

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

Document Specification:			
Purpose:	To set out the policy and procedure to be followed by NPC when dealing with Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations its qualifications or services		
Accountability:	Director	Responsibility:	Compliance Manager
Last Review date:	December 2025	Next Review due:	December 2027
Version:	5		

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Contents

1. Purpose & Scope	3
2. Data Protection	3
3. Definition	3
4. Reasonable Adjustments – Process for Centres and Learners	4
5. Special Considerations – Process for Centres and Learners	6
6. Submitting Requests for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations	7
7. Evidence requirements	8
8. Appeals	8
9. Maximum Time Allowance for Regulated Qualifications Awarded by NALP	8
10. Record Keeping and Reporting	9
11. Monitoring the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy	10

1. Purpose & Scope

The National Paralegal College (NPC) is a trading name of NALP Training Company Limited. It offers both internally developed and certificated courses and fully regulated qualifications, accredited by a Recognised Awarding Organisation to its Learners, all of which are delivered on a distance learning basis. All of NPC's courses and qualifications are aimed at the Paralegal sector.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process which must be followed by Learners and Centres when making a request for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration and how such a request will be considered by NPC. The process described will ensure that NPC continues to meet its obligations as an Approved Centre of the Ofqual recognised Awarding Organisation, NALP, as well as all applicable Equalities Laws and regulations, in particular, the Equalities Act 2010.

2. Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with the current data protection legislation and regulation. Data will be processed only to ensure that all persons to whom this policy relates act in the best interests of the Learners, NPC and the Awarding Organisation, NALP. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

Please note that we treat all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements in confidence, and will not make details available to any other parties, with the exception of sharing this with the awarding organisation, NALP, but only if it relates to regulated qualifications that NPC offers under the Approved Centre status with NALP.

3. Definition

In respect of reasonable adjustments NPC takes its policy based on the requirements for all regulated qualifications and applies this to all courses and qualifications it offers, regardless of whether it is regulated or not.

Under Ofqual's Condition of Recognition, Condition G6.1 states:

"Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a disabled Learner to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding to the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification."

Reasonable adjustments therefore help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the Learner at a significant disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments made may involve:

- making changes for individuals to the standard assessment arrangements, for example allowing Learners extra time to complete the assessment

- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in large print or Braille for those with visual impairments
- providing access facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner.

Where reasonable adjustments are made, these must:

- not affect the integrity of the award
- reflect the current needs of the individual Learner
- not give the Learner an unfair advantage over other Learners
- ensure that examination continues to be valid, reliable and comparable against stated examination criteria.

In respect of special considerations, Ofqual's Condition of Recognition, Condition G7.1 states:

"Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a Learner who has temporarily experienced:

(a) an illness or injury, or

(b) some other event outside of the Learner's control,

which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that Learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment."

Special considerations are therefore given when unforeseen circumstances prevent the Learner from attending or completing their assignments for assessment within the stated timescales, such as temporary illness, injury or bereavement.

4. Reasonable Adjustments – Process for Centres and Learners

Learners requesting reasonable adjustments must provide NPC with evidence of their specific needs. Where the request is in respect of a regulated qualification, this information and evidence may be shared with the Awarding Organisation.

All requests for reasonable adjustments must be received at NPC at the time of enrolment onto the qualification, due to the assessments for NALP qualifications being assignment and Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) based (for the NEW Level 3 Certificate for Paralegal Technicians and Level 4 Certificate for Associate Paralegals and the Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals) for the regulated qualifications and some of the courses offered by NPC being assignment based. This is to ensure that any necessary arrangements have been put into place in advance of any assignments or other assessments being set for the Learner and to allow for the provision of additional support or adjustments during the study periods.

Due to the fact that all of NPC's courses and qualifications are Distance Learning based with the materials being sent electronically to the Learners, the types of reasonable adjustments that we

can make are limited. The following are examples of conditions which may require reasonable adjustments and what those adjustments may be. Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

Learners with Visual Impairment

- Large print or Braille course material
- Coloured backgrounds, paper or overlays for course material
- Extra time allocated for study, MCQs and assignments
- Allowing readers and/or scribes
- Option to sit the MCQ assessment in-person on paper instead of sitting it electronically via the app VICTVS. Please note that in-person invigilation will need to be arranged and you will be able to sit the exam at your chosen Centre or another suitable venue, e.g. Employer's office. Sitting this paper-based MCQ exam at home is not permitted. The hard copy of the exam questions will be enclosed in a secure envelope which will be sent to the invigilator on the day of the exam to ensure that the Learner does not have prior sight of the questions.

