

**BCS Professional Certification  
Reasonable Adjustments Policy  
September 2017**

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# 1. Introduction

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT recognises that some candidates require alternative arrangements for their examinations. This may be the result of a disability, medical condition or for religious reasons. Most of the document focuses on reasonable adjustments for candidates who have disabilities, but it also covers candidates who may require adjustments based on religious grounds or candidates whose first language is not English.

The Equality Act 2010 (previously the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) aims to end discrimination which many disabled people face and it is now unlawful for Examination Institutes, among others, to discriminate against disabled people. It is recognised that our overseas partners may have other legal obligations in their country to ensure that there is no discrimination so it is expected that they will follow the applicable legislative and regulatory requirements in terms of disability.

Examinations should be a fair test of an individual's knowledge and what they are able to do. If someone has a disability or learning difficulty, the usual format of the examinations may not be suitable. Adjustments may need to be made for them. They allow an individual to show their ability and knowledge without being disadvantaged by the assessment format itself.

This document provides information on who may be entitled to extra time and how to request it. We also hope that this document will increase an Accredited Training Organisation's (ATO) knowledge and understanding about the Equality Act (or local equivalent), associated legislation such as the Data Protection Act (or local equivalent) and the opportunities that are available to accommodate candidates who may require reasonable adjustments when taking a Professional Certification with BCS.

The information in this document can be used by our ATOs and candidates for guidance and we have endeavoured to ensure that the information is correct.

## 2. Reasonable Adjustments Policy Statement

We seek to provide equal access to examinations for all candidates, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers and that any reasonable adjustments for candidates preserve the validity, reliability and integrity of the qualification.

We will endeavour to accommodate the needs of candidates with an examination requirement, according to individual circumstances, ensuring such candidates are not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates and that certificates accurately reflect candidate attainment.

We will give every consideration to requested extra time, ensuring that there are no unnecessary barriers to the examination and candidate attainment. However, all requests will be considered on the information received. Requests for extra time which do not meet the Reasonable Adjustments Policy will be declined.

### 3. Who is entitled to Reasonable Adjustments?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has 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:

- a permanent physical impairment, e.g. cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis
- behavioural, emotional, social needs, e.g. chronic depression, autism
- a sensory impairment, e.g. hearing impairment, visual impairment
- specific cognitive difficulties, e.g. dyslexia, memory loss
- motor difficulties, e.g. hand / eye co-ordination, difficulty moving hands / arms

It is expected that all non-UK ATOs are fully aware of what the equivalent legislation is and adhere to it to ensure that candidates are provided appropriate reasonable adjustments.

If there is not an option for you to take the examination in your native language you will be entitled to an extra 25% of time. (See Section 6.11 for further information).

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

### 4. What Reasonable Adjustments are considered acceptable?

Applications for reasonable adjustments will be individually considered and decisions may vary according to the exact nature of your everyday needs and usual method of working. The reasonable adjustments offered by BCS may include:

- Allocation of extra time
- Bilingual paper dictionary whose purpose is translation between the examination language and another national language (not allowed for on-line examinations via Pearson Vue or ProctorU)
- Large Print
- Alternative fonts – you can request a font of your choice to suit your needs
- Coloured Paper / you can request blue, green yellow or pink to suit your needs
- Support of a personal assistant – see Section 6.1 for further information
- Rest / Time Breaks – See Section 6.2 for further information
- Support of a Sign Language interpreter – see Section 6.3 for further information
- Support of a scribe / amanuensis – see Section 6.4 for further information
- Use of assistive technology - see Section 6.5 for further information
- Support of a reader – see Section 6.6 for further information
- Use of appropriate examination locations – See Section 6.7 for further information
- Re-sits, in the case of temporary illness / injury – see Section 6.9 for further information

This is not an exhaustive list and other adjustments will be considered on a case by case basis. We will consider all requests in line with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

## 5. How much extra time is allowed?

Extra time will be permitted, as appropriate to you, in line with this document ensuring you are not disadvantaged in relation to other candidates.

The standard time extension for our examinations is 25% if you have a disability or are not able to take the exam in your official or native language. You cannot request any more than 25% extra time due to your language.

Up to 100% extra time can be provided due to a disability dependent on your needs if this is requested by an appropriate professional.

All requests for extra time will be considered based on the information supplied; however; in consideration of the amount of extra time requested we must ensure that:

- The credibility of the qualification is maintained
- The validity, reliability and integrity of the examination is preserved
- You are not given, or do not appear to be given an unfair advantage.

## 6. What assistance may I be entitled to?

### 6.1 Support of a Personal Assistant

You can request the support of a personal assistant if you need someone to help with personal care / assistance during the examination. This help will be designed to maintain the effectiveness of the examination. Personal assistants cannot give factual help or offer any suggestions or advice which could be seen as giving you an unfair advantage.

