

Adaptations to Assessment Policy

Introduction

ATHE qualifications are, in the main, achieved by the completion of written assignments that are included within a portfolio of evidence. The assignments completed by learners are based either on ATHE sample assignments that are provided to centres or ATHE approved centre devised assignments.

As the majority of ATHE qualifications are assignment and/or task based, bringing together a portfolio of evidence and are not time-bound, this offers centres flexibility in their assessment approaches. The opportunity to adapt delivery and assessment to suit remote working and online engagement already exists.

ATHE recognises that in certain circumstances changes to the method of assessment may be needed. This is over and above existing policies relating to reasonable adjustments and special considerations and their associated processes. The purpose of this policy is to establish the principle that whilst ensuring validity, ATHE may take a flexible approach in certain instances to ensure that learners have access to assessment and are not disadvantaged. This will ensure compliance with the relevant Ofqual Conditions, the Conditions set by other Regulators and the associated requirements and guidance.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is aimed at ATHE centres and learners, who are using ATHE qualifications. It sets out the principle that assessments may be adapted without changing the standards and level of the qualification, to meet a particular need or set of circumstances where teaching and assessment are significantly disrupted by a major event, including:

- Global pandemic, as with COVID-19 restrictions
- National emergency, such as a natural disaster
- Local incident, such as flooding impacting on access to learning and assessment and the usability of resources
- Centre incident, such as a fire where learner work and materials are lost.

Audience for the Policy

This document should be of significance to curriculum managers, exams officers, heads of centres, teaching staff and learners who use ATHE qualifications.

Adaptations to Assessments

Adaptations to assessment may take place following:

- consultation with centres and in accordance with guidelines from the Regulators. Based on the information, ATHE may apply a standard adaptation to assessment for a qualification(s) for a specified period of time and inform centres of the decision. It is imperative that any decisions are communicated immediately to tutors and learners, so that no individuals are disadvantaged.
- an application to ATHE with a request to adapt a method of assessment for a qualification, the application being made in advance of carrying out any assessment.

ATHE will consider individual applications based on the merit of the rationale put forward by the centre.

The circumstances surrounding the decisions are not exhaustive but may include a situation where the learner will be disadvantaged by a major disruption to teaching and assessment practice, which cannot reasonably be mitigated by the existing policies and flexibilities within ATHE qualifications. Circumstances may also relate to where awarding organisations are directed to make adaptations to a specification and/or associated standards by the Regulators.

In line with regulatory requirements and guidance, adaptations may include:

- Adaptations to the design, setting, delivery or marking of an assessment for an ATHE qualification, for example:
 - by using an online rather than paper-based test, or carrying out an assessment remotely rather than face-to-face
 - by using a practical simulation in place of an observation, or professional discussion in place of a practical demonstration, or
 - by withdrawing a task in an assignment or withdrawing the need to complete an optional unit.
- Calculation of results based on the level of attainment demonstrated by a learner in an adapted assessment, such as the use of predicted grades based on evidence including, where available:
 - the level of attainment of previous learners at the centre in assessments for the qualification
 - relevant differences in the profile of learners in the current cohort at the centre in comparison with previous cohorts
 - previous formal and informal assessments for current learners
 - mock examinations/tests for current learners, and
 - classwork and assignment work for current learners.
- Continuing use of Teacher Assessed Grades to determine results, in line with the published hierarchy of principles, that:
 - are evidence-based to ensure validity and reliability
 - reflect the Learner's level of attainment as demonstrated by relevant evidence and assessments taken
 - do not advantage or disadvantage different Learners taking the same qualification
 - do not advantage or disadvantage Learners taking that qualification against their peers taking similar VTQs or GQs not covered by the VCR Framework
 - minimises burdens and is deliverable
 - maintains standards with the same qualification in line with previous years
 - maintains standards with similar qualifications available from ATHE and other awarding organisations.

Adaptations agreed by ATHE will be time-bound to address the specific issues being faced and may include an extension to the period of learning where appropriate.

Adaptations should ensure that learners are able to achieve the qualification without compromising the validity and integrity of the qualification. If approved, a written record must

be completed by the centre that details the adaptation made and the documented evidence relied upon to make the assessment decision and outcome – this must be made available to ATHE or an ATHE External Quality Assurer on request. This is to ensure there is a clear and detailed audit trail of the adaptation and how this has been applied.

In line with regulatory requirements, ATHE will also maintain a record in the required format of the adaptation, the reason for it, the method and evidence used, and the decisions made.

Submitting Requests for Adaptations and Recording Decisions

Request for adaptations should be submitted by email in the first instance to ATHE Customer Service at info@athe.co.uk outlining the rationale for the request, the potential impact on learners if an adaptation is not made and details of what format the adaptation is proposed to take. Receipt will be acknowledged within 48 hours. In urgent cases of disruption to teaching and assessment, centres should contact the ATHE Chief Executive directly at alex.birks@athe.co.uk.

The request will be considered by the Head of Quality & Assessment Manager (HQA) in conjunction with the CEO at ATHE. A written response will be issued within five working days and further information and a meeting may be requested from the applicant in support of the request.

A final decision on the adaptation will be communicated to the applicant in writing by the HQA, and the required Ofqual documentation will be completed as above to record any agreed changes to assessment. This will be submitted to the Regulator on request.