Learners with Hearing Impairment

- Use of hearing aids/hearing induction loops (where applicable at Centre level)
- Extra time allocated for training and examination
- British Sign Language or other suitable interpreter
- Option to sit the MCQ assessment in-person on paper instead of sitting it electronically via the app VICTVS.

Learners with Reading, Writing or Learning Difficulties

- Extra time allocated for study and assessments
- Accessible formats for assessments
- Reader and/or scribe
- Dictation via Audio-cassettes
- Speech synthesisers
- Word-processing or transcription software
- Coloured backgrounds, paper or overlays for course material
- Option to sit the MCQ assessment in-person on paper instead of sitting it electronically via the app VICTVS

Learners who have a permanent physical impairment

- Reader, scribe and/or interpreter
- Mechanical/electronic aids or software

Learners whose first language is not English

- Use of a bilingual dictionary (book form only; not electronic dictionaries or translators)

NPC qualifications have been designed specifically to be studied via distance learning, therefore, if a Learner uses adaptive technology or software, etc. to assist them during their studies, this will normally be allowed. However, **all such adjustments made directly by Learners must be disclosed to NPC prior to commencement of studies to ensure that this does not provide an unfair advantage to the Learner.**

Every request for a reasonable adjustment will be considered on a case-by-case basis by NPC and, where appropriate, the Awarding Organisation. **What is reasonable in terms of an adjustment to the assessment will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment.**

5. Special Considerations – Process for Centres and Learners

Special consideration is given to events or circumstances, beyond the Learner's control, which lead to a Learner being unable to complete their course or assignment within the given timescales. Examples of events that attract special consideration would be:

- Temporary illness
- Injury to self or an immediate family member
- Bereavement
- Mental health issues

NPC reserves the right to request evidence of the reason given for the special consideration being made so Learners should make this available on request.

Extra work commitments; childcare or elderly care issues of a general nature; other assessments with similar deadlines; no computer facilities at home; etc. are not considered as exceptional extenuating circumstances.

The following are examples of conditions which may require a special consideration and what adjustments may be made. Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

Services for Learners who have a medical condition or temporary injury

- Reader and/or scribe and/or interpreter
- Mechanical/electronic aids or software

Learners who suffer a bereavement, temporary illness or mental health issue will be offered an extension to their study or assignment deadline, up to a maximum of 25% additional time for study or to complete an assignment (for regulated qualifications awarded by NALP). The

maximum time allowed as an extension for each qualification we offer is set out in Section 10 of this policy.

If a Learner requires more than 1-week additional time to complete an assignment, the original assignment will be withdrawn from them without affecting their record of achievement. They will then be issued a new assignment when they inform us that they are recovered sufficiently to be able to complete this within the usual timeframe.

All requests for special consideration must be received by NPC at least 1 working day (24 hours) prior to the deadline for submission of assignments for assessment and date of MCQ exam, particularly where this will need to be passed to the awarding organisation for final approval.

Please note that the requirements for special considerations to be allowed will depend on the qualification or course being studied by the Learner. Learners must endeavour to inform NPC as soon as they become aware of the possibility of their missing the deadline for completion of the qualification or course work and/or assignments. NPC cannot be held responsible for any missed deadlines where they were not made aware of the circumstances being faced by the Learner. Where a learner is studying a regulated qualification being awarded by a recognised Awarding Organisation, such as NALP, the awarding organisation's policy on special considerations and reasonable adjustments will take precedence over our own.

6. Submitting Requests for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations

Learners must contact NPC at the time of enrolment to alert us to any Reasonable Adjustments which require to be made. Special Considerations must also be put in writing at least 1 working day (24 hours) prior to the deadline for submission of the assignment for assessment or at least 5 working days prior to the end of the maximum period allowed to complete the qualification or course being taken.

Each request should include the following information:

- The nature of the Learner's disability/learning need/reason for special consideration
- Details of the adjustments being requested
- Any supporting evidence or a copy of the evidence.

All requests for reasonable adjustments must be made at the time of enrolment of the Learner. Requests for Special Considerations must be made at least 1 working day (24 hours) prior to the deadline for submission of the assignment for assessment, or 5 working days prior to the end of the maximum allowed time to complete the course or qualification.

Please email the request for reasonable adjustments or special consideration, for the attention of The Chief Executive.

E-mail: admin@nationalparalegalcollege.co.uk

When we receive the request, where applicable we will pass this on to the Awarding Organisation, otherwise we will consider the matter ourselves. We will always strive to inform the Learner of the decision that has been made within 3 working days for reasonable adjustments or within 2 working days for special considerations. If it will take longer than this to make a decision, we will inform the Learner and indicate a timescale for the decision.