### 6.2 Rest Breaks

You can request rest breaks if you suffer from fatigue, physical or mental disabilities or for religious obligations. The rest break will be part of your extra time request and you can take it any time during the examination. Women who are pregnant are also allowed to use the toilet although no extra time is awarded for pregnant women. It is important that you do not discuss the examination with any third party during any break period.

### 6.3 Support of a Sign Language Interpreter

You can request a sign language interpreter if you are hard of hearing to undertake the role of conversing with others on your behalf. The interpreter can say a phrase or word as well as re-phrasing using sign language or by writing it down for you. They must not give factual help, offer any suggestions or advice which could be seen as giving you an unfair advantage. We would normally expect the candidate to source the interpreter although if this is not possible, BCS will make reasonable efforts to locate a suitable person.

## 6.4 Support of a scribe / amanuensis

You can request a scribe if you have limitations with writing down the answers such as a physical or visual impairment or a specific learning difficulty. The scribe's role will be someone who will write down your dictated answers to the questions. They must write down the answers exactly as they are dictated. They must not give factual help nor offer any suggestions or advice which could be seen as giving you an unfair advantage.

## 6.5 Use of laptop and adaptive technology (also known as assistive or access technology)

You can request the use of adaptive, assistive or access technology which enables you to access computer systems if you have particular needs. Where possible, we would expect you to use your own laptop and software. You will only be able to have access to the relevant programme or programmes and all equipment will be checked by the invigilator prior to the start of the examination. If you cannot use your own equipment BCS will make reasonable efforts to source the same or similar equipment. If BCS is unable to source suitable equipment, then we will advise you accordingly and you will be responsible for either sourcing suitable equipment or using what can be made available to us by BCS. The list below is indicative of the most common assistive technologies available, but should be used as a guideline only.

### Hardware

- Alternative keyboards and mice including:  
Braille labelled keyboards or home-row key indicators; Joysticks / trackerballs / mouse keys on the keyboard; Mouth Stick
- Braille Display
- Switches (alternative input to keyboard and mouse, used by candidates with physical disabilities)
- 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
- Screen magnification software e.g. [Dragon Software](#)
- Screen reading software (supporting both users with visual impairment and dyslexic users) e.g. [browsealoud.com](#), [JAWS software](#) or [NVDA](#)
- Input devices – eye/head operated pointing devices or on-screen keyboards

## 6.6 Support of a Reader

You can request a reader if you have a visual impairment or specific learning difficulties which would benefit from the support of a reader. They will be able to read all or any part of the examination or your answers to you. They can only read the exact wording and must not give meanings of words, rephrase or interpret anything. They should only repeat instructions and questions on the paper when specifically requested to do so by you. They cannot advise you which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be answered.

## 6.7 Use of alternative examination locations

You can request the use of alternative premises to take the examination if this benefits you due to a physical disability. Locations must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act, Health and Safety Regulations (or local equivalent) as well as disability access regulations and ATOs are also required to meet these standards when hosting an examination.

## 6.8 Alternative format of examination papers

You can request changes to the font and/or font colour within reason for paper based examinations. We can also offer different coloured paper; blue, green, yellow or pink for dyslexic candidates.

Please note that these options are not available for candidates taking on-line examinations.

## 6.9 Temporary Illness / Injury

Although a temporary illness or injury or indisposition would not be covered by the Equality Act (or local equivalent), we may still be able to accommodate candidates affected in such a way. You need to complete the Reasonable Adjustments Form and provide supporting evidence of the circumstances and we will try to accommodate your request.

## 6.10 Pregnancy

You are entitled to go to the toilet if you are pregnant but you are not entitled to extra time unless there are other medical conditions that would allow you to request extra time.

## 6.11 Candidates taking an examination not in your official or native language

If the examination is taken in a language that is not your native / official language, then you are entitled to use your own **paper** dictionary (whose purpose is translation between the examination language and another national language) during the examination. Please advise your ATO at the time of course booking if you require extra time.

If you are sitting an on-line examination, then you must complete and return the Extra Time Request form at least 3 working days before the examination. This is because we have to communicate with a third party to allow you the extra time. Extra time will not be allowed on the day if you have not requested this with BCS prior to the examination date and within the 3 working days.

You will not be able to use a dictionary if you sit through an on-line Test Centre.

Electronic dictionaries will **not** be allowed into the examination room.

## 6.12 Stammer / Stutter (Oral Examinations Only)

You can request extra time for an oral examination if you have a stammer or stutter (not for a written examination). We will also try to allocate you the final interview slot of the day so that there are fewer time restrictions on you and the interviewers. Please let us know as early as possible so that the best time slot can be allocated to you. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider written responses to the interviewer questions.

## 6.13 Religious Obligations

You can request a break or different time to start the examination if you need to do so for religious reasons. We will require a written request for this and the contact details for the appropriate religious authority (e.g. imam, minister, rabbi or priest).

