



AASW

Australian Association
of Social Workers

Disability Access & Reasonable Adjustments

Credentials

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1. Purpose

AASW is committed to ensuring that applicants with disability, health conditions, neurodivergence, learning differences, temporary impairment or other accessibility needs can participate equitably in credential applications, assessment and related credential processes.

This framework establishes a transparent and consistent approach to reasonable adjustments that:

- promotes fairness, inclusion and accessibility
- supports dignity, privacy, choice and self-determination
- supports compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- removes or reduces disability-related barriers where reasonable
- maintains credential eligibility, competency and public protection requirements
- provides clear, timely, and reviewable decision-making.

2. Policy Statement

A reasonable adjustment is a change to the way an applicant accesses, participates in, or demonstrates requirements within a credential process so they can participate on the same basis as others. An adjustment may change how a requirement is completed or demonstrated; it does not change the underlying eligibility, competency, capability, professional knowledge, skills or ethical standards required for the credential.

AASW will consider requests individually and in consultation with the applicant. Adjustments are not automatically approved in the form requested. Where a requested adjustment cannot reasonably be provided, AASW will consider whether another effective adjustment can address the identified barrier.

3. Guiding principles

Equity rather than equality: Support is provided according to individual need, recognising that identical treatment does not always produce equitable participation.

Individualised and functional assessment: Decisions focus on the barrier and functional impact in the relevant credential activity, rather than diagnosis alone.

Dignity, respect and applicant voice: Applicants are encouraged to identify barriers and adjustments that may support their participation.

Confidentiality and need-to-know handling: Disability, health and adjustment information is managed confidentially and shared only where needed to assess or implement an adjustment.

Credential integrity: Adjustments must preserve the validity, integrity and required standards of the credential process.

Proportionality and reasonableness: AASW considers effectiveness, practicality, resources, timing, cost and any unjustifiable hardship considerations, as relevant.

Timeliness: Requests are considered as promptly as practicable, so applicants are not unnecessarily disadvantaged.

Reviewability: Decisions and approved arrangements may be reconsidered where circumstances, needs or relevant information change.

Code of Ethics: Reasonable adjustments do not remove an applicant's or credential holder's obligation to meet applicable professional and ethical requirements, including those in the AASW Code of Ethics, where relevant to credential integrity.

4. Scope

This framework applies across AASW credential touchpoints, including:

- new credential applications
- renewal/ reinstatement and reassessment activities
- case study or other assessment activities
- appeals and review processes
- mandatory CPD audit processes
- other credential-related activities where an accessibility barrier affects participation.

This framework does not provide for:

- waiving mandatory credential eligibility requirements
- lowering competency or assessment standards
- altering required learning outcomes, professional knowledge or skills
- changing capability or ethical expectations
- altering an assessment outcome because of disability
- coaching, substantive assistance with assessed content, or provide access to confidential assessment content because of disability alone.

5. Who may request an adjustment?

An adjustment may be requested by an applicant or credential holder who experiences an accessibility barrier associated with disability, a health or medical condition, neurodivergence, a learning difference, psychosocial or mental health condition, or temporary injury or illness. A person does not need to fit a particular diagnostic label for AASW to discuss accessibility needs; however, supporting evidence will be requested where it is reasonably required to assess the functional impact or proposed adjustment.

6. Types of reasonable adjustments

The following examples are non-exhaustive. The appropriate adjustment will depend on the activity, the barrier, the applicant's circumstances and the need to preserve credential integrity.

Area	Possible adjustments
Information and communication	Accessible Word/PDF or electronic materials; large print or alternative formats; Plain English guidance; additional verbal explanation; alternative communication methods.

Application process	Additional time to compile evidence; extended submission windows; assistance to understand procedural requirements without completing assessed work for the applicant; flexible communication arrangements.
Time and scheduling	Additional assessment time; reasonable scheduled or supervised rest breaks; split assessment over multiple sessions or days where appropriate; flexible scheduling around fatigue, disability impacts or medical treatment.
Technology and assistance	Screen reader; speech-to-text; other assistive technology; reader or scribe; modified visual presentation or accessible electronic materials.
Health-related access	Permission, where appropriate and consistent with assessment integrity, to access medication, food, drink or required medical devices during an assessment.

7. Request process

Step 1 - Request

Applicants should indicate that they require a reasonable adjustment through the application process or contact the Credentials Team. Early contact is encouraged, but a request may be made when a need becomes apparent.

Step 2 - Information and evidence

The applicant describes the barrier, relevant functional impact and requested or recommended support. Applicants should provide information reasonably necessary to assess the barrier, proposed adjustment and credential integrity. This does not require unnecessary disclosure of detailed medical information and does not alter any separate disclosure obligations under applicable professional or ethical requirements, including the AASW Code of Ethics. Where appropriate, AASW may request evidence from a suitably qualified professional. Evidence should focus on functional impact and recommended adjustments rather than diagnosis alone.

Step 3 - Consultation

Credentials staff may discuss the barrier, requested adjustment, previous effective arrangements, alternatives, timing and implementation needs with the applicant.

Step 4 - Assessment

AASW considers the request using the decision-making criteria in section 8. Further information may be sought only where reasonably needed to make the decision.

