

NATIONAL EXAMINING BOARD FOR DENTAL NURSES

Candidate Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- NEBDN complies with its duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments';
- NEBDN has a clear procedure in place for candidates to follow, should they wish to apply for an adjustment to their examination;
- all applications for reasonable adjustments are received, processed and considered in a consistent, fair and timely manner;
- in considering applications, a fair and standardised approach is taken to decision-making.

Scope

Who can apply for an adjustment to their examination?

Any candidate who is registered with NEBDN, or who is going through the registration process, and who has a disability* (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) may apply for an adjustment to be made to their NEBDN examination.

*Disability covers a wide variety of conditions, encompassing long-term illness as well as physical or psychological problems and temporary impairments, for example:

- Vision or hearing impairments;
- Physical impairments;
- Mental health difficulties;
- Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- Long-term health conditions.

This policy also covers NEBDN candidates who wish to apply for an adjustment to their examination date based on religious grounds.

While course providers may assist with an application, the applicant must be the candidate for whom the adjustment is required and the Reasonable Adjustments Application Form must be signed by them.

Policy statement

NEBDN is committed to equality and diversity. Any individual who makes an application for an adjustment to their examination will be treated respectfully and fairly.

This policy is designed to make NEBDN examinations accessible. NEBDN aims to ensure open access to our examinations for candidates who are eligible for reasonable adjustments without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence standard being measured.

Definitions

'Disability'

Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a 'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

'Reasonable Adjustments'

The Equality Act 2010 requires an awarding body to make reasonable adjustments where a candidate who is disabled (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) would be at a **substantial disadvantage** in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The awarding body is required to take **reasonable** steps to overcome that disadvantage.

Adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the candidate an **unfair** advantage over other candidates undertaking the same or similar examinations.

Adjustments must not affect the competence standards against which assessment is made – in the case of NEBDN examinations, the standards that a candidate has to achieve to demonstrate their competence. Adjustments can however affect how the assessment of that standard is carried out.

Whether an adjustment will be considered **reasonable** will depend on a number of factors which include, but are not limited to:

- the needs of the disabled applicant;
- the effectiveness of the adjustment;
- the cost of the adjustment;
- the extent to which the adjustment reflects the normal practice of a person working within the occupational area;
- the likely impact of the adjustment upon the applicant and other candidates.

Adjustments must not put in jeopardy the health and well-being of the candidate or any other person.

'Competence Standard'

A competence standard is defined as an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level

of competence or ability. The application by an awarding body of a competence standard to a disabled person is not disability discrimination.

“Exemption”

An exemption is an agreement for a candidate to miss a component or components of an examination.

Responsibilities

The Education Committee is responsible for reviewing this policy on a regular basis to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with current legislation. The committee will be guided by feedback from NEBDN staff members who operate the policy, in particular the Operations Manager and the Admissions and Customer Support team.

The responsibility for implementing this policy lies with NEBDN staff, examiners and invigilators, particularly those involved in registering candidates and in organising and managing examinations.

Confidentiality

Applications for reasonable adjustments will be dealt with in a confidential manner. Everyone involved in the process has a duty to maintain confidentiality. However, in order to consider the application and/or to make the approved adjustments, it will be necessary to disclose the identity of the candidate to NEBDN staff members, examiners, exam centres, external suppliers and to anyone else who may be directly involved in the organisation of the examination. NEBDN may also need to contact the applicant’s course provider and we may need to provide relevant parties with a copy of the application and any evidence relating to it.

In submitting a signed Reasonable Adjustments Application Form to NEBDN, applicants should understand that they are verifying that they have read the Reasonable Adjustments Policy and they are giving permission for NEBDN to use the information they have provided in their application in accordance with the policy and for the purposes of making an adjustment to their examination(s).

If candidates have any questions, concerns or alternative instructions in regard to confidentiality and the way in which NEBDN will use their information, they should contact NEBDN before they submit their application.

References

Assessment policy
Data Protection policy
Equality Act 2010
Equality and Diversity policy
Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances policy
General Dental Council ‘Standards for the Dental Team’ (standard 2.1.2)

Questions

If you have any questions about this policy, please email NEBDN at info@nebdn.org and your enquiry will be directed to the appropriate member of staff.

Reasonable Adjustments Application Procedure

While course providers may assist with an application, the applicant must be the candidate for whom the adjustment is required and the Reasonable Adjustments Application Form must be signed by them.

What we can do

Every application for examination adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis. An adjustment may be unique to an individual and consequently not included in the following list of available examination adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments to an examination may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Examination on a different day of the week (*religious grounds only*)
- Disabled access
- Additional time in an examination
- Documents on coloured paper
- Coloured overlay
- Documents in a larger font size
- Written information in place of verbal information
- An assistant to act as a reader
- An assistant to act as a scribe
- Separate examination room and invigilator
- Opportunities to take supervised rest breaks
- Examiners/invigilators to be made aware of a medical condition
- A place of privacy to take medication

It is important to note that not all the adjustments listed will be reasonable, permissible or practical in every situation or for every NEBDN examination. Applicants may not need, or may not be allowed, the same adjustment for all examinations.

Limitations

1. NEBDN is a charity and receives its funding from exam fees. Whilst every effort will be made to consider an adjustment, consideration will also be given to the overall cost of it to the organisation and the impact it would have on the costs to other candidates.
2. An adjustment cannot be granted where it will compromise the assessment objectives or integrity of the examination or where it will affect the competence standards against which assessment is made.