7. Evidence requirements

Learners requiring arrangements for reasonable adjustments should provide NPC with evidence of their learning needs or medical condition. We will ensure that the evidence is current and relevant to the Learner who has made the request. Examples of evidence could be a relevant diagnostic report or statement of learning needs or medical condition from appropriately qualified personnel.

Requests for special consideration should be supported by evidence of the temporary illness or injury, such as a doctor's or hospital 'Fit Note'. If the request is for other reasons, such as bereavement, NPC reserves the right to request evidence in some circumstances, particularly where a Learner is making, or has made, more than one request for a special consideration during the allotted time allowed for a single qualification or course.

8. Appeals

If Learners wish to appeal against the decision by NPC or, where applicable, the awarding organisation, to decline requests for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our *Appeals Policy*, available to download from our website at www.nationalparalegalcollege.co.uk or by contacting 020 3745 5513.

9. Maximum Time Allowance for Regulated Qualifications Awarded by NALP

NPC is an approved Centre of NALP who are the recognised awarding organisation that awards the regulated qualifications we offer. Where a learner is taking a NALP qualification and require a reasonable adjustment or special consideration, they must be aware that the NALP policy on this will take precedence over our own for the purposes of remaining compliant with all applicable statutory regulations covering those qualifications. NALP imposes strict maximum time allowances for reasonable adjustments and special considerations, which are detailed in this section.

For many individuals taking a NALP qualification who require allowances for reasonable adjustments or special considerations, the most appropriate adjustment will be to allow them additional time to complete their qualification and/or assignment. However, there is a maximum of 25% additional time allowed for this. This may be applied to more than one assignment (e.g. if it is a reasonable adjustment due to an ongoing condition, then any additional time will be allotted to all assignments) but it can only be applied to a qualification as a whole once. So, if an

individual has an incident for which they claim a Special Consideration and are allowed 25% extra on their allotted time to complete the qualification, should another incident occur, they will not be allowed any further time. If, however, in the first instance they are only allotted 10% additional time, they may be allowed to claim the further 15% up to the overall maximum of 25% additional time. The maximum time allowed for each qualification awarded by NALP is as follows:

Qualification Title	Maximum Study time extension	Maximum assignment extension	Maximum MCQ extension
Level 3 Single Subject Award in Paralegal Practice	3 months	1 week	N/A
Level 3 Certificate for Paralegal Technicians	6 months	4 Calendar days	15 minutes for Unit 1; 11 minutes for Unit 2, 3 & 4
Level 3 Certificate in Paralegal Practice	6 months	1 week	N/A
Level 3 Diploma in Paralegal Practice	6 months	1 week	N/A
Level 4 Diploma in Paralegal Studies	6 months	1 week	N/A
Level 4 Certificate for Associate Paralegals	6 months	26 Calendar days	56 minutes
Level 5 Diploma for Senior Associate Paralegals	6 months	1 week	44 minutes
Level 7 Diploma in Paralegal Practice	6 months	1 week	N/A

10. Record Keeping and Reporting

As noted in Section 2, all data collated under this Policy will be treated in the strictest confidence and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and any other relevant regulations or legislation.

Any medical reports or documents will not be held for longer than is absolutely necessary which is normally no longer than the term of enrolment of the learner on a NALP qualification.

If a learner appeals against a decision made by NALP in respect of a request for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration, the information and evidence supplied as part of the application for such reasonable adjustment or special consideration will be shared with the individual dealing with the appeal which, if escalated to a Stage 3 appeal, may be someone outside of NALP who is providing an independent view of the decision made. Any such independent persons appointed to deal with such appeals will be subject to a strict Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality agreement to ensure that such information will be treated in the strictest confidence in such situations.

The Governing Board are provided with some statistical data regarding the level of reasonable adjustments and special considerations; however, this data does not include any learner names or access to any medical or other sensitive information provided as part of the application for a reasonable adjustment or special consideration.

As a recognised Awarding Organisation, NALP is sometimes required to provide general information to its regulators regarding what reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests it has received, including the outcome of those requests and what adjustments have been allowed. Such information is provided to the Regulator(s) on an anonymised basis. No learner names, nor access to any medical data or evidence is provided as part of this monitoring.

11. Monitoring the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy

NPC will ensure that:

- Guidance from the Awarding Organisation or changes in regulation, legislation or other relevant industry standards are reviewed and the policy is updated to comply with best practice
- Information from monitoring activities is made available to the Awarding Organisation on request
- This policy is reviewed at least biennially or earlier as required