Step 5 - Written outcome

AASW advises the applicant in writing of approved adjustments, any alternative adjustment offered, implementation arrangements, reasons for any declined element, and available review options.

8. Decision-making framework

Question	Consideration
What barrier is the applicant experiencing?	How does the barrier affect access to or participation in the specific credential activity?
What adjustment is requested?	Is it connected to the functional impact and likely to be effective?
Can credential standards and assessment integrity be preserved?	Would the adjustment change only the method or conditions, rather than the competency, eligibility requirement or assessed outcome?
Is another effective option available?	Could a different adjustment address the barrier with less impact on assessment integrity or implementation?
Is the adjustment reasonable and practicable?	Consider timing, operational feasibility, cost, resources, safety, impact on others and relevant unjustifiable hardship considerations.
Would refusal create avoidable disadvantage?	Consider equity and whether a reasonable alternative can be provided.
Is the arrangement reusable?	For ongoing or permanent needs, consider whether an approved adjustment can apply to future comparable credential activities, subject to review if circumstances or assessment requirements change.

9. Supporting information and documentation

AASW should request only information reasonably necessary to understand the barrier, functional impact and appropriate adjustment. Depending on the circumstances, this may include information from a suitably qualified professional describing functional limitations and recommended supports.

AASW should not require unnecessary disclosure of detailed medical history where the functional impact and adjustment need can otherwise be established. Where a condition or need is ongoing, AASW may consider whether existing evidence and previously approved adjustments remain sufficient rather than requiring repeated evidence for each comparable activity.

10. Implementation of approved adjustments

The Credentials Team is responsible for recording the approved arrangement, coordinating implementation with relevant assessors or service providers, and limiting disclosure to information necessary to put the adjustment in place. Assessors should receive the practical instructions required to implement the adjustment, rather than unnecessary diagnostic or health information.

Approved adjustments apply to the specified activity or period. For ongoing needs, AASW may approve an arrangement across future comparable credential activities, with review where the applicant's circumstances, the credential requirements or the assessment method materially change.

11. Review and escalation

An applicant may request reconsideration where new information becomes available, circumstances change, an approved adjustment is not implemented as agreed, or the applicant believes the request was not fully considered.

The proposed escalation pathway is:

1. Credentials Administration Officer
2. Team Leader, Credentials
3. Director, Professional Standards & Regulations
4. Formal review process.

A review should be undertaken by a person with appropriate authority who was not the sole original decision-maker where practicable. The applicant should receive the review outcome and reasons in writing.

12. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Applicants / credential holders	Raise accessibility needs as early as practicable; provide information reasonably requested to assess or implement an adjustment; participate in consultation; advise AASW if needs or circumstances change; and provide accurate information about matters relevant to the adjustment and credential integrity, consistent with applicable professional and ethical obligations.

Credentials Administration staff	Receive requests respectfully; focus on functional barriers; consult with applicants; assess and document decisions consistently; coordinate implementation; protect confidentiality.
Assessors	Implement approved arrangements exactly as advised; maintain assessment integrity; avoid seeking unnecessary health information; promptly report implementation issues.
Team Leader	Support complex decisions, consistency, escalation and review; consider alternative adjustments and relevant resource or hardship issues.
AASW	Maintain accessible processes and information; monitor implementation; review the framework and recurring barriers; improve accessibility where systemic changes can reduce the need for individual adjustments.

13. Privacy and confidentiality

Information about disability, health conditions and adjustment requests will be handled confidentially and accessed or shared only to the extent necessary to assess, approve, implement or review the adjustment, subject to applicable AASW information-handling requirements.

14. Monitoring and review

AASW should periodically review the operation of this framework, including request volumes, types of adjustments, timeliness, declined requests, review outcomes and recurring accessibility barriers. Monitoring should use de-identified or aggregated information where practicable. The framework should also be reviewed when credential processes materially change or where implementation experience identifies a need for clarification.

15. Applicant guide - requesting a reasonable adjustment

AASW is committed to making credential processes accessible and inclusive. If disability, a health condition, neurodivergence, a learning difference, injury or another accessibility need affects your participation, you may request a reasonable adjustment.

What can I request?

Examples include extra time, rest breaks, accessible materials, assistive technology, a reader or scribe, split assessment sessions, flexible scheduling, alternative communication arrangements. Other adjustments may also be considered.

What cannot be changed?

A reasonable adjustment cannot waive credential eligibility requirements, lower competency or assessment standards, change required professional knowledge or skills, alter an assessment outcome, or provide coaching or advance access to confidential assessment content.

How do I request an adjustment?

1. Select the reasonable adjustment option in the application process or contact the Credentials Team.
2. Tell us about the barrier, how it affects your participation, and what support may help.
3. Provide supporting information if AASW reasonably needs it to assess the request.
4. AASW may contact you to discuss the request or possible alternatives.
5. You will receive the outcome and implementation arrangements in writing.

Contact

Credentials Team

Email: Credentialing.AASW@aasw.asn.au

Phone: 03 9320 1000

Applicants are encouraged to contact AASW as early as practicable so appropriate arrangements can be made.

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