Access to Fair Assessment Policy

Item	Details
Policy owner	Kirsty Noble
Position	Quality Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	Learners and Staff
Effective from	August 2026
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1. Policy Statement

Skills-UK, Education & Training Limited is committed to ensuring that all learners have fair and equitable access to assessment and are provided with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Assessment will be conducted in a way that is fair, consistent, transparent and non-discriminatory and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation, qualification specification and applicable legislation.

Skills-UK aims to provide qualifications and learning programmes that enable learners to achieve their potential through appropriate and accessible routes to learning and assessment.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- learners understand how they will be assessed and what is expected of them;
- assessment decisions are fair, consistent and based on the relevant assessment criteria;
- learners are provided with appropriate assessment opportunities and feedback;
- reasonable adjustments and special consideration are considered where appropriate;
- assessment evidence is authentic and represents the learner's own work;
- suspected malpractice is identified, reported and investigated appropriately; and
- learners understand how to challenge or appeal an assessment decision.
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This policy applies to all learners undertaking learning and assessment with Skills-UK and to all staff involved in teaching, assessment, internal quality assurance and the administration of qualifications.

3. Principles of Fair Assessment

Skills-UK will ensure, where applicable, that assessment is:

- **Valid** – assessment measures the knowledge, skills and understanding it is intended to assess.
- **Reliable** – assessment decisions are made consistently against the required standards.
- **Fair** – learners are provided with appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding without unfair disadvantage.

- **Consistent** – assessment criteria and awarding organisation requirements are applied consistently.
- **Authentic** – evidence submitted for assessment represents the learner's own work or contribution.
- **Transparent** – learners understand the assessment requirements, processes and decisions that apply to them.

Assessment will be undertaken by appropriately qualified, trained and/or occupationally competent staff in accordance with the requirements of the relevant programme or awarding organisation.

Assessment practice will be subject to appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements.

4. Access to Assessment

Learners will be made aware of this policy and will have access to it through the Skills-UK website or on request.

During induction and throughout their programme, learners will be provided with appropriate information about:

- their programme and qualification requirements;
- learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- the methods of assessment that will be used;
- assessment expectations and relevant deadlines;
- arrangements for reasonable adjustments and special consideration;
- requirements relating to authenticity and malpractice; and
- how to raise concerns or appeal an assessment decision.

Staff involved in assessment are responsible for ensuring that learners understand the assessment requirements relevant to their programme.

5. What Learners Can Expect from Skills-UK

Learners can expect:

- assessment to be carried out fairly and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation or programme;
- assessment decisions to be based on the relevant learning outcomes, assessment criteria or qualification standards;
- appropriate opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding;
- assessment requirements to be explained clearly;
- work to be assessed within appropriate timescales;
- constructive and timely feedback on assessed work;
- assessment decisions to be appropriately recorded;
- appropriate support to understand assessment requirements;
- reasonable adjustments and special consideration to be considered where applicable; and
- access to an appropriate appeals process.

Externally assessed examinations and tests will be conducted in accordance with the requirements and instructions of the relevant awarding organisation.

6. Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Skills-UK is committed to ensuring that disabled learners and learners with additional needs are not unfairly disadvantaged during assessment.

Reasonable adjustments may be considered to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the assessment without changing the competence, standard or learning outcome being assessed.

Any reasonable adjustment must be permitted by the relevant awarding organisation and qualification requirements and will be considered on an individual basis.

Where a learner experiences a temporary illness, injury or another event outside their control that materially affects their ability to undertake an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment, special consideration may be considered where permitted by the relevant awarding organisation.

Skills-UK will follow the relevant awarding organisation's requirements when applying for, approving, recording and implementing reasonable adjustments or special consideration.

This reflects Ofqual's current framework, which requires arrangements that allow disabled learners to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and understanding without changing the required level of attainment.

7. Assessment Decisions and Feedback

Assessment decisions must be based on the evidence presented and the relevant assessment criteria or qualification requirements.

Learners will be provided with appropriate feedback to help them understand:

- what they have achieved;
- where further evidence or development is required; and
- what action they should take next, where applicable.

Assessors must maintain appropriate assessment records in accordance with Skills-UK and awarding organisation requirements.

Assessment decisions may be subject to internal quality assurance to ensure that assessment standards are applied consistently.