## 6.14 Other Reasonable Adjustments

The reasonable adjustment arrangements listed here are not intended to be comprehensive. Other reasonable adjustments will be considered in line with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

# 7. How do I apply for extra time due to a disability?

Complete the [Reasonable Adjustments Request Form](#) (which is on the BCS website) and return it to [eprofessional@bcs.uk](mailto:eprofessional@bcs.uk) with your supporting documentary evidence at least 3 working days before your examination date. Failure to submit your request within 3 working days will result in your request being denied.

We cannot accept requests on the day of the examination.

# 8. How do I apply for extra time because of my language?

## 8.1 Candidates taking a BCS Accredited Course and Examination

You should advise your ATO that you require extra time and they will apply on your behalf. This request must be received by BCS at least 3 working days before your examination date. BCS cannot accept requests on the day of the examination.

## 8.2 Candidates taking a Public Examination

You should advise BCS at least 3 working days before the examination day that you require extra time. BCS cannot accept requests on the day of the examination. You should complete the [Extra Time Request form](#) and return it to BCS at least 3 working days before your examination date.

## 8.3 Candidates taking an on-line examination

You should complete the [Extra Time Request form](#) and return it to BCS at least 3 working days before your examination date.



## 9. What Documentary Evidence is required?

You should provide BCS with documentary evidence which outlines the nature and severity of your disability. It should be from an appropriate independent professional.

| Disability                  | Apply before the exam   | Documentary Evidence   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Visually Impaired Candidate | 50% Extra Time as well as assistive technology / scribe                                       | Appropriate professional providing a written, dated and signed statement<br><b>OR</b><br>Certificate of Registration as blind or partially sighted               |
| Hearing Impaired Candidate  | 25% Extra Time as well as an Interpreter  | Appropriate professional providing a written, dated and signed statement   |
| Dyslexic Candidate          | 25% Extra Time as well as changes to the exam paper – such as background colour and font size | Appropriate professional providing a written, dated and signed statement<br><b>OR</b><br>Report from a Learning Support professional or educational psychologist |
| Other Medical Conditions    | Up to 25% Extra Time as well as assistive technology / scribe                                 | Appropriate professional providing a written, dated and signed statement   |

*A letter from another awarding body approving reasonable adjustments would be considered valid documentary evidence. Please send us a copy of the evidence rather than the original.*

BCS will keep on record all Reasonable Adjustment Request forms and evidence for a period of 5 years after the examination.

If you take another examination with us at a later date you will not need to resubmit the evidence, all you need do is quote your Reasonable Adjustments number and we will be able to authorise the extra time based on your previous application. If you prefer, you can request that we destroy all information once you have passed the examination.

## 10. Details of authorising specific reasonable adjustments

We will consider each request in line with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy and you will be informed in writing of our decision. If we require further information or clarification, we may do this by telephone or email.

## 11. Disclosure and Confidentiality

Information about your disability is deemed 'sensitive personal data' and therefore the BCS and your ATO, if appropriate, are required by law (under the Data Protection Act) to process the information 'fairly and lawfully'. We will keep in confidence all correspondence and documentation received in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Your information will only be made available to those on a 'need to know' basis based on the Equality Act 2010. This will include BCS administrative staff and the invigilator of your

examination as well as people who may be required to assist you during the examination such as a scribe or sign language interpreter.

We are required to provide a monthly report to the Official Accreditor regarding the total number of requests for extra time due to disability and the breakdown of requests. This report will not contain your name or any detailed information about you.

As an example, we will report, 5 extra time requests in January 2015 - 2 of these were for dyslexia and 3 were for hearing impairments. We will not pass on, in written form, any sensitive information without your written consent

## 12. BCS Record Keeping and Reporting

We will record and evaluate all requests, outcomes and feedback. This information will ensure consistency over time and will be available to the Regulatory Authorities on request.

The Equality Act requires that the information held be accurate, relevant and up-to-date and should not be deemed 'excessive'. Information will be kept secure (either in a locked filing cabinet or for electronic information in a restricted folder). We will destroy your information five years after the examination date.

## 13. Candidate Guidance

Arrangements for the use of third parties (such as an interpreter or scribe during the examination) will normally be your responsibility however BCS will take reasonable steps to source suitable persons if you are not able to do so.

Strict guidelines during the examination must be maintained, for example:

1. The support of a reader should be solely to read text and not to advise you. They cannot offer suggestions or any other support, which could be seen as giving you an unfair advantage. We would expect the reader to not have a conflict of interest in undertaking this task, however, we acknowledge that it is appropriate to have had previous working experience with you.
2. Modification to equipment/disability aids and input display devices including adapted keyboard, large monitor, synthesisers must be approved by BCS in advance of the examination.
3. Candidates cannot talk to third parties during Rest/Time Breaks apart from the invigilator.
4. We will ensure that all public examination facilities comply with the relevant legislation for candidates with reasonable adjustments. It is the responsibility of the Accredited Training Organisation to ensure that examinations held on their premises meet the regulatory requirements. Should the location need to accommodate a third-party support, a separate room must be provided.
5. We will ensure that the invigilator or other authorised third party has prior information of your requirements.