



Policy for Access Arrangements at BHS Assessments

V4.6

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Contact details for the BHS Education Team:

Address: BHS Education
Abbey Park
Stareton
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2XZ

Telephone: 02476 840508

Email: education@bhs.org.uk

Policy reference sheet – Policy for Access Arrangements at BHS Assessments

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4.6	5	Section 6 added to outline standard support offered at assessments.	06/2026
	7-8	Added further information for adjustments that cannot be applied to assessment and when signposting to alternative qualifications may be required.	
	8-9	Additional guidance provided regarding supporting evidence.	
	9	Updated guidance for application processing.	
	11	Added guidance for how BHS comply with BHSQ requirements with regards to managing access arrangement applications	
	12	Added guidance for when BHS report data to BHSQ	

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1. Introduction

British Horse Society (BHS) is committed to making sure all its activities are conducted fairly, transparently, objectively and free from bias.

BHS aims to promote equality, diversity and inclusivity within assessment. Adjustments to assessment may be needed to support candidates to succeed. However, health and safety and the integrity of the qualification must not be compromised.

We believe in making our assessments welcoming for everyone. Our assessors are already trained to help by rephrasing questions, giving candidates time to think, and generally being patient and understanding. If a candidate feels they have a very specific need that goes beyond this standard support, then applying for an access arrangement might be right for them.

There may be circumstances where elements of our qualifications are not accessible to all. This policy will help to explain the adjustments BHS can make during assessment, and adjustments that can't be made to our assessments for work-related qualifications. It is worth reiterating that the integrity of the qualification must be maintained at all times. In these instances, we'll support by signposting to other qualifications that may better suit individual learner needs.

This document has been created in line with the approach taken by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB). JCQ's Guidance for Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration and FAB's The Application of Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations in Vocational Qualifications.

2. Scope and application

This policy applies to:

- Assessments delivered by the BHS Education Team. This includes qualifications awarded by BHS and BHSQ.
- BHS recreational awards.

This policy is for:

- Candidates.
- Assessors and Internal Quality Assurers.
- Approved assessment centres.
- Trainers.
- BHS employees.
- Others as relevant.

3. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this policy is to detail access arrangements for assessments delivered by the BHS Education Team. It also includes the types of access arrangements that can be applied for, how to do this and what happens with the application.

This document will:

- Define access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.
- Detail the BHS's approach to special consideration at BHS assessments.
- Detail the BHS's approach to access arrangements at BHS assessments.

- Detail the responsibility of the candidate and, if applicable, their trainer when applying for access arrangements at BHS assessments.
- Detail the responsibility of the BHS Education Team, BHS Approved assessment centres and BHS assessors when managing access arrangements.
- Detail the approach to access arrangements for BHS recreational products and awards.
- Detail how to complain or appeal against access arrangements outcomes.

It's useful to refer to the following documents and policies when reading this:

- [Privacy Notice](#)
- [Terms and Conditions for BHS Assessments](#)
- [Everyone Welcome](#) (BHS policy for Diversity, Equality and Inclusion)
- [Complaints Policy for Qualifications](#)
- [Appeals Policy for Qualifications](#)

4. Terms and Definitions

Access arrangements include **reasonable adjustments** and **access to fair assessment**. Access arrangements are agreed before an assessment.

Reasonable adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment. They allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs or a disability to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment.

Access to fair assessment is where a candidate does not require any adjustments to assessment because their disability, condition or injury does not require it. However, it may be useful for the assessor or others to understand the situation prior to assessment.

A **special consideration** is where the candidate's circumstances, for example, a temporary illness, or some other event outside of the candidate's control, impacts the candidate's ability to take the assessment. For example, an emotional shock or trauma.

Assessor is used throughout the document referring to any BHS contracted personnel at BHS assessments. For the purpose of this document it includes the role of Assessor, Internal Quality Assurer and Assessor Mentor, as applicable.

BHS assessments are those delivered for Stage 1-4, Coaching4All, Riding Out, BHSI and Fellowship qualifications only.

Approved assessment centre or **assessment centre** is any location where a BHS assessment is taking place.

Candidate is used throughout the document referring to anyone training towards BHS/BHSQ qualifications and when they take their assessment. This also includes learners, students and trainees.

