to Assessment Request Form

Any information requested below and any documentation regarding the need for reasonable adjustments in an assessment will be considered as strictly confidential (as specified within the 'Accredited Test Centre Contract') and will not be shared without the candidate's written consent.

The details below must be completed and signed by the Test Centre Manager. Information on this form is used internally within BCS only and will not be shown on the candidate's Log Book (or Skills Card). The form must be returned to BCS (see address below) and approved before the candidate sits the assessment. Please allow at least 10 working days before the date of the first assessment. If the appropriate supporting evidence is not sent to BCS or held at the Test Centre, the candidate's application cannot be accepted.

Candidate Name	
Candidate Log Book (Skill Card)/ Registration Number	
Candidate Date of Birth	
Test Centre Name	
Test Centre I.D.	
Test Centre Manager	
Test Centre Manager e-mail Address	
Test Centre Telephone Number	
Date of first planned assessment	
Manual assessment On-line assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
If on-line assessment, the name of the test provider.
Additional time required: - up to 33% (e.g. 15 minutes). - above 33%. - amount of time required if above 33%.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Minutes.
Details of the personal support, e.g. reader and /or assistive technology, e.g. magnification software that is required:	

<p>Please indicate the type of evidence that supports the candidate's request;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test Centre's assessments of the candidate's needs. - History of provision/support within the Centre. - Health professional/ ed. psychologist report. - <i>Confirmation of Access to Assessment</i> form. - Letter from another awarding body granting reasonable adjustments - Other (please give details). <p>Please indicate if the supporting evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will be sent to BCS, or - retained by the Centre. 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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Signed: Test Centre Manager

Date:

Return to: Access to Assessment Dept., ECDL, 4 th Floor, Minton Place, Station Road, Swindon SN1 1AB, or Fax: 01793 485 866

ECDL USE ONLY	
Approved By	
Date of Approval	



MONITORING FORM

This part of the form will be kept separate from the rest of this document. It will be used for monitoring purposes only. No personal details should be printed on this page.

Type of Disability/ Difficulty

Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behavioural, Emotional and Social	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sensory	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific Learning Difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>
English as a second or additional language	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B

CONFIRMATION OF ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT FORM

I have known _____ (Candidate's name) since
_____ (Date) in my capacity as _____ (Professional
title)

Additional time required:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- up to 33% (e.g. 15 minutes).- above 33%.- amount of additional time required if above 33%.	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><div style="margin-right: 10px;"><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></div><div>..... Minutes.</div></div>
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Communication/Support, e.g. an interpreter, a reader, rest breaks:

Assistive Technology, e.g. screen reading software, ergonomic keyboard:

Test Centre Staff or Independent Expert.
Name (please print):

Professional title:

Signature:

Date:

Test Centre Manager.
Name (please print):

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX C

DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

In order to make adjustments, there is a duty on Test Centres to take reasonable steps to encourage candidates to disclose a disability. For example, candidates should be encouraged to advise the appropriate person of their disability at the point of registration for the qualification.

Once the information has been obtained, the Test Centre is required by law to process the data 'fairly and lawfully'. This means that the candidate must know what information the relevant organisation holds about them, what they will do with it and to whom this information may be disclosed. Information about whether or not someone is disabled should only be available to those people who need to know in order to discharge the Test Centre's responsibilities towards the candidate under the Disability Discrimination Act.

BCS will not pass on in written form any sensitive information without the candidate's written consent.

Summary of Steps to take before passing on information

- Obtain details of the candidate's needs
- Keep a record of the details
- Advise the candidate to whom the information will be passed and what the information will be used for
- Obtain the candidate's written consent to pass on the information to the relevant parties

BCS will keep in confidence all correspondence and documentation received in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The Disability Discrimination Act identifies 'sensitive personal data' as a sub set of 'personal data' and this includes any information relating to a candidate's disability.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM TO PASS ON INFORMATION

Information about disability is classed as 'sensitive personal data' and will be processed by the Test Centre and BCS in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Test Centre has a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled candidates. In order to make these adjustments, some information regarding your disability may have to be disclosed to various members of staff in the Test Centre and/or the BCS, the awarding body for this qualification.

Detailed information about your impairments or medical information will not be passed on unless it is deemed relevant to making reasonable adjustments.

You can request that no information about your disability is passed on to others, or you can request that information is restricted to certain people. However, you should be aware that if you do this, it could limit the types of adjustments that the Test Centre and/or BCS can make for you.

You should also be aware that even if you have asked for information about your disability not to be passed on to other members of Test Centre staff and/or BCS, there could be certain instances where this may still have to be done for reasons of health and safety, emergency or public policy.

I consent to data regarding my disability to be passed on to relevant Test Centre staff and BCS (please circle):

Yes No Restricted

If you have circled 'restricted', please indicate below to whom you consent to information being passed:

.....
.....
.....

Candidate Name:.....

Candidate Signature:.....

Date:.....

Test Centre Manager Signature:

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access to Assessment	The removal of artificial and unnecessary barriers to the process of judging an individual's competence.
Assessment	The process of making judgments about the extent to which a candidate's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification, or part of a qualification.
Assistive Technology	Mechanical or electronic devices which help individuals with particular needs to overcome these limitations.
Audit	A regular (at least annual) visit by one of our staff to review and audit operations and procedures at the Test Centre and satellite sites.
BCS	British Computer Society – the BCS is the licensed awarding body for ECDL in the UK.
British Sign Language (BSL)/English interpreter	An individual who interprets communication into and out of British Sign Language.
Disability	A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.
ECDL Foundation	The ECDL-F is the central governing body for the ECDL internationally. The ECDL-F is responsible for the syllabus, assessment and courseware approval.
EV	See External Verifier .
External Verifier/Auditor	Member of the BCS staff who is responsible for visiting Test Centres to review the quality of qualification marking, administration and management.
Internal Verification	The on-going process of ensuring that the quality of training and assessing is maintained.
Internal Verifier	A member of the Test Centre staff who is responsible for carrying out the internal verification process.
Invigilator	A registered member of staff who is responsible for the monitoring and invigilation of ECDL certification assessments.
IV	See Internal Verifier .
Reader	A person who will read to the candidate any part of the assessment materials or any part of the candidate's answers.
Reasonable Adjustments	Arrangements which are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by a candidate with assessment - related needs.

Scribe	A person who writes down a candidate's dictated answers to questions.
Test Centre Forum	A secure web site for Test Centre staff http://www.ecdl.co.uk/tcforum.
Test Centre Manager	Nominated representative who is responsible for the accredited Test Centre.
Test Paper	Manual assessment instructions