3. The General Dental Council's 'Standards for the Dental Team' (2.1.2) states:

"You must be sufficiently fluent in written and spoken English to communicate effectively with patients, their relatives, the dental team and other healthcare professionals in the United Kingdom."

Applicants may not therefore apply for an adjustment on the basis that English is not their first language.

4. In some instances, an adjustment may not be feasible within a small examination centre and under these circumstances the applicant must be prepared to attend a larger examination centre elsewhere.
5. Where a person is appointed to facilitate an adjustment (for example, a reader or a scribe) the person appointed cannot be the candidate's own tutor or a relative or friend.
6. For clarity, NEBDN do not grant exemptions from any of their examinations.

How we decide what is 'reasonable'

The Equality Act does not specify what is 'reasonable' but guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests that the most relevant factors are:

Will the adjustment help in overcoming the difficulties that the disabled person may have?

The adjustment will need to be designed to fully address the disadvantage it is meant to overcome. For example, providing access for a wheelchair user to the room in which the examination is to be held as well as ensuring that there are appropriate disabled toilet facilities.

How practical is it to provide the adjustment?

The earlier NEBDN know that an adjustment is required, the more likely it is that it will be reasonable something to be done about it. For example, if an applicant arrives at an exam centre on the date of their exam and asks for an adjustment to be made without first having applied for it, it is unlikely that we will be able to reasonably accommodate the request.

What are the resource implications of making the adjustment?

NEBDN receives its funding from exam fees. Whilst every effort will be made to consider an adjustment, consideration will also need to be given to the overall cost of the adjustment to the organisation and the impact it might have on other candidates.

Would the adjustment cause disruption to others?

NEBDN will need to be sure that other candidates are not disadvantaged through the exam team having to devote all their time to one person, for example.

Applying for an adjustment

Applications for an adjustment should be submitted on the correct form with the required supporting evidence and, as far as possible, be submitted before the exam entry closing date.

Applicants are advised that NEBDN is unable to guarantee adjustments for applications received at NEBDN Head Office after the relevant exam entry closing date as it may not be reasonable or practical to do so. This particularly applies to applications where additional rooms or invigilators are required at exam centres or where examination papers are affected.

Applications which are accepted for consideration may be:

- a) approved
- b) part-approved
- c) not approved

Outcomes of applications will be confirmed directly to the applicant in writing.

If disability or impairment occurs between exam entry closing date and exam day

It is recognised that in some situations it may not be possible for a candidate to apply for an adjustment before the relevant exam entry closing date. For example, in the event that a disability or impairment occurs in the interim period between the exam entry closing date and the day of the exam.

In these circumstances, a candidate may still apply for an adjustment and NEBDN will make every effort to accommodate the applicant's requirements. However, depending on the request, it may not be reasonable or practical to do so.

In the event that NEBDN is unable to make the adjustment, the applicant will be informed of any other course of action available to them. For example, it may be possible for the applicant to choose to defer to a later examination.

If disability or impairment occurs on exam day

Where disability or impairment occurs unexpectedly on exam day, the Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances Policy may apply.

Evidence of Need

Supporting documentary evidence must be submitted with the completed application form. This may take the form of, but is not limited to, a medical report or letter from a qualified medical professional or educational psychologist, for example.

For applications based on religious grounds, a letter or statement from the candidate's religious representative should be obtained.

The applicant must be able to support their application by supplying evidence of one or more of the following:

- a) the candidate is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010;
- b) the candidate has an impairment or medical condition which has a substantial and long term adverse effect, giving rise to persistent and significant difficulties;
- c) the candidate has a temporary injury, medical condition or impairment at the time of the examination;
- d) the candidate has relevant religious grounds for their application.

Pregnancy

For the purposes of this policy, pregnancy is classed as a medical condition. Candidates who know they will be pregnant at the time of their examination are encouraged to notify us as soon as possible by submitting a Reasonable Adjustments Application Form as outlined in this policy. A statement from a medical professional or a copy of a MATB1 form is required as supporting evidence.

Religious Grounds

Candidates applying for an adjustment to their examination date based on religious grounds should apply by submitting a Reasonable Adjustments Application Form as outlined in this policy. A statement or letter from the candidate's religious representative is required supporting evidence.

Timescale

Applications for Reasonable Adjustments can be submitted to NEBDN Head Office at any point from when the candidate registers with NEBDN. However, it is strongly advised that applications are submitted to NEBDN at the earliest opportunity so that candidates can be reassured of an outcome well in advance of their examination.

In particular, where it is known from the outset that a candidate will need an adjustment for their examination, the application could be submitted with, or soon after, the candidate registration form. For example, where a medical condition already exists or where a specific learning disability has already been diagnosed or if the application is based on religious grounds – in these cases there is likely to be little reason to delay the application for an adjustment.

In all cases, applicants are strongly advised to submit their applications before the exam entry closing date. This is to allow sufficient time for NEBDN to consider applications and to make arrangements for the required adjustments.

Applicants should allow up to 28 working days for receipt of written confirmation from NEBDN about the outcome of an application.

CHECKLIST – Application for Reasonable Adjustments

If you are submitting an application for an examination adjustment, please check that you have:

1. Completed the application on the correct form.
Current application form available on our website at www.nebdn.org
2. Attached documentary evidence in support of your application.
Refer to information under 'Evidence of Need' in this policy
3. Applied, as far as possible, before the relevant exam entry closing date.
Closing dates are available on our website at www.nebdn.org