Trainer is any professional supporting the candidate to train for BHS/BHSQ qualifications and prepare for their assessment. This could be, but is not limited to, a BHS Accredited Professional Coach or employees within a BHS Approved Riding School.

British Horse Society Qualifications (BHSQ) is the awarding organisation for British Horse Society. They are recognised and regulated by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in

England, Qualifications Scotland Accreditation, Qualifications Wales (QW) and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland. BHS are a centre for delivery of BHSQ qualifications at Stage 2, 3 and 4.

5. Special consideration at assessment

Safety is paramount in equine and as a consequence we cannot offer special consideration. Candidates may transfer to another assessment or receive a partial refund in line with our booking terms and conditions (see medical transfer or refund).

6. Standard support at assessment

We understand that any assessment can feel daunting. BHS Assessors are all experienced to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for every candidate. This includes **standard support measures** such as:

- Rephrasing or repeating questions for clarity.
- Providing sufficient time for candidates to think and respond.
- Being patient, calm, and understanding throughout the assessment.

Our standard assessment timings allow for a patient and empathetic approach.

If a candidate's requests are within our standard support, there's no need to apply for access arrangements. This support is offered to all candidates.

If a candidate has a specific need that goes beyond this standard support, either access to fair assessment or reasonable adjustment may be applied for.

BHS provides information and guidance to help manage expectations of assessment method and delivery. Candidates should refer to the syllabus, example assessment timings and training videos, which are available on the BHS website. BHS can also support candidates to choose an assessment centre that may better suit their needs, for example a quieter/smaller assessment centre or one that is holding an assessment with smaller candidate numbers. If you'd like to discuss the assessment delivery in more detail please contact the BHS Education Team.

7. Access to fair assessment at assessment

Access to fair assessment would be applied for if the candidate wants to make the assessor/s and/or assessment centre aware of their disability, injury, condition, or other aspect. However, the candidate doesn't require any adjustments to assessment. This ensures candidates are supported effectively.

An access to fair assessment notification is required to be applied for before the assessment takes place. We cannot transfer an access to fair assessment application between assessments or resits. The candidate is required to submit an application for each assessment they will be taking where they wish to notify the assessor of a specific need. This is to ensure that we have relevant and current information to support the candidate.

Examples of access to fair assessment, and not reasonable adjustment, may include:

- A candidate has injured their shoulder which limits movement. They want the assessor to be aware of this for the riding unit.

- A candidate has colour blindness and requests the assessors do not identify the jumping efforts by colour.
- A candidate has diabetes making assessors aware that they may need to take a break in between sections to administer medication.
- A candidate requires a helper to move poles.

In neither of these cases is assessment affected.

Refer to section 10 for further details on how to apply.

8. Reasonable adjustments at assessment

The Equality Act 2010* requires an awarding organisation to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled candidate, within the definition of the Equality Act 2010, would be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. The BHS and BHSQ are required to take reasonable steps to overcome that disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments cannot be made to the assessment criteria. To achieve a unit or qualification, a candidate must pass all the assessment criteria within the qualification specification.

Adjustments to assessments:

- must not affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes.
- must not give the candidate an unfair advantage.
- must be based on the individual needs of the candidate.
- must be supported by appropriate and valid evidence.
- must be approved before assessment.

The BHS is required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health, safety and welfare (for candidates, horses and others), will be taken into consideration.

As the knowledge, skills and understanding required for each qualification is different, the candidate may not need, nor be allowed, the same adjustment for all assessments. For this reason, we cannot transfer a reasonable adjustment between assessments or resits. The candidate is required to submit a reasonable adjustment application with supporting evidence for each assessment they will be taking where they wish to request an adjustment. This is to ensure that we have the specific reasonable adjustment in place to support the candidate.

In some cases, particularly for temporary disabilities or difficulties, (for example an injury), it may be best for the candidate to wait until they are no longer affected by the condition or difficulty before taking their assessment, rather than having a reasonable adjustment applied.