8. Malpractice and Authenticity of Learner Work

Assessment can only be fair where the evidence submitted accurately represents the learner's own knowledge, skills, understanding or contribution.

Learners must not attempt to gain an unfair advantage during an assessment or submit work produced by another person or source as their own.

Examples of potential malpractice include:

- copying another learner's work or allowing another learner to copy their work;
- giving, receiving or sharing answers where this is not permitted;
- plagiarism or presenting another person's work as their own;
- using unauthorised materials, information or devices during an assessment;
- communicating with another learner during an examination or controlled assessment where this is prohibited;
- obtaining or attempting to obtain confidential assessment materials;
- impersonation or allowing another person to complete an assessment on the learner's behalf;
- falsifying assessment evidence or records; and

- inappropriate or unauthorised use of artificial intelligence or generative AI.
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The use of AI is **not automatically prohibited**. Where AI tools are permitted, learners must comply with the requirements of the relevant assessment, Skills-UK and awarding organisation, including any requirement to acknowledge or reference their use.

Using AI to generate work that a learner presents as their own where this is not permitted, or failing to acknowledge AI use where acknowledgement is required, may constitute malpractice.

This distinction is important: Ofqual's April 2026 advice identifies AI-generated material presented as a learner's own as a risk to assessment validity, while current learner guidance recognises that permitted AI use may vary by qualification.

9. Reporting and Investigating Malpractice

All suspected or alleged malpractice will be taken seriously and considered in accordance with Skills-UK procedures and the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation.

Learners and staff are encouraged to report suspected malpractice to an appropriate member of staff.

Any suspected malpractice must be referred to the **Quality Director**.

The matter will be investigated appropriately and fairly, and records of the allegation, investigation and outcome will be maintained.

Where required, suspected or confirmed malpractice will be reported to the relevant awarding organisation in accordance with its requirements.

No assumption of malpractice will be made solely because an allegation has been raised. Decisions will be based on the available evidence and the applicable awarding organisation requirements.

Where malpractice is established, appropriate action may be taken in accordance with Skills-UK and awarding organisation procedures.

10. Appeals Against Assessment Decisions

Learners have the right to challenge an assessment decision where they believe that the assessment process or decision has not been applied fairly, consistently or in accordance with the relevant assessment requirements.

Appeals relating to internally assessed work will be managed in accordance with the **Skills-UK Assessment Appeals Procedure**.

Where an assessment or decision is controlled by an awarding organisation, Skills-UK will follow the relevant awarding organisation's review and appeals procedures.

Where applicable, this may include decisions concerning:

- assessment results;
- reasonable adjustments;
- special consideration; and
- decisions or sanctions arising from malpractice or maladministration.
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Current Ofqual requirements provide for awarding-organisation appeals covering assessment results, reasonable adjustments/special consideration and action following malpractice investigations.

Learners will not be disadvantaged for raising a genuine assessment concern or making an appeal in good faith.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

The Quality Director is responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation of this policy;
- ensuring appropriate assessment and quality assurance arrangements are maintained;
- overseeing significant assessment concerns and malpractice allegations;
- ensuring awarding organisation requirements are followed; and
- monitoring the effectiveness of assessment practice.

Tutors, Assessors and IQAs are responsible for:

- applying assessment requirements fairly and consistently;
- ensuring learners understand assessment expectations;
- providing appropriate assessment opportunities and feedback;
- maintaining accurate assessment records;
- identifying and reporting potential malpractice;
- implementing approved reasonable adjustments; and
- complying with awarding organisation requirements.

Learners are responsible for:

- completing assessments in accordance with the instructions provided;
- submitting authentic work;
- complying with assessment and examination requirements;
- declaring or referencing sources and AI use where required;
- attending assessments and meeting agreed assessment requirements; and
- raising concerns promptly where they believe assessment arrangements or decisions are unfair.

12. Monitoring and Review

Assessment practice will be monitored through Skills-UK's quality assurance arrangements, which may include internal quality assurance, standardisation, observations, learner feedback, assessment sampling and awarding organisation external quality assurance.

Any identified themes, inconsistencies or areas for improvement will be addressed through appropriate quality improvement activity.

This policy will be reviewed **annually**, or earlier where required due to changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, awarding organisation requirements, assessment practice or organisational arrangements.

13. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside, where applicable:

- Assessment Appeals Procedure

- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy/Procedure
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Internal Quality Assurance Policy/Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy