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Learning Support, Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy (Incl. RARPA)

Version 1.0

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Learning Support Policy, Reasonable Adjustments and Considerations (Inc. RAPP):

This policy provides the overview of learning support, reasonable adjustment, special consideration measures and resources to ensure successful and timely achievement of apprenticeship standards of all pathways and levels with Firebrand Training.

Learning Mentor:

Firebrand Training will ensure that there are sufficient qualified Learning Mentors to meet the me/learner ratio that allows for regular contact and sufficient formative/summative assessment.

Progression and learning support activities are always conducted by appropriately qualified and occupationally expert mentors. Staff development is provided for Learning Mentors, Technical Subject Experts and QAO's and guided by the identified needs of the individual and the operational delivery of Firebrand Trainings apprenticeship programmes. Learner allocation is matched against the requirements of the qualification and the appropriately skilled/qualified Learning Mentor.

Learning Mentors have sufficient time, resources, and authority to perform their roles and effectively. Their output is monitored monthly in line with organisational KPI's, and any areas of underperformance are addressed in line with the Firebrand Training operational capability policy. Resources are made available in line with identified needs required for qualification achievement. Equipment and accommodation used for the purposes of assessment comply with the requirements of relevant health and safety acts.

Subject Matter Expert:

The unique role of the Firebrand Technical Subject Matter Expert ensures that every qualification we deliver is backed by industry champions so as to ensure relevance and to support the provision of technical skills and knowledge at the highest level. There exists no learner caseload allocation however each Technical Subject Matter Expert will be responsible for all achievers within their respective qualification remit.

The primary role of the Firebrand Technical Subject Matter Expert (SME) is to prepare the learner and gauge readiness for EPA Gateway. This is achieved through working in tandem with the QAO (Quality Assurance Officer) to complete a final evaluation of learner submitted work project/significant tasks, whilst providing individualised technical mentoring and support of the knowledge components, running practice EPA sessions and to support employers in providing the learner necessary exposure to the mandatory competencies of the qualification in order to build skills and knowledge as expected of a distinction level achiever. Additional responsibilities include supporting new business acquisition and providing detailed qualification overviews at POS (Point of Sale) where required. Product training will be provided periodically by this role to Sales and Marketing departments.

Quality Assurance Officer:

It is the policy of Firebrand Training that Learning Mentors will be allocated a nominated Quality Assurance Officer appointment for each qualification they assess within. Internal quality assurance is always conducted by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Learning Mentors may have one QAO for all of their awards or they may have different QAO's depending upon the award(s) they are working within, however predominantly there will be one QAO allocated per Operations Manager and their respective Learning Mentors.

The QAO's will indicate to the Head of Apprenticeship Quality and the Operations Managers any positive feedback to be given to the Learning Mentor and any issues or concerns they would like discussed. The QAO will then feedback to the Learning Mentor any points raised by any sampling/direct observation and record on the sampling plan and QAO report, documenting any action points raised from this activity. This is bolstered by monthly 1:1 session with allocated Learning Mentors which may include their respective Operations Manager where required.

Best practice and areas for further improvement are used to drive standardisation in order to achieve the highest possible levels of teaching, learning, assessment, and individualised learner mentoring.

Learner Support

The Firebrand Apprenticeships learner allocation support policy will comply with the basic principles of ethics, legality, prudence, equality, safety, timeliness, fairness, transparency, and simplicity.

In order to ensure that the provision of learner support is appropriate to meet the principles set out above, our policy is to ensure that:

- Firebrand will provide relevant pre-entry information and guidance about the contents, assessment and demands of each programme to enable effective selection of programmes of study
- Firebrand will provide information on the range of support services available and how to access these services.
- Firebrand, through application and throughout programme delivery, will encourage all apprentices/learners to discuss their learning needs and aspirations with their Learning Mentor or other Firebrand staff so as to allow effective planning and appropriate learner support. Learners have an opportunity to disclose any learning difficulties/disabilities on application and/or at enrolment or at any time during their time on programme.
- Individual learner needs are reviewed and identified at the start of their programme and appropriate resources and/or strategies provided to respond to those needs effectively.
- Learner progress is critically analysed and reported on monthly through the structured Operations Meetings so as to best allocate on-programme support to improve progress through to achievement.

Firebrand provides on-going support, advice and counselling which is available centrally through a safeguarding and welfare number and email address, whilst signposting exists in the training center, on staff email signatures and through

the provision of the IMPACT modules as an additional value-added qualification which develops social skills in a digital world. Individual aspirations and career goals are reviewed regularly through planned Learner Assessment Reviews and Progression Reviews in line with the Progression Plan. ILP's (Individual Learning Plans) are reviewed and where changes occur are updated monthly.

Firebrand make every effort to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all learner needs are met at every stage of the learning programme.

Recognising Achievement and Progress (RARPA)

Firebrand Training recognises the importance in assessing the quality and level of achievement of its funded provision. It is important to know that learners are progressing both personally and within the wider community context as a result of the learning they have invested in and also that our Learning Mentors are able to best support them. RARPA is a process which enables us to monitor achievement and progress within non accredited learning. Firebrand Training facilitate a staged approach to ensure that the learner is at the centre of learning and the learner's goals are recognised and count towards the success of their learning.

This staged process has been designed to:

- Focus on and promote the needs and interests of learners.
- Take account of learners' diverse and sometimes multiple purposes in learning.
- Allow for negotiation of the content and outcomes of learning programmes Encourage learners to reflect on and recognise their own progress and achievement, thus increasing their confidence.
- Promote and support informed learner self-assessment, peer assessment and dialogue about learning and achievement between learners and mentors (both Firebrand Training Learning Mentors and the learners own organisational level allocated mentor) and Firebrand Technical Trainers
- Enable both the achievement of planned learning objectives and learning outcomes, not specified at the outset, to be recognised and valued.
- Promote good practice in teaching, learning and assessment Enhance providers' quality assurance and improvement practices.

The staged process consists of five elements. These are:

1. Aims: appropriate to an individual learner or groups of learners, as the learner applies for a course, aims are identified for the learner's course. These are based on the needs of the learners as assessed by the tutor, learners and families and the core aims of the course. These are established during the enrolment calls and revisited as part of the FDOL (First Day of Learning) live learning webinar.

2. Initial Assessment: To establish the learner's starting point an Initial Assessment is completed against the requirements of the qualification and numeracy and literacy. Furthermore, a non-academic starting point

evaluation is conducted against the essential soft skills that link to the expected behaviours of advanced and higher-level learners.

3. Challenging Learning Objectives/Outcomes: Identification of appropriate objectives for the learner is an outcome of the assessment process. Depending on the length of the course appropriate SMART targets consisting of short-, medium- and long-term objectives may be devised that link well to the learners' wider career goals and recorded within the learners' Progression Review. These are reviewed and updated as appropriate throughout the learner's course, normally every quarter but may be revisited out of sequence dependent on learner needs.

4. Formative Assessment: Recognition and recording of progress and achievement during the programme takes place for all learners, through a range of methods. Learning Mentors' record all forms of progress against set objectives and review self-evaluation and reflection through learners own timesheet record keeping. Learning Mentors record achievements using the Progression Review which aligns concurrently with the SPC (Summative Portfolio Checklist) for standard/qualification-based outcomes.

5. Summative Assessment: End of programme review of overall progress and achievement. This may include recognition of learning outcomes not specified during the programme and discussion about 'next steps' for the learner. Grade outcomes and supporting narratives are shared and discussed so as to identify areas of further development beyond the confines of the qualification as well as recognise best practice and successes.

Responsibilities All Learning Mentors, SMEs, QAOs and support staff, support learners in the recognition and recording of progress and achievements in accordance with the RARPA 5-point framework

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Definitions:

Reasonable Adjustment:

A reasonable adjustment is an activity or process that is implemented to address a significant disadvantage. ATO's (Apprenticeship Training Organisations) must adhere to the Reasonable Adjustments Duty which was first introduced under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The duty requires the ATO (Apprenticeship Training Organisation) to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and other benefits, facilities and services provided for students.

Special Considerations:

An apprentice's examination performance can sometimes be affected by circumstances beyond their control and therefore the inclusion of special consideration is considered. This practice is a post-examination/test adjustment that compensates candidates who were suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the examination/test. Exams officers may apply for special consideration on a candidate's behalf.

Overview:

A reasonable adjustment enables a reduction in relation to the effect of a disability, learning requirement or another established difficulty that would normally place the apprentice at a substantial disadvantage in an assessment situation, examination, or test. Any reasonable adjustments must not alter the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes but may include the following methods of lessening the apprentice's limitations. (This list is not exhaustive)

- Using assistive technologies
- Adjusting the testing/examination environment
- Providing an alternative testing/examination venue
- Providing direct assistance during assessment (e.g., a reader, scribe, or signer)
- Adapting resources/materials (e.g., increasing font size, Braille based resources, changing background colour or the provision of overlays, and language modification)
- The provision of additional time (as agreed with the test/examination provider and/or End Point Assessment Organisation)

In all instances any reasonable adjustment must be approved by the EPAO (End Point Assessment Organisation) once escalated by the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO) and documented within the apprentices learning record, these must also be agreed and implemented prior to assessment commencing and not as a reactive action to a perceived apprentice difficulty mid test/examination. It is imperative that all staff and stakeholders acknowledge that this is an arrangement to give an apprentice access to a qualification, and therefore the work produced following a reasonable adjustment must be assessed in the same way as the work from other apprentices.

Applying reasonable adjustment

In the instance of requests directly to the EPAO it is the responsibility of the ATO (Apprenticeship Training Organisation) to implement any reasonable adjustments before any assessment/examination/test. An apprentice does not have to be formally recognised as disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) to qualify for reasonable adjustment; nor will every apprentice who is disabled be entitled to reasonable adjustment. In relation to vendor specific examinations, it is the apprentices' responsibility to request any reasonable adjustments directly with the vendor provider. Reasonable adjustments are only to be employed where an apprentice will not be given an unfair advantage of others taking the same or similar assessment/examination/test.

Special consideration

Special considerations operate differently to applied reasonable adjustments as in this case the limiting factors apply to the apprentice immediately before or during an assessment/examination/testing session.

These could include:

- Issues impacting on the mental health of an apprentice (e.g., a bereavement)
- Issues impacting on the ability to undertake assessment/examination/testing (e.g., illness or injury, disturbance such as an evacuation)

Therefore, an apprentice may be eligible for the inclusion of special consideration if:

- Assessment/Examination/Testing performance is seriously affected
- Unsuccessful alternative arrangements in an attempt to address a reasonable adjustment
- All or part of the assessment impacted by issues beyond the control of the apprentice

In this case, Firebrand Training as the ATO (Apprenticeship Training Organisation) will submit a written Special Consideration request to the Awarding organisation(s) per apprentice affected. Special Consideration Requests cannot be submitted for numerous apprentices, regardless of if the reason for the request is identical. The BCS (British Computer Society, also known as The Chartered Institute for IT) as the primary End Point Assessment Organisation for Firebrand Training, has detailed the below linked Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration Policy for apprentices and other candidates:

<https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/heq-reasonable-adjustments.pdf>

Accelerate People, as the secondary EPAO have the following policy:

[Microsoft Word - 034 Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy \(accelerate-people.co.uk\)](#)

It is also possible for apprentices to request special consideration during or post assessment/examination/test but excludes special consideration in the case of a permanent disability or learning difficulty. Decisions pertaining to the extent of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment/examination/test and will reflect the difficulty faced by the apprentice.

Appeals

The apprentice is always encouraged to firstly follow the Firebrand Training appeals process and/or complaints policy. However, if an apprentice believes that they might have been treated unfairly and want further advice, the apprentice can contact the [Equality Advisory and Support Service](#)

Phone: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

You can email using the [contact form on the EASS website](#)