9. Reasonable adjustments that can be applied to BHS assessments

At BHS assessments, the types of adjustments applied may include, but not be limited to:

1. The location of the assessment, for example a candidate with a hearing impairment requires a quiet room for oral questioning. Due to BHS assessments taking place in working yards, with differing facilities, it may not be possible to implement reasonable adjustment requests of this nature at all assessment centres.
2. Minor changes to the organisation or layout of the assessment area may benefit some candidates with autistic spectrum disorder, a visual or hearing impairment or with physical difficulties. Due to BHS assessments taking place in working yards, with differing facilities it may not be possible to implement reasonable adjustment requests of this nature at all assessment centres.
3. The timing of the assessment. In each qualification specification there is a time allowance for a unit. If a candidate requires additional time because of a disability or long-term health condition this may be considered via a reasonable adjustment application. Any extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the candidate's difficulty. Extra time must not compromise the standard. Extra time will not be approved where timing is an explicit part of the assessment, for example a coaching assessment. Where extra time is approved, the qualification may have to be assessed across multiple dates.
4. Changes to the usual assessment arrangements or assessment method. For example, a specific request regarding when, where or how an assessment is delivered. The evidence must fully support the reasons for this type of request, particularly what it is about the disability or condition that requires this change to the assessment.
5. The availability or use of specialist equipment or tack is allowed if this is generally commercially available, reflects the candidate's normal way of working and does not put them at an unfair advantage. The equipment must not compromise horse welfare or horse and/or rider/handler safety. The BHS Education Team may provisionally confirm the use of specialist equipment prior to assessment. The Lead Assessor will then inspect this equipment on the day of assessment. They will confirm whether it is suitable to use.
6. The size or type of horse used. For example, for a candidate with a physical disability it may be more suitable to work with a smaller horse or pony within a Care assessment.
7. Support personnel such as British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.

10. Reasonable adjustments that cannot be applied to assessments

Examples of reasonable adjustments that cannot be applied to BHS Assessments:

1. Requests for a reader or scribe are not required for an assessment of a practical nature as reading or writing is not a requirement.
2. Support personnel such as a chaperone can support a candidate getting to and from the assessment centre and be with the candidate during breaks in assessment. However support personnel (other than BSL interpreters) are not allowed to be with the candidate whilst the assessment is taking place. This is to maintain safety, security of assessment and fairness for all learners. BHS qualifications are work-related and may lead to employment. They are industry delivered which means the candidate works independently, completing each individual criteria on their own.
3. Requests to use specialist equipment that puts the candidate at an advantage over others.

4. Supervised rest breaks during the completion of a task are usually not allowed; as speed or time is generally a component of the assessment. During an assessment, natural breaks in between tasks do occur.

5. A trauma-informed trained assessor. This cannot be provided as BHS assessors are not accredited in this practice. While our assessors are trained to assess in an empathetic way, they only work with candidates for a short period of time (up to one day). We've evaluated our assessments and trauma-informed practitioners are not required for this type of activity.

6. The use of sensory aids or toys, for example "fidget toys" will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Horses are flight animals and react quickly to noise or visual stimuli. A sensory aid must be silent, non-electronic, not visually distracting to other candidates or horse and not capable of storing information. A sensory aid must not affect health and safety of a candidate. A sensory aid must not affect the candidate's ability to safely complete practical tasks required. The BHS Education Team may provisionally confirm the use of a sensory aid before assessment. This will be reviewed and risk assessed by the assessor at the assessment and before beginning or continuing with assessment. The approval of the aid can be withdrawn at any time during assessment. If a candidate has a condition that affects attention regulation, BHS would recommend taking their assessment in smaller manageable sessions across multiple days. Short breaks are planned at assessments.

In instances where a candidate requires adjustments that cannot be applied to BHS assessments, we'll do our best to work with the candidate to find a suitable solution. If the candidate feels they are still unable to access the assessment, BHS can provide guidance to other qualifications. There are multiple routes into equine, for example Work Based Diplomas or Apprenticeships, which may better suit specific learner needs for assessment.

11. Process for applying for access arrangements

11.1 Application

Applications are managed by the BHS Education Team.

The candidate must have a confirmed assessment booking in place before applying for access arrangements.

An application can be made by the candidate or a member of their support network. Apply online via the [Access Arrangements Application Form](#). The application must include detailed information regarding the candidate's situation and the support or arrangement being requested. Once an online application form is submitted, the applicant will receive an email receipt. If this is not received within 24 hours, it is the applicant's responsibility to contact the BHS Education Team.

11.2 Supporting evidence

Supporting evidence is not required if applying for access to fair assessment. However, a candidate can submit evidence if they wish.

A reasonable adjustment request must be supported by evidence which is valid, sufficient and reliable. The supporting evidence must be relevant to the demands of the qualification and the types of activities the learner will be assessed against. Evidence may include, but is not limited to, a signed letter from a medical practitioner or learning support provider, a medical report or psychological assessment report, or a formal letter from the relevant disability/support group.

To ensure that any adjustment will only provide the candidate with the necessary assistance required without giving them an unfair advantage over others, the application and supporting evidence must clearly explain the extent to which the candidate is affected by the disability or difficulty. The application and supporting evidence must clearly identify the nature of the adjustment being requested. For example, if extra time is being requested, the application must identify how much extra time the candidate may need based on the candidate's normal way of working and informal assessments during learning and training. It is not for BHS to decide this. The candidate should have experience of and practice in the use or application of the adjustment.

If an application is approved, supporting evidence will not be shared with the assessor as standard. If the candidate requires specific details from the supporting evidence to be shared with the assessor, this must be made clear in their application.

11.3 Application timeframe

Access arrangements must be agreed before the assessment day.

The BHS Education Team cannot accept requests for access arrangements within 15 working days of an assessment. This ensures there is sufficient time for any adjustment to be arranged. If a candidate requires access arrangements, we recommend they book their assessment at least six weeks in advance and submit an access arrangement application as soon as possible thereafter.

11.4 Application processing

Applications are considered on an individual basis. If we consider that there is insufficient evidence to approve an application, we may request further evidence. For example, we may contact the candidate or a member of their support network (for example a parent or guardian if the candidate is under 18 years of age), their trainer, a professional disability organisation or their medical practitioner. This is so we can gather information about the candidate's requirements, their training, and how we may be able to support them.

If there is a concern the reasonable adjustment requested or the effects of a person's disability or difficulty may have health, safety and/or welfare implications for themselves, for others, or for horses, the BHS Education Team will complete a risk assessment. This will identify risk associated with activities required within the assessment and will take into account any reasonable adjustments. BHS may ask the candidate's trainer to provide the risk assessment.

BHS may refer to BHSQ during the processing of an application if further advice or guidance is required.

We will inform the candidate of the outcome of their application. If we cannot confirm an outcome before the assessment, we may cancel or defer the assessment. The candidate will not incur a fee for this if the application was made within the accepted timeframe. The BHS Education Team will not allow the candidate to continue with the assessment without access arrangements in place if this affects health and safety.

11.5 Assessment transfers and cancellations

If a candidate with a confirmed access arrangement wants to transfer their assessment, they can do so following our [booking terms and conditions](#) for BHS Assessments.

If an assessment is transferred, the candidate should notify the BHS Education Team of their access arrangement application at the time of transfer. If the transferred date of assessment is within one month of the original assessment date, the access arrangement application will be transferred. If the transferred date of assessment is more than one month from the original assessment date, the BHS Education Team

will consult with the candidate to confirm if the access arrangement application is still relevant and required.

If an assessment is cancelled and the candidate withdrawn, should the candidate rebook the assessment, a new access arrangement application must be applied for.

11.6 Candidate checklist and summary for access arrangement applications

This is guidance only and does not reflect the full scope of the policy. Ensure you refer to this and related policies for further details.

Guidance checklist for access arrangement applications

1. Identify if a reasonable adjustment or access to fair assessment request is required for your training and BHS assessment. Your trainer will support you with this. Use the definitions within this Policy to help you.
2. With the support of your trainer, decide on what the reasonable adjustment or access to fair assessment request/s will be.
3. Book your BHS assessment. We recommend to book at least six weeks in advance as this gives you time to organise and submit your access arrangement application.
4. If you are requesting a reasonable adjustment, you must have supporting evidence to submit with your application. Make arrangements for this if this is something you need to organise.
5. Apply for your access arrangement online via our [Access Arrangements Application Form](#) within our application timeframe. Provide as much information as possible regarding your circumstances and what arrangements you are applying for. If applying for a reasonable adjustment you will need to include supporting evidence with your application at this point. You will also need to tell us:
 - a. Your BHS membership number
 - b. Your date of birth
 - c. Contact details for us to update you on your application
 - d. Trainer or training centre details
 - e. The type of assessment, date and assessment centre you are applying access arrangements for

If you have booked more than one assessment you will need to submit an access arrangement application for each assessment you have booked if your request/s relate to each type of assessment.

6. The BHS Education Team will consider your application. During this time, yourself, a member of your support network or your trainer may be contacted to provide further information.
7. The BHS Education Team will inform you on the outcome of your application by email.
8. If you wish to transfer your assessment, you should inform the BHS Education Team of your access arrangement application at the point of transfer.

12. Responsibility of the BHS Education Team when managing access arrangements

The BHS Education Team will support candidates by ensuring that:

- The reasonable adjustment provides the candidate with the opportunity to demonstrate competence against the assessment criteria where practicable.
- The assessment is reliable, fair and valid.

The BHS Education Team will support assessment centres and assessors by ensuring that:

- Appropriate guidance is provided on the application of access arrangements and their implementation.
- The BHS Education Team consult with the assessment centre and/or the assessor/s if required.
- Information on confirmed applications is provided, if relevant.
- There is a point of contact to discuss access arrangements with.

The BHS Education Team will monitor the management of access arrangements by:

- Internal quality assurance (IQA) activities may be carried out according to the BHS Education Team IQA policy.
- Maintain, review and analyse a register to ensure that the applications granted are consistent and appropriate.
- Ensuring BHS Education Team employees understand the approach to managing access arrangements.
- Ensuring BHS appointed Internal Quality Assurers understand BHS's approach to managing access arrangements and are able to offer guidance and support.

The BHS Education Team will comply with BHSQ's requirements by:

- Maintaining accurate records of all applications
- Provide information on applications where known external quality assurance (EQA) activity is happening at assessment
- Contacting BHSQ for further advice and guidance when processing applications, in line with BHSQ Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Working with BHSQ to resolve any actions regarding access arrangements.

13. Record keeping

BHS must maintain records of all applications for audit and monitoring purposes. This includes:

- All submitted access arrangement requests and accompanying information provided.
- The decision for each application along with evidence of it being communicated to the applicant.

- Evidence of the application outcome being communicated to the assessor/s and, if required, the assessment centre.

Records will be maintained securely. Data will be processed for the purpose of providing access arrangements at a specific assessment date. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

Personal data held as part of an access arrangement application, including supporting evidence, will be held for 3 months after the candidate's assessment date. This is in case of complaint or appeal. If a complaint or appeal is lodged, the application and supporting evidence will be kept until the complaint or appeal is resolved. After this time, the evidence will be disposed securely.

Information regarding access arrangements concerning regulated qualifications will need to be provided to BHSQ as part of an annual return. This information is anonymised.

Please refer to the [BHS Privacy Policy](#) for further information about how we use personal data.

14. Complaints and Appeals regarding access arrangements

If a candidate is not satisfied with the management of their access arrangement, they can use the BHS's complaints or appeals procedure. Links to these policies are on page 4 of this document.

15. Access arrangements for awards within the BHS Education Team's recreational offer/pathway

This includes:

- Pony Stars
- Horse Explorers
- Challenge Awards.

The training and delivery of these products is organised by the BHS Approved Centre or Accredited Professional Coach. For candidates taking these awards there is no requirement to apply for access arrangements to the BHS Education Team. In these instances, the candidate should discuss their requirements with their coach or others before they begin.

If a candidate is not satisfied with the Approved Centre or Accredited Professional Coach's management of their access arrangements, they should follow the complaints procedure for the Approved Centre or Accredited Professional Coach in question.

If the complaint between the candidate and the Approved Centre or Accredited Professional Coach cannot be resolved, the candidate can make a formal complaint to BHS regarding the Approved Centre or Accredited Professional Coach's conduct. The candidate should follow the BHS's [Raising a Concern](#